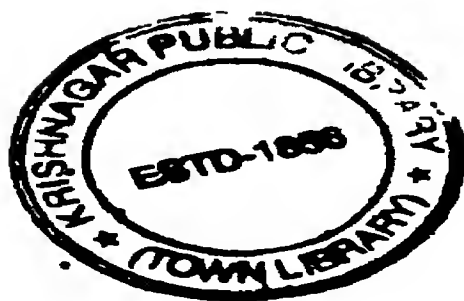




WESTWARD HO!



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WESTWARD HO!

OR

THE VOYAGES AND ADVENTURES OF
Sir Amvas Leigh, Knight,
OF BURROUGH, IN THE COUNTY OF DEVON
IN THE REIGN OF HER MOST GLORIOUS MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH,

First Edition

RENDERED INTO MODERN ENGLISH

BY CHARLES KINGSLEY



London
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TO
THE RAJAH SIR JAMES BROOKE, KCB
V:
GEORGE AUGUSTUS SELWYN, DD
BISHOP OF NEW ZEALAND

This Book is Dedicated

BY ONE WHO (UNKNOWN TO THEM) HAS NO OTHER METHOD OF EXPRESSING HIS
ADMIRATION AND REVERENCE FOR THEIR CHARACTERS

THAT TYPE OF ENGLISH VIRTUE, AT ONCE MANFUL AND GODLY, FEARFUL AND
ENTHUSIASTIC, FRUGAL AND SELF-SACRIFICING, WHICH HE HAS BEEN TO DETECT IN
THESE LACES, THEY HAVE EXHIBITED IN A FORM EVEN FEWER AND MORE BEAUTIFUL
THAN THAT IN WHICH HE HAS DISCOVERED IT, AND THAN THAT IN WHICH IT WAS EXHIBITED
BY THE WORTHIES WHOM ELIZABETH, WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF RANK, TO A
GATHERED ROUND HER IN THE FULL GLORIOUS WORKS OF HER GREATNESS.

C. K.

February 1880

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WESTWARD HO!

CHAPTER I

HOW MR. OXENHAM SAW THE WHITE BIRD

'The yellow oak our palace is,
Our castle, the sea.'

ALL who have travelled through the delicious scenery of North Devon must needs know the little white town of Bideford, which slopes upwards from its broad tide river paved with yellow sands, and many-arched old bridge where salmon wait for autumn floods, toward the pleasant upland on the west. Above the town the hills close in cushioned with deep oak woods, through which juts here and there a crag of fern-fringed slate, below they lower, and open more and more in softly rounded knolls, and fertile squares of red and green, till they sink into the wide expanse of hazy flats, rich salt marshes, and rolling sand-hills, where Torrington joins her sister Taw, and both together flow quietly toward the broad surges of the bar, and the everlasting thunder of the long Atlantic swell. Pleasantly the old town stands there, beneath its soft Italian sky, fanned day and night by the fresh ocean breeze, which foehn-like the keen winter frosts, and the fierce thunder heats of the midland, and pleasantly it has stood there for now, perhaps, eight hundred years, since the first Grenvil, cousin of the Conqueror, returning from the conquest of South Wales, drew round him trusty Saxon earls, and free Norse rovers with their golden curls, and dark Silurian Britons from the Swansea shore, and all the mingled blood which still gives to the seaward folk of the next county their strength and intellect, and, even in these leveling days, their peculiar beauty of face and form.

But at the time whereof I write, Bideford was not merely a pleasant country town, whose quay was haunted by a few coasting craft. It was one of the chief ports of England; it furnished seven ships to fight the Armada: even more than a century afterwards, say the chroniclers, 'it sent more vessels to the northern trade than any port in England, saving (strange juxtaposition!) London and Tynham,' and was the centre of a local civilisation and enterprise, small perhaps compared with the vast efforts of

the present day—but who dare despise the day of small things, if it has proved to be the dawn of mighty ones? And it is to the sea life and labour of Bideford, and Dartmouth, and Totterham, and Plymouth (then a pretty place, and many another little western town, that England owes the formulation of her naval and commercial glory. It was the men of Devon, the Drakes and Hawkins, Gillearts and Raleighs, Grenvilles and Oxenham, and a host more of 'forgotten worthies,' whom we shall learn one day to honour as they deserve, to whom she owes her commerce, her colonies, her very existence. For had they not first crippled, by their West Indian raids, the ill-gotten resources of the Spaniard, and then crushed his last huge effort in Britain's Salamis, the glorious fight of 1588, what had we been by now, but a Popish appendage of a world tyrannous as cruel as Hughen Rome itself and far more devilish?

It is in memory of those men, their voyages and their battles, their faith and their valour, their heroic lives and no less heroic deaths, that I write this book, and if now and then I shall seem to warm into a style somewhat too stilted and pompous, let me be excused for my subject's sake, fit rather to have been sung than said, and to have proclaimed to all true English hearts, not as a novel but as an epic (which some may yet gild himself to write), the same great message which the songs of Troy, and the Persian wars, and the trophies of Marathon and Salamis, spoke to the hearts of all true Greeks of old.

One bright summer's afternoon, in the year of grace 1575, a tall and fair boy, nine hugging along Bideford quay, in his scholar's gown, with satchel and slate in hand, watching wistfully the shipping and the sailors, till, just after he had passed the bottom of the High Street, he came opposite to one of the many taverns which looked out upon the river. In the open bay window sat merchants and gentlemen, discoursing over their afternoon's draught of sack, and outside the door was gathered a group of sailors, listening earnestly to some one who stood in the midst. The boy, all alive for any sea-news, must needs go up to them, and take

his place among the sailor-lads who wore peeping and whispering under the elbows of the men, and so came in for the following speech, delivered in a kind hoarse voice, with a strong Devonshire accent, and a fair sprinkling of pathos.

'If you don't believe me, go and see, or stay here and grow all over blue monih! I tell you, as I am a gentleman, I saw it with these eyes, and so did Salvation Yoo there, through a window in the lower room, and we measured the heap, as I am a christened man, seventy foot long, ten foot broad, and twelve foot high, of silver bars, and each bar between a thirty and forty pound weight. And says Captain Drake "There, my lads of Devon, I've brought you to the mouth of the world's treasure-house, and it's your own fault now if you don't sweep it out as empty as a stock-fish!"

'Why didn't you bring some of they home, then, Mr. Oxenham?'

'Why weren't you there to help to carry them? We would have brought 'em away, as enough, and young Drake and I had broke the door abroad already, but Captain Drake goes off in a dead faint, and when he came to look, he had a wound in his leg you might have laid three fingers in, and his boots were full of blood, and had been for an hour or more, but the heart of him was that, that he never knew it till he dropped, and then his brother and I got him away to the boats, he kicking and struggling, and bidding us let him go on with the fight, though every step he took in the sand was in a pool of blood, and so we got off. And tell me, ye sons of shotten herrings, wasn't it worth more to save him than the dirty silver? for silver we can get again, brave boys! there's more fish in the sea than ever came out of it, and more silver in Nombre de Dios than would pave all the streets in the west country but of such captains as Franky Drake, Heaven never makes but one at a time, and if we lose him, good-bye to England's luck, say I, and who don't agree, let him choose his weapons, and I'm his man!'

He who delivered this harangue was a tall and sturdy personage, with a florid black-bearded face, and bold restless dark eyes, who leaned, with crossed legs and arms akimbo, against the wall of the house, and seemed in the eyes of the schoolboy a very magnificent, some prince or duke at least. He was dressed (contrary to all sumptuary laws of the time) in a suit of crimson velvet, a little the worse, perhaps, for wear, by his side were a long Spanish rapier and a brace of daggers, gaudy enough about the hilts; his fingers sparkled with rings; he had two or three gold chains about his neck, and large earrings in his ears, behind one of which a red cross was stuck jauntily enough among the glossy black curls, on his head was a broad velvet Spanish hat, in which instead of a feather was fastened with a great gold clasp a whole Quetzal bird, whose gorgeous plumage of fretted golden green shone like one entire precious stone. As he finished his speech, he took off the said hat, and looking at the bird in it—

'Look ye, my lads, did you ever see such a fowl as that before? That's the bird which the old Indian kings of Mexico let no one wear but them own selves, and therefore I wear it,—I, John Oxenham of South Tawton,—for a sign to all brave lads of Devon, that as the Spaniards are the masters of the Indians, we're the masters of the Spaniards' and he replaced his hat.

A murmur of applause followed. But our hunter that he 'doubted the Spaniards were too many for them!'

'Too many? How many men did we take. Nombre de Dios with? Seventy-three were we, and no more when we sailed out of Plymouth Sound, and before we saw the Spanish Main, half were "gastados," used up, as the Dons say, with the scurvy, and in 't' Pleasant Captain Hawkins of Cowes fell in with us, and that gave us some thirty hunks more and with that handful, my lads, only fifty-three in all we picked the lock of the new world! And when did we lose but our trumpeter, who stood braying like an ass in the middle of the square, instead of taking care of his flock like a Christian? I tell you, those Spaniards are rank cowards, as all bullies are. They pray to a woman, the idolatrous rascals! and no wonder they fight like women!'

'You're right, 'captain,' sang out a tall gaunt fellow who stood close to him 'one west countryman can fight twoasterlings, and an asterling can beat three Dons any day. Th' my lads of Devon!'

'For O! it's the herrings and the gold brown beef, and the cider and the cream as white.
'Q! they are the making of the jolly Devon lads,
'For to play, and che to fight!

'Come,' said Oxenham, 'come along! Who lists? who lists? who'll make his fortune?'

'Oh, who will John, jolly partner as all!
And who will John, says he, I'll!
To fill his pockets with the good red gold,
By sailing on the sea, O!'

'Who'll list?' cried the gaunt man again, 'now's your time! We've got forty men to Plymouth now, ready to sail the minute we get back, and we want a dozen out of you Bilford men, and just a boy or two, and then we're off and away, and make our fortunes, or go to heaven!

'Our bodies in the sea as deep as,
Our souls in heaven to be real!
We're valiant seamen, one and all,
Hereafter shall be blest!'

'Now,' said Oxenham, 'you won't let the Plymouth men say that the Bilford men daren't follow them! North Devon against South, it is. Who'll join! who'll join! It is but a step of a way, after all, and sailing as smooth as a duck-pond as soon as you're past Cape Finisterre. I'll run a lovely herring-boat there and back for a wager of twenty pound, and never ship a bucketful all the way. Who'll join? Don't think you're buying a pig in a poke. I know the road, and Salvation Yoo, here, too, who was the gunner's mate as well as,

I do the narrow seas, and better. You ask him to show you the chart of it, now, and see if he don't tell you over the ruttier as well as Drake himself.

On which the gaunt man pulled from under his arm a great white buffalo horn covered with rough etchings of land and sea, and held it up to the admiring ring.

'See here, boys all, and behold the pictur of the place, dra'd out so natural as ever was life. I got mun from a Portugal, down to the Azores, and he'd pricked mun out, and pricked mun out, wheresoever he'd sailed, and whatsoever he'd seen. Take mun in your hands now, Simon Evans, take mun in your hands, look mun over, and I'll sure you'll know the way in five minutes so well as ever a shark in the seas.'

And the horn was passed from hand to hand, while Oxenham, who saw that his hearers were becoming moved, called through the open window for a great jankard of sack, and passed that from hand to hand, after the horn.

The schoolboy, who had been devouring with eyes and ear all which passed, and had continued by this time to edge himself into the inner ring, now stood face to face with the hero of the emerald crest, and got as many peeps as he could at the wonder. But when he saw the sailors, one after another, having turned it over a while, come forward and offer to pay Mr Oxenham, his soul burned within him for a nearer view of that wondrous horn, as magical in its effects as that of Tristram, or the enchantment in Ariosto, and when the group had somewhat broken up, and Oxenham was going into the tavern with his recruits, he asked loudly for a nearer sight of the marvel, which was granted at once.

And now to his astonished gaze displayed themselves cities and harbours, dragons and elephants, whales which fought with sharks, plate ships of Spain, islands with apes and palm-trees, each with its name over-written, and here and there, 'Here is gold', and again, 'Much gold and silver' inserted most probably, as the words were in English, by the hands of Mr Oxenham himself. Laughingly and long enough the boy turned it round and round, and thought the owner of it more fortunate than Khan or Kaiser. 'Oh, it he could but possess that horn, what needed he on earth beside to make him blest.'

'I say, will you sell this?'

'Yea, marry, or my own soul, if I can get the worth of it.'

'I want the horn.—I don't want your soul; it's somewhat of a stale sole, for aught I know; and there are plenty of fresh ones in the bay.'

And therewith, after much fumbling, he pulled out a tester (the only one he had), and asked if that would buy it?

'That I no, nor twenty of them.'

The boy thought over what a good knight-errant would do in such case, and then answered,

'Tell you what: I'll fight you for it.'

'Thank'ee, sir!'

'Break the jackanapes's head for him, Yeo,' said Oxenham.

'Call me jackanapes again, and I break yours, sir.' And the boy lifted his fist fiercely.

Oxenham looked at him a minute smilingly.

'Tut! tut! my man, but one of your own size, if you will, and spare little folk like me!'

'If I have a boy's age, sir, I have a man's fist. I shall be fifteen years old this month, and know how to answer any one who insults me.'

'Fifteen, my young cockerel? you look liker twenty,' said Oxenham, with an admiring glance at the lad's broad humbs, keen blue eyes, curling golden locks, and round honest face.

'Fifteen? If I had half a dozen such lads as you, I would make knights of them before I died. Eh, Yeo?'

'He'll do,' said Yeo, 'he will make a brave gamecock in a year or two, if he darts ruffit up so early at a tough old hen master like the Captain.'

At which there was a general laugh, in which Oxenham joined as loudly as any, and then bade the lad tell him why he was so keen after the horn.

'Because,' said he, looking up boldly, 'I want to go to sea. I want to see the Indies. I want to fight the Spaniards. Though I am a gentleman's son, I'd a d-d never be a cabin-boy on board your ship.' And the lad, having hurried out his say hercey enough, dropped his head again.

'And you shall,' cried Oxenham with a great oath, 'and take a galloon, and dine off carbadoed bones. Where so are you, my gallant fellow?'

'Mr Leigh's, of Burrough Court.'

'Bless his soul! I know him as well as I do the Edlystone, and his kitchen too. Who says with him to night?'

'Sir Richard Grenville.'

'Dick Grenville? I did not know he was in town. Go home and tell your father John Oxenham will come and keep him company. There, off with you! I'll make all straight with the good gentleman, and you shall have your venture with me. And as for the horn, let him have the horn, Yeo, and I'll give you a noble for it.'

'Not a penny noble Captain! If young master will take a poor mariner's gift, there it is, for the sake of his love to the calling, and Heaven send him luck therein! And the good fellow, with the impulsive generosity of a true sailor, thrust the horn into the boy's hands, and walked away to escape thanks.

'And now,' quoth Oxenham, 'my merry men all, make up your minds what manfared men you be minded to be before you take your bounties. I want none of your rascally lurching longshore vermin, who get five pounds out of this captain, and ten out of that, and let him sail without them after all, while they are stowed away under women's mufflers, and in tavern cellars. If any man is of that humour,

he had better to cut himself up, and salt himself down in a barrel for pork, before he meets me again for by this light, let me catch him, he it seven years hence, and if I do not cut his throat upon the streets, it's a pity! But if any man will be true brother to me, true brother to him I'll be, come wreck or prize, storm or calm, salt water or fresh, victuals or none, share and fare alike, and here's my hand upon it, for every man and all! and so—

'Westward ho' with a rumbelow,
And hurra for the Spanish Main, O!'

After which oration Mr. Oxenham swaggered into the tavern, followed by his new men, and the boy took his way homewards, nursing his precious horn, trembling between hope and fear, and blushing with maidenly shame, and a half-sense of wrong-doing at having revealed suddenly to a stranger the darling wish which he had hidden from his father and mother ever since he was ten years old.

Now this young gentleman, Amias Leigh, though come of as good blood as any in Devon, and having lived all his life in what we should even now call the very best society, and being (on account of the valour, courtesy, and truly noble qualities which he showed forth in his most eventful life) chosen by me as the hero and centre of this story, was not, saving for his good looks, by any means what would be called nowadays an 'interesting' youth, still less a 'highly-educated' one; for, with the exception of a little Latin, which had been driven into him by repeated blows, as if it had been a nail, he knew no books, whatsoever, save his Bible, his Prayer-book, the old *Mort d'Arthur* of Caxton's edition, which lay in the great bay window in the hall, and the translation of Las Casas's *History of the West Indies*, which lay beside it, lately done into English under the title of *The Cruelties of the Spaniards*. He devoutly believed in fairies, whom he called pixies, and held that they changed ladies, and made the mushroom ridges on the downs to dance in. When he had warts or humors, he went to the white witch at Northam to charm them away, he thought that the sun moved round the earth, and that the moon had some kindred with a Cheshire cheese. He held that the swallows slept all the winter at the bottom of the horse-pond, talked, like Raleigh, Grenville, and other low persons, with a broad Devonshire accent, and was in many other respects so very ignorant a youth, that any post monitor in a national school might have had a hearty laugh at him. Nevertheless, this ignorant young savage, 'vacant of the glorious gains' of the nineteenth century, children's literature and science made easy, and, worst of all, of those unproved views of English history now current among our railway essayists, which consist in believing all persons, male and female, before the year 1688, and nearly all after it, to have been either hypocrites or fools, had learnt certain things which he would hardly have

been taught just now in any school in England, for his training had been that of the old Persians, 'to speak the truth and to draw the bow,' both of which savage virtues he had acquired to perfection, as well as the equally savage ones of enduring pain cheerfully, and of behaving it to be the finest thing in the world to be a gentleman, by which word he had been taught to understand the careful habit of causing needless pain to no human being, poor or rich, and of taking pride in giving up his own pleasure for the sake of those who were weaker than himself. Moreover, having been entrusted for the last year with the breaking of a colt, and the care of a cast of young hawks which his father had received from *Lancey*, he had been profiting much, by the means of those coarse and frivolous amusements, in perseverance, thoughtfulness, and the habit of keeping his temper, and though he had never had a single 'object lesson,' or been taught to 'use his intellectual powers,' he knew the names and ways of every bird, and fish, and fly, and could read, as cunningly as the oldest sailor, the meaning of every drift of cloud which crossed the heavens. Lastly, he had been for some time past, on account of his extraordinary size and strength, undisputed cock of the school, and the most terrible lighter among all hideous boys, in which brutal habit he took much delight, and contrived, strange as it may seem, to extract from it good, not only for himself but for others, doing justice among his school-fellows with a heavy hand, and succouring the oppressed and afflicted, so that he was the terror of all the sailor-lads, and the pride and stay of all the town's boys and girls, and hardly considered that he had done his duty in his calling if he went home without beating a big lad for bullying a little one. For the rest, he never thought about thinking, or felt about feeling, and had no ambition whatsoever beyond pleasing his father and mother, getting by honest means the maximum of 'red currants' and mazard cherries, and going to sea when he was big enough. Neither was he what would be nowadays called by many a jocular child, for though he said his Creed and Lord's Prayer night and morning, and went to the service at the church every forenoon, and read the day's Psalms with his mother every evening, and had learnt from her and from his father (as he proved well in after life) that it was infinitely noble to do right and infinitely base to do wrong, yet (the age of children's religious books not having yet dawned on the world) he knew nothing more of the glory, or of his own soul, than is contained in the Church Catechism. It is a question, however, on the whole, whether, though grossly ignorant (according to our modern notions) in science and religion, he was altogether untrained in manhood, virtue, and godliness, and whether the barbaric narrowness of his information was not somewhat counterbalanced both in him and in the rest of his generation by the depth, and breadth, and healthiness of his Education.

So let us watch him up the hill as he goes hugging his heart, to tell all that has passed to his mother, from whom he had never hidden anything in his life, save only that misfortune, and that only because he foreknew that it would give her pain, and because, moreover, being a prudent and sensible lad, he knew that he was not yet old enough to go, and that, as he expressed it to her that afternoon, 'there was no hollang till he was out of the wood'.

So he goes up between the rich lane-banks, heavy with drooping ferns and honeysuckle, and upon the windy down toward the old Court, nestled amid its ring of wind-elipt oaks, through the gray gateway into the homeclose, and then he pauses a moment to look around, first at the wide bay to the westward, with its southern wall of purple cliffs; then at the dim Isle of Lundy far away at sea, then at the cliffs and downs of Morte and Braunton, right in front of him; then at the vast yellow sheet of rolling sand-hill, and green alluvial plain dotted with red cattle, at his feet, through which the silver estuary winds onward toward the sea. Beneath him, on his right, the Torridge, like a land-locked lake, sleeps broad and bright between the old park of Tapeley and the charmed rock of the Hubbastone, where, seven hundred years ago, the Norse rovers landed to lay siege to Kenwith Castle, a mile away on his left hand, and not three fields away, are the old stones of 'The Bloody Corner,' where the retreating Danes, cut off from their ships, made their last fruitless stand against the Saxon sheriff and the valiant men of Devon. Within that charmed rock, so Torridge boatmen tell, sleeps now the old Norse Viking in his leaden coffin, with all his fairy treasure and his crown of gold, and as the boy looks at the spot, he fancies, and almost hopes, that the day may come when he shall have to do his duty against the invader as boldly as the men of Devon did then. And past him, far below, upon the soft south-eastern breeze, the stately ships go sliding out to sea. When shall he sail in them, and see the wonders of the deep? And as he stands there with beating heart and kindling eye, the cool breeze whistling through his long fair curls, he is a symbol, though he knows it not, of brave young England longing to wing its way out of its island prison, to discover and to traffic, to colonise and to civilise, until no wind can sweep the earth which does not bear the echoes of an English voice. Patience, young Amyas! Thou too shalt forth, and westward ho, beyond thy wildest dreams; and see brave sights, and do brave deeds, which no man has since the foundation of the world. Thou too shalt face invaders stronger and more cruel far than Dane or Norman, and bear thy part in that great Titan strife before the renown of which the name of Salamis shall fade away!

Mr. Oxenham came that evening to supper as he had promised: but as people supped in those days in much the same manner as they do now, we may drop the thread of the story

for a few hours, and take it up again after supper is over.

'Come now, Dick Grenville, do thou talk the good man round, and I'll warrant myself to talk round the good wife.'

The personage whom Oxenham addressed thus familiarly answered by a somewhat sarcastic smile, and, 'Mr Oxenham gives Dick Grenville,' (with just enough emphasis on the 'Mr' and the 'Dick,' to hint that a liberty had been taken with him) 'overmuch credit with the men. Mr Oxenham's credit with fair ladies, none can doubt. Friend Leigh, is Heard's great ship hoise yet from the Straits?'

The speaker, known well in those days as Sir Richard Grenville, Granville, Greenvil, Grenfield, with two or three other variations, was one of those truly heroic personages whom Providence, fitting always the men to their age and their work, had sent upon the earth whereof it takes right good care, not in England only, but in Spain and Italy, in Germaany and the Netherlands, and wherever, in short, great men and great deeds were needed to lift the medieval world into the modern.

And, among all the heroic faces which the painters of that age have preserved, none, perhaps, hardly excepting Shakspeare's or Spenser's, Alva's or Parnass's, is more heroic than that of Richard Grenville, as it stands in Prince's *Portraits of Devon*, of a Spanish type, perhaps (or more truly speaking, a Cornish), rather than an English, with just enough of the British element in it to give delicacy to its massive features. The forehead and whole brow are of extraordinary loftiness, and perfectly upright, the nose long, aquiline, and delicately pointed, the mouth fringed with a short silky beard, small and ripe, yet firm as granite, with just pout enough of the lower lip to give hint of that capacity of noble indignation which lay hid under its usual courtly calm and sweetness. If there be a defect in the face, it is that the eyes are somewhat small, and close together, and the eyebrows, though delicately arched, and, without a trace of peevishness, too closely pressed down upon them, the complexion is dark, the figure tall and graceful, altogether the likeness of a wise and gallant gentleman, lovely to all good men, awful to all bad men, in whose presence none dare say or do a mean or a ribald thing, whom brave men left, feeling themselves nerved to do their duty better while cowards slipped away, as bats and owls before the sun. So he lived and acted, whether in the Court of Elizabeth, giving his counsel among the wisest, or in the streets of Exeter (called alike by squire and merchant, shopkeeper and sailor; or riding along the moorland roads between his houses of Stow and Hildesford, while every woman ran out to her door to look at the great Sir Richard, the pride of North Devon). Or, sitting there in the low mullioned window at Burroughs with his cup of maltney before him, and the lute to which he had just been singing laid across his knees, while the real

western sun streamed in upon his high, bland forehead, and soft curling locks, over the same steadfast, God-fearing, chivalrous man, conscious (as far as a soul so healthy could be conscious) of the pride of beauty, and strength, and valour, and wisdom, and a race and name which claimed direct descent from the grandfather of the Conqueror, and was tracked down the centuries by valiant deeds and noble benefits to his native shire, himself the noblest of his race. Men said that he was proud—but he could not look round him without having something to be proud of, that he was stern and harsh to his sailors—but it was only when he saw in them any taint of cowardice or falsehood, that he was subject, at moments, to such fearful fits of rage, that he had been seen to smother the glasses from the table, grind them to pieces in his teeth, and swallow them—but that was only when his indignation had been aroused by some tale of cruelty or oppression, and, above all, by those West Indian devilries of the Spaniards, whom he regarded (and in those days rightly enough) as the enemies of God and man. Of this last fact Oxenham was well aware, and therefore felt somewhat puzzled and nettled, when, after having asked Mr. Leigh's leave to take young Amys with him, and set forth in glowing colours the purpose of his voyage, he found Sir Richard utterly unwilling to help him in his suit.

'Heyday, Sir Richard! You are not surely gone over to the side of those canting fellows (Spanish Jesuits in disguise, every one of them, they are) who pretended to turn up their noses at Franky Drake as a pirate, and be hanged to them?'

'My friend Oxenham,' answered he, in the sententious and measured style of the day, 'I have always held, as you should know by this, that Mr. Drake's booty, as well as my good friend Captain Hawkins's, is lawful prize, as having taken from the Spaniard, who is not only "hostis humani generis," but has no right to the same, having robbed it violently, by torture and extreme iniquity, from the poor Indian, whom God avenges, as He surely will.'

'Amen,' said Mrs. Leigh.

'I say Amen too,' quoth Oxenham, 'especially if it please Him to avenge them by English hands.'

'And I also,' went on Sir Richard, 'for the rightful owners of the said goods being either miserably dead, or incapable by reason of their servitude of ever recovering any share thereof, the treasure, falsely called Spanish, cannot be better bestowed than in building up the state of England against them, our natural enemies, and thereby, in building up the wall of the Reformed Churches throughout the world, and the liberties of all nations, against a tyranny more foul and infamous than that of Nero or Caligula, which, if it be not the cause of God I, for one, know not what God's cause is! And, as he warmed in his speech, his eyes flashed very fire.

'Hark now!' said Oxenham, 'who can speak more boldly than he? and yet he will not help this lad to so noble an adventure.'

'You have asked his father and mother, what is their answer?'

'Mine is this,' said Mr. Leigh, 'if it be God's will that my boy should become, hereafter, such a mariner as Sir Richard Grenville, let him go, and God be with him; but let him not hide here at home and be trained, if God give me grace, to become such a gentleman as Sir Richard Grenville.'

Sir Richard bowed low, and Mrs. Leigh caught up the last word—

'There, Mr. Oxenham, you cannot gainsay that, unless you will be disappointed in his worship. And for me, though it be a weak woman's reason, yet it is another's: he is my only child. His elder brother is far away; God only knows whether I shall see him again, and what are all reports of his virtues and his learning to me, compared to that sweet presence which I daily miss? Ah! Mr. Oxenham, my beautiful Joseph is gone, and though he be lord of Pharaoh's household, yet he is far away in Egypt, and you will take Benjamin also! Ah! Mr. Oxenham, you have no child, or you would not ask for mine!'

'And how do you know that, my sweet Madam?' said the adventurer, turning first deadly pale, and then glowing red. His last words had touched him to the quick in some unexpected place, and rising, he contritely laid her hand to his lips, and said—'I say no more. Farewell, sweet Madam, and God send all such wives as you.'

'And all wives,' said she, smiling, 'such husbands as mine.'

'Nay, I will not say that,' answered he, with a half-smile—and then, 'Farewell, friend Leigh—farewell, gallant Dick Grenville—God send I see thee Lord High Admiral when I come home. And yet, why should I come home? Will you pray for poor Jack, girtles?'

'Tut, tut, man! good words,' said Leigh; 'let us drink to our merry meeting before you go.' And rising, and putting the tankard of malmsey to his lips, he passed it to Sir Richard, who rose, and saying, 'To the fortune of a bold mariner and a gallant gentleman,' drank, and put the cup into Oxenham's hand.

The adventurer's face was flushed, and his eye wild. Whether from the liquor he had drunk during the day, or whether from Mrs. Leigh's last speech, he had not been himself for a few minutes. He lifted the cup, and was in act to pledge them, when he suddenly dropped it on the table, and pointed, staring and trembling, up and down, and round the room, as if following some fluttering object.

'There! Do you see it? The bird!—the bird with the white breast!'

Each looked at the other, but Leigh, who was a quick-witted man and an old courtier, forced a laugh instantly, and cried—

'Nonsense, bravo Jack Oxenham! Leave

HOW MR OXENHAM SAW THE WHITE BIRD

white birds for men who will show the white feather Mrs Leigh wants to pledge you'

Oxenham recovered himself in a moment, pledged them all round, drinking deep and heartily; and after hearty farewells, departed, never hinting again at his strange exclamation.

After he was gone, and while Leigh was attending him to the door, Mrs Leigh and Grenville kept a few minutes' dead silence. At last—

'God help him!' said she.

'Amen,' said Grenville, 'for he never needed it more. But indeed, Madam, I put no faith in such omens.'

'But, Sir Richard, that bird has been seen for generations before the death of any of his family. I know those who were at South Tawton when his mother died, and his brother also; and they both saw it. God help him! for, after all, he is a proper man.'

'So many a lady has thought before now, Mrs Leigh, and well for him if they had not. But, indeed, I make no account of omens. When God is ready for or a man, then he must go, and when can he go better?'

'But,' said Mr Leigh, who entered, 'I have seen, and especially when I was in Italy, omens and prophecies before now beget their own fulfilment, by driving men into recklessness, and making them run headlong upon that very ruin which, as they fancied, was running upon them.'

'And which,' said Sir Richard, 'they might have avoided, if, instead of trusting in I know not what dumb and dark destiny, they had trusted in the living God, by faith in whom men may remove mountains, and quench the fire, and put to flight the armies of the alien. I too know, and know not how I know, that I shall never die in my bed.'

'God forbid!' cried Mrs Leigh.

'And why, fair Madam, if I do doing my duty to my God and my queen? The thought never moves me now, to tell the truth, I pray often enough that I may be spared the miseries of imbecile old age, and that end which the old Northmen rightly called "a cow's death" rather than a man's. But enough of this. Mr Leigh, you have done wisely to night. Poor Oxenham does not go on his voyage with a single eye. I have talked about him with Drake and Hawkins, and I guess why Mrs Leigh touched him so home when she told him that he had no child.'

'Has he one, then, in the West Indies?' cried the good lady.

'God knows, and God grant we may not hear of shame and sorrow fallen upon an ancient and honourable house of Devon. My brother Stukely is woe enough to North Devon for this generation.'

'Poor braggadocio!' said Mr Leigh, 'and yet not altogether that too, for he can fight at last.'

'So can every mastiff and boar, much more an Englishman. And now come hither to me, my adventurous godson and don't look in such

doleful dumps. I hear you have broken all the sailor-boys' heads already.'

'Nearly all,' said young Anyas, with due modesty. 'But are I not to go to sea?'

'All things in their time, my boy, and God forbid that either I or your worthy parents should keep you from that noble calling which is the safeguard of this England and her queen. But you do not wish to live and die the master of a trawler?'

'I should like to be a brave adventurer, like Mr Oxenham.'

'God grant you become a braver man than he! for as I think, to be bold against the enemy is common to the brutes, but the prerogative of a man is to be bold against himself.'

'How, sir?'

'To conquer our own fancies, Anyas, and our own lusts, and our ambition, in the sacred name of duty, this it is to be truly brave, and truly strong, for he who cannot rule himself, how can he rule his crew or his fortunes? Come, now, I will make you a promise. If you will bide quietly at home and learn from your father and mother all which befits a gentleman and a Christian, as well as a seaman, the day shall come when you shall sail with Richard Grenville himself, or with better men than he, on a nobler errand than gold-hunting on the Spanish Main.'

'O my boy, my boy!' said Mrs Leigh, 'hear what the good Sir Richard promises you. Many an earl's son would be glad to be in your place.'

'And many an earl's son will be glad to be in his place a score years hence, if he will but learn what I know you too can teach him. And now, Anyas, my lad, I will tell you for a warning the history of that Sir Thomas Stukely of whom I spoke just now, and who was, as all men know, a gallant and courtly knight, of an ancient and worshipful family in Ulster, well practised in the wars, and well beloved at first by our incomparable queen, the friend of all true virtue, as I trust she will be of yours some day, who wanted but one step to greatness, and that was this, that in his hurry to rule all the world, he forgot to rule himself. At first, he wasted his estate in show and luxury, always intending to be famous, and destroying his own fame all the while by his vainglory and haste. Then, to retrieve his losses, he hit upon the peopling of Florida, which thou and I will see done some day, by God's blessing, for I and some good friends of mine have an errand there as well as he. But he did not go about it as a loyal man, to advance the honour of his queen, but his own honour only, dreaming that he too should be a king, and was not ashamed to tell her Majesty that he had rather be sovereign of a molehill than the highest subject of an emperor.'

'They say,' said Mr Leigh, 'that he told her plainly he should be a prince before he died, and that she gave him one of her pretty quips in return.'

'I don't know that her Majesty had the best

of it. A fool is many times too strong for a wise man, by virtue of his thick hide. For when she said that she hoped she should hear from him in his new principality, "Yes sooth," says he, graciously enough. "And in what style?" asks she. "To our dear sister," says Stukely to which her clemency had nothing to reply, but turned away, as Mr Hurlough told me, laughing.

'Alas for him!' said gentle Mrs Leigh. 'Such self-conceit—and Heaven knows we hate the root of it in ourselves also—in this very daughter of self-will, and of that loud crying out about I, and me, and mine, which is the very bird-call for all devils, and the broad road which leads to death.'

'It will lead him to his,' said Sir Richard, 'God grant it be not upon Tower-hill! for since that Florida plot, and after that his hopes of Irish preferment came to nought, he who could not help himself by fair means has taken to foul ones, and gone over to Italy to the Pope, whose infallibility has not been proof against Stukely's wit, for he was seen his Holiness's closet counsellor, and, they say, his bosom friend, and made him give credit to his boasts that, with three thousand soldiers he would beat the English out of Ireland, and make the Pope's son king of it.'

'Ay, but,' said Mr Leigh, 'I suppose the Italians have the same fetch now as they had when I was there, to explain such ugly cases, namely, that the Pope is infallible only in doctrine and quoad Pope, while quoad hominem, he is even as others, or indeed, in general, a deal worse, so that the office, and not the man, may be glorified thereby. But where is Stukely now?'

'At Rome when last I heard of him, ruffling it up and down the Vatican as Baron Row, Viscount Murreugh, Earl Wexford, Marquis Lemster, and a title or two more, which have cost the Pope little, seeing that they never were his to give, and plotting, they say, some hare-brained expedition against Ireland by the help of the Spanish king, which must end in nothing but his shame and ruin. And now, my sweet hosts, I must call for serving-boy and lantern, and home to my bed in Bideford.'

And so Amyas Leigh went back to school, and Mr Orenham went his way to Plymouth again, and sailed for the Spanish Main.

CHAPTER II.

HOW AMYAS CAME HOME THE FIRST TIME

¹ Qui tacant homines, facient te siders notum.

² Qui pascit comitibus immemor esse sui.

Old Epigram on Drake.

Five years are past and gone. It is nine of the clock on a still, bright November morning; but the bells of Bideford church are still ringing for the daily service two hours after the usual time; and instead of going soberly according to wont,

cannot help breaking forth every five minutes into a jocund peal, and tumbling head over heels in ecstasies of joy. Bideford streets are a very flower-garden of all the colours, swarming with seamen and burghers, and burghers' wives and daughters, all in their holiday attire. Gallies are hung across the streets, and tapestries from every window. The ships in the pool are dressed in all their flags, and gave tuneful vents to their feelings by peals of ordnance of every size. Every stable is crammed with horses, and Sir Richard Grenville's house is like a very tavern, with eating and drinking, and unsaddling, and running to and fro of groom and serving-men. Along the little churchyard, packed full with women, streams all the gentle blood of North Devon,—tall and stately men, and fair ladies, worthy of the days when the gentry of England were by due right the leaders of the people, by personal prowess and beauty, as well as by intellect and education. And first, there is my lady Countess of Bath, whom Sir Richard Grenville is escorting, cap in hand (for her good Earl Bournier is in London with the Queen), and there are Ambassadors from beautiful Umberleigh, and Carys from more beautiful Clovelly, and Fortescues of Wear, and Fortescues of Buckland, and Fortescues from all quarters, and Coles from Slade, and Stukelys from Arlinton, and St Legers from Annery, and Coffins from Portledge, and even Copckitones from Eggesford, thirty miles away and lost, but not least (for almost all stop to give them place), Sir John Chichester of Raleigh, followed in single file, after the good old patriarchal fashion, by his eight daughters, and three of his five famous sons (one, to avenge his murdered brother, is fighting valiantly in Ireland, hereafter to rule there wisely also, as Lord Deputy and Baron of Belfast), and he muts at the gate his cousin of Arlington, and behind him a train of four daughters and nineteen sons, the last of whom has not yet passed the Town hall, while the first is at the Lychgate, who, laughing, make way for the elder though shorter branch of that most fruitful tree; and so on into the church, where all are placed according to their degrees, or at least as near as may be, not without a few sour looks, and shewings, and whisperings, from one high-born matron and another, till the churchwardens and sidesmen, who never had before so goodly a company to arrange, have hustled themselves hot, and red, and frantic, and end by imploring abjectly the help of the great Sir Richard himself to tell them who everybody is, and which is the elder branch, and which is the younger, and who carries eight quarterings in their arms, and who only four, and so prevent their setting at deadly feud half the fine ladies of North Devon, for the old men are all safe packed away in the corporation pews, and the young ones care only to get a place whence they may eye the ladies. And at last there is a silence, and a looking toward the door, and then distant music, flutes and hautboys, drums and trumpets, which come braying, and screaming,

and thundering merrily up to the very church doors, and then cease. and the churchwardens and sidesmen bustle down to the entrance, rods in hand, and there is a general whisper and rustle, not without glad tears and blessings from many a woman, and from some men also, as the wonder of the day enters, and the rector begins, not the morning service, but the good old thanksgiving after a victory at sea.

And what is it which has thus sent old Bideford wick with that 'goodly joy and pious mirth,' of which we now only retain traditions in our translation of the Psalms? Why are all eyes fixed, with greedy admiration, on those four weather-beaten mariners, decked out with knots and ribbons by loving hands, and yet more on that gigantic figure who walks before them, a heedless boy, and yet with the frame and stature of a Hercules, towering, like Saul of old, a head and shoulders above all the congregation, with his golden locks flowing down over his shoulders? And why, as the five go instinctively up to the altar, and there fall on their knees before the rails, are all eyes turned to the pew where Mrs. Leigh of Burroughs has hid her face between her hands, and her hood rustles and shakes to her joyful sobs? Because there was fellow-feeling of old in merry England, in county and in town; and these are Devon men, and men of Bideford, whose names are Amyas Leigh of Burroughs, John Slaveley, Michael Heard, and Jonas Marshall of Bideford, and Thomas Brand of Clovelly; and they, the first of all English mariners, have sailed round the world with Francis Drake, and are come hither to give God thanks.

It is a long story. To explain how it happened we must go back for a page or two, almost to the point from whence we started in the last chapter.

For somewhat more than a twelvemonth after Mr. Oxenham's departure, young Amyas had gone on quietly enough, according to promise, with the exception of certain occasional outbursts of fierceness common to all young male animals, and especially to boys of gay strength of character. His scholarship, indeed, progressed no better than before, but his home education went on healthily enough, and he was fast becoming, young as he was, a right good archer, and rider, and swordsman (after the old school of buckler practice), when his father, having gone down on business to the Exeter Assizes, caught (as was too common in those days) the goul-fever from the prisoners, sickened in the very court; and died within a week.

And now Mrs. Leigh was left to God and her own soul, with this young lion-cub in leash, to tame and train for this life and the life to come. She had loved her husband fervently and wholly. He had been often peevish, often melancholy, for he was a disappointed man, with an estate impoverished by his father's folly, and his own youthful ambition, which had led him up to Court, and made him waste his heart and his purse in following a vain shadow. He was one

of those men, moreover, who possess almost every gift except the gift of the power to use them, and though a scholar, a courtier, and a soldier, he had found himself, when he was past forty, without settled employment or aim in life, by reason of a certain shyness, pride, or delicate honour (call it which you will), which had always kept him from playing a winning game in that very world after whose prizes he hankered to the last, and on which he revenged himself by continual grumbling. At last, by his good luck, he met with a fair young Miss Poljanib, of Derbyshire, then about Queen Elizabeth's Court, who was as tired as he of the aims of the world, though she had seen less of them, and the two contrived to please each other so well, that though the queen grumbled a little, as usual, at the lady for marrying, and at the gentleman for adoring any one but her royal self, they got leave to vanish from the little Babylon at Whitehall, and settle in peace at Burroughs. In her he found a treasure, and he knew what he had found.

Mrs. Leigh was, and had been from her youth, one of those noble old English churchwomen, without superstition, and without severity, who are among the fairest features of that luminous time. There was a certain melancholy about her, nevertheless, for the recollections of her childhood carried her back to times when it was an awful thing to be a Protestant. She could remember among them, five and twenty years ago, the burning of poor blind Joan Waste at Derby, and of Mistress Joyce Lewis, too, like herself, a lady burn, and sometimes even now, up her nightly dreams, rage in her ears her mother's bitter cries to God, either to spare her that fiery torment, or to give her strength to bear it, as she whom she loved had borne it before her. For her mother, who was of a good family in Yorkshire, had been one of Queen Catherine's bedchamber women, and the bosom friend and disciple of Anne Askew. And she had sat in Smithfield, with blood curdled by horror, to see the hapless Countess, a month before the paragon of Henry's Court, carried in a chair (so crippled was she by the rack) to her fiery doom at the stake, beside her fellow-courtier, Mr. Lascelles, while the very heavens seemed to the shuddering mob around to speak their wrath and grief in solemn thunder peals, and heavy drops which hurried upon the quaking pile.

Therefore a sadness hung upon her all her life, and deepened in the days of Queen Mary, when, as a notorious Protestant, and heretic, she had had to hide for her life among the hills and caverns of the Peak, and was only saved by the love which her husband's tenants bore her, and by his bold declaration that, good Catholic as he was, he would run through the body any constable, justice, or priest, yea, bishop or cardinal, who dared to serve the Queen's warrant upon his wife.

So she escaped: but, as I said, a sadness hung upon her all her life, and the akin of that dark

mantle fell upon the young girl who had been the partner of her wanderings and hidings among the lonely hills, and who, after she was married, gave herself utterly up to God.

And yet in giving herself to God, Mrs Leigh gave herself to her husband, her children, and the poor of Northam town, and was none the less welcome to the Grenvilles, and Fortescues, and Chichesters, and all the gentle families round, who honoured her husband's talents, and enjoyed his wit. She accustomed herself to austerities, which often called forth the kindly rebukes of her husband, and yet she did so without one superstitious thought of appeasing the fancied wrath of God, or of giving Him pleasure (base thought) by any pain of hers, for her spirit had been trained in the freest and loftiest doctrines of Luther's school, and that little mystic *All-Deutsch Theologus* (to whom the great Reformer said that he owed more than to any book, save the Bible and St. Augustine) was her counsellor and comforter by day and night.

And now, at little past forty, she was left a widow—lovely still in face and figure, and still more lovely from the divine calm which brooded, like the dove of peace and the Holy Spirit of God (which indeed it was), over every look, and word, and gesture, a sweetness which had been ripened by storm, as well as by sunshine, which this world had not given, and could not take away. No wonder that Sir Richard and Lady Grenville loved her, no wonder that her children worshipped her, no wonder that the young Amyas, when the first burst of grief was over, and he knew again where he stood, felt that a new life had begun for him, that his mother was no more to think and act for him only, but that he must think and act for his mother. And so it was, that on the very day after his father's funeral, when school-hours were over, instead of coming straight home, he walked boldly into Sir Richard Grenville's house, and asked to see his godfather.

'You must be my father now, sir,' said he firmly.

And Sir Richard looked at the boy's broad strong face, and swore a great and holy oath, like Glasgerion's, 'by oak, and ash, and thorn,' that he would be a father to him, and a brother to his mother, for Christ's sake. And Lady Grenville took the boy by the hand, and walked home with him to Burrough, and there the two fair women fell on each other's necks, and wept together, the one for the loss which had been, the other, as by a prophetic instinct, for the like loss which was to come to her also. For the sweet St. Leger knew well that her husband's fiery spirit would never leave his body on a peaceful bed, but that death (as he prayed almost nightly that it might) would find him sword in hand, upon the field of duty and of fame. And there those two vowed everlasting sisterhood, and kept their vow, and after that all things went on at Burrough as before, and Amyas rode, and shot, and boxed, and wandered

on the quay at Sir Richard's side, for Mrs. Leigh was too wise a woman to alter one tittle of the training which her husband had thought best for his younger boy. It was enough that her elder son had of his own accord taken to that form of life in which she in her secret heart would fain have moulded both her children. For Frank, God's wedding gift to that pure love of hers, had won himself honour at home and abroad, first at the school at Buleford; then at Exeter College, where he had become a friend of Sir Philip Sidney's, and many another young man of rank and promise, and next, in the summer of 1572, on his way to the University of Heidelberg, he had gone to Paris, with (luckily for him) letters of recommendation to Walsingham, at the English Embassy, by which letters he not only fell in a second time with Philip Sidney, but saved his own life (as Sidney did his) in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day. At Heidelberg he had stayed two years, winning fresh honour from all who knew him, and resisting all Sidney's entreaties to follow him into Italy. For, seeming to be a burden to his parents, he had become at Heidelberg tutor to two young German princes, whom, after living with them at their father's house for a year or more, he at last, to his own great delight, took with him down to Padua, 'to perfect them,' as he wrote home, 'according to his insufficiency, in all princely studies.' Sidney was now returned to England, but Frank found friends enough without him, such letters of recommendation and diplomas did he carry from I know not how many princes, magnificoes, and learned doctors, who had fallen in love with the learning, modesty, and virtue of the fair young Englishman. And ere Frank returned to Germany he had satiated his soul with all the wonders of that wondrous land. He had talked over the art of sonnetteering with Tasso, the art of history with Sarni, he had listened, between awe and incredulity, to the daring theories of Galileo, he had taken his pupils to Venice, that their portraits might be painted by Paul Veronese, he had seen the palaces of Palladio, and the Merchant Princes on the Rialto, and the Argosies of Ragusa, and all the wonders of that meeting-point of east and west, he had watched Tintoretto's mighty hand 'hurling tempestuous glories o'er the scene'; and even, by dint of private intercession in high places, had been admitted to that sacred room where, with King silver beard and undimmed eye, amid a pantheon of his own creations, the ancient Titian, patriarch of art, still lingered upon earth, and told old tales of the Bellina, and Raffaele, and Michael Angelo, and the building of St. Peter's, and the fire at Venice, and the Sack of Rome, and of kings and warriors, statesmen and poets, long since gone to their account, and showed the sacred brush which Francis the First had stooped to pick up for him. And (licence forbidden to Sidney by his friend Langust) he had been to Rome, and seen (much to the scandal of good Protestants at home)

that 'right good fellow,' as Sidney calls him, who had not yet eaten himself to death, the Pope for the time being. And he had seen the frescoes of the Vatican, and heard Palestrina preside as chapel-master over the performance of his own music beneath the dome of St. Peter's, and fallen half in love with those luscious strains, till he was awakened from his dream by the recollection that beneath that same dome had gone up thanksgivings to the God of heaven for those blood-stained streets, and shrieking women, and heaps of insulted corpses, which he had beheld in Paris on the night of St. Bartholomew. At last, a few months before his father died, he had taken back his pupils to their homes in Germany, from whence he was dismissed, as he wrote, with rich gifts, and then Mrs. Leigh's heart beat high, at the thought that the wanderer would return. But, alas! within a month after his father's death, came a long letter from Frank, describing the Alps, and the valleys of the Waldenses (with whose Barbes he had had much talk about the late horrible persecutions), and setting forth how at Padua he had made the acquaintance of that illustrious scholar and light of the age, Stephanus Parmenius (commonly called from his native place, Budeus), who had visited Geneva with him, and heard the disputations of their most learned doctors, which both he and Budeus disliked for their hard judgments both of God and man, as much as they admired them for their subtlety, being themselves, as became Italian students, Platonists of the school of Ficinus and Pico Mirandolensis. So wrote Master Frank, in a long contentious letter, full of Latin quotations; but the letter never reached the eyes of him for whose delight it had been penned, and the widow had to weep over it alone, and to weep more bitterly than ever at the conclusion, in which, with many excuses, Frank said that he had, at the special entreaty of the said Budeus, set out with him down the Danube stream, to Buda, that he might, before finishing his travels, make experience of that learning for which the Hungarians were famous throughout Europe. And after that, though he wrote again and again to the father whom he fancied living, no letter in return reached him from home for nearly two years, till, fearing some mishap, he hurried back to England, to find his mother a widow, and his brother Amyas gone to the South Seas with Captain Drake of Plymouth. And yet, even then, after years of absence, he was not allowed to remain at home. For Sir Richard, to whom idleness was a thing horrible and unrighteous, would have him up and doing again before six months were over, and sent him off to Court to Lord Hunsdon.

There, being as delicately beautiful as his brother was huge and strong, he had speedily, by Carey's interest and that of Sidney and his Uncle Leicester, found entrance into some office in the Queen's household, and he was now basking in the full sunshine of Court favour,

and fair ladies' eyes, and all the chivalries and enthusiasms of Gloriana's fairyland, and the fast friendship of that bright meteor Sidney, who had returned with honour in 1577, from the delicate mission on behalf of the German and Belgian Protestants, on which he had been sent to the Court of Vienna, under colour of condoling with the new Emperor Rodolph on his father's death. Frank found him when he himself came to Court in 1579 as lovely and loving as ever, and, at the early age of twenty-five, acknowledged as one of the most remarkable men of Europe, the patron of all men of letters, the counsellor of warriors and statesmen, and the confident and advocate of William of Orange, Languet, Plessis du Moynay, and all the Protestant leaders on the Continent, and found, moreover, that the son of the poor Devon squire was as welcome as ever to the friendship of nature's and fortune's most favoured, yet most unapologetic minion.

Poor Mrs. Leigh, as one who had long since learned to have no self, and to live not only for her children, but *in* them, submitted without a murmur, and only said, smiling, to her stern friend—'You took away my mastiff pup, and now you must needs have my fair greyhound also.'

'Would you have your fair greyhound, dear lady, grow up a tall and true Cotswold dog, that can pull down a stack of ten, or one of those smooth-skinned poppets which the Florence ladies lead about with a rug of bells round its neck, and a flannel farthingale over its loins?'

Mrs. Leigh submitted, and was rewarded after a few months by a letter, sent through Sir Richard, from none other than Gloriana herself, in which she thanked her for 'the loan of that most delicate and flawless crystal, the soul of her excellent son,' with more praises of him than I have room to insert, and finished by exalting the poor mother above the famed Cornelia, 'for those sons, whom she called her jewels, she only showed, yet kept them to herself. But you, madam, having two as precious, I doubt not, as were ever that Roman dame's, have, beyond her courage, lent them both to your country and to your queen, who therein holds herself indebted to you for that which, if God give her grace, she will repay as becomes both her and you.' Which epistle the sweet mother bedewed with holy tears, and laid by in the cedar-box which held her household gods, by the side of Frank's unnumerable diplomas and letters of recommendation, the Latin whereof she was always spelling over (although she understood not a word of it), in hopes of finding, here and there, that precious *excellentissimus Noster Franciscus Leighus Anglus*, which was all in all to the mother's heart.

But why did Amyas go to the South Seas? Amyas went to the South Seas for two causes, each of which has, before now, sent many a lad to far worse places. First, because of an old schoolmaster, secondly, because of a young

beauty. I will take them in order and explain.

Vindex Brimblecombe, whilom servitor of Exeter College, Oxford (commonly called Sir Vindex, after the fashion of the times), was, in those days, master of the grammar-school of Rydeford. He was, at root, a godly and kind-hearted pedant enough, but, like most school-masters in the old flogging days, had his heart pretty well hardened by long, baneful licence to inflict pain at will on those weaker than himself, a power healthful enough for the victim (for, doubtless, flogging is the best of all punishments, being not only the shortest, but also a mere bodily and animal, and not, like most of our new-fangled 'humanitarian' punishments, a spiritual and fiendish torture), but for the executioner pretty certain to eraticate, from all but the noblest spirits, every trace of chivalry and tenderness for the weak, as well, often, as all self-control and command of temper. Be that as it may, old Sir Vindex had heart enough to feel that it was now his duty to take especial care of the fatherless boy to whom he tried to teach his *qua, quæ, quod* but the only outcome of that new sense of responsibility was a rapid increase in the number of floggings, which rose from about two a week to one per diem, not without consequences to the pedagogue himself.

For all this while, Amyas had never for a moment lost sight of his darling desire for a sea-life, and when he could not wander on the quay and stare at the shipping, or go down to the pebble-ridge at Northam, and there sit, devouring, with hungry eyes, the great expanse of ocean, which seemed to woo him outward into boundless space, he used to console himself, in school-hours, by drawing ships and imaginary charts upon his slate, instead of minding his 'humanities.'

Now it befell, upon an afternoon, that he was very busy at a map, of bird's-eye view of an island, whereon was a great castle, and at the gate thereof a dragon, terrible to see, while, in the foreground came that which was meant for a gallant ship, with a great flag aloft, but which, by reason of the forest of lances with which it was crowded, looked much more like a porcupine carrying a sign-post, and, at the roots of those lances, many little round o's, whereby were signified the heads of Amyas and his schoolfellows who were about to slay that dragon, and rescue the beautiful princess who dwelt in that enchanted tower. To behold which marvel of art, all the other boys at the same desk must needs club their heads together, and with the more security, because Sir Vindex, as was his custom after dinner, was lying back in his chair, and slept the sleep of the just.

But when Amyas, by special instigation of the evil spirit who haunts successful artists, proceeded further to introduce, heedless of perspective, a rock, on which stood the lively portraiture of Sir Vindex—nose, spectacles, gown, and all; and in his hand a brandished

rod, while out of his mouth a-label shrieked after the runaways, 'You come back!' while a similar label replied from the gallant bark, 'Good-bye, master!' the shoving and tittering rose to such a pitch, that Cerberus awoke, and demanded sternly what the noise was about. To which, of course, there was no answer.

'You, of course, Leigh! Come up, sir, and show me your exertation.'

Now of Amyas's exertation not a word was written, and, moreover, he was in the very article of putting the last touches to Mr. Brimblecombe's portrait. Whereon, to the astonishment of all hearers, he made answer—

'All in good time, sir!' and went on drawing.

'In good time, sir!' Insolent, *ex et vapule!*

But Amyas went on drawing.

'Come hither, sirrah, or I'll flay you alive.'

'Wait a bit!' answered Amyas.

The old gentleman jumped up, ferula in hand, and darted across the school, and saw himself upon the fatal slate.

'*Proh flagitium!*' what have we here, villain?' and clutching at his victim, he raised the cane. Whereupon, with a serene and cheerful countenance, up rose the mighty form of Amyas Leigh, a head and shoulders above his tormentor, and that slate descended on the bald coxcomb of Sir Vindex Brimblecombe, with so shrewd a blow, that slate and pate crackled at the same instant, and the poor pedagogue dropped to the floor, and lay for dead.

After which Amyas arose, and walked out of the school, and so quietly home, and having taken counsel with himself, went to his mother, and said, 'Please, mother, I've broken school-master's head.'

'Broken his head, then wicked boy!' shrieked the poor widow, 'what shalt do that for?'

'I can't tell,' said Amyas penitently, 'I couldn't help it. It looked so smooth, and bald, and round, and—you know!'

'I know! O wicked boy! thou hast given place to the devil, and now, perhaps, thou hast killed him.'

'Killed the devil?' asked Amyas, hopefully but doubtfully.

'No, killed the schoolmaster, sirrah! Is he dead?'

'I don't think he's dead, his coxcomb sounded too hard for that. But had not I better go and tell Sir Richard?'

The poor mother could hardly help laughing, in spite of her terror, at Amyas's perfect coolness (which was not in the least infant for insolence), and being at her wife's end, sent him, as usual, to his godfather.

Amyas rehearsed his story again, with pretty nearly the same exclamations, to which he gave pretty nearly the same answers, and then—

'What was he going to do to you, then, sirrah?'

'Flog me, because I could not write my exercise, and so drew a picture of him instead.'

'What! art afraid of being flogged?'

'Not a bit, besides, I'm too much accustomed

to it, but I was busy, and he was in such a desperate hurry, and, oh, sir, if you had but seen his bald head, you would have broken it yourself!

Now Sir Richard had, twenty years ago, in like place, and very much in like manner, broken the head of Vindex Brimblecombe's father, schoolmaster in his day, and therefore had a precedent to direct him, and he answered—

'Amias, sirrah! those who cannot obey will never be fit to rule. If thou canst not keep discipline now, thou wilt never make a company or a crew keep it when thou art grown to that mind that, sirrah!'

'Yes,' said Amias.

'Then go back to school this moment, sir, and be flogged.'

'Very well,' said Amias, considering that he had got off very cheaply; while Sir Richard, as soon as he was out of the room, lay back in his chair, and laughed till he cried again.

So Amias went back, and said that he was come to be flogged, whereon the old schoolmaster, whose pate had been plastered meanwhile, wept tears of joy over the returning prodigal, and then gave him such a swateling as he did not forget for eight-and-forty hours.

That evening Sir Richard sent for old Vindex, who entered, trembling, cap in hand, and having primed him with a cup of sack, said—

'Well, Mr Schoolmaster! My godson has been somewhat too much for you to day. There are a couple of nobles to pay the doctor.'

'O Sir Richard, *gratias tibi et Domini!* but the boy hits shrewdly hard. Nevertheless I have repaid him in inverse kind, and set him an imposition, to learn me one of Phædrus his fables, Sir Richard, if you do not think it too much.'

'Which, then? The one about the man who brought up a bear's cub, and was eaten by him in play at last?'

'Ah, Sir Richard! you have always a merry wit. But, indeed, the boy is a brave boy, and a quick boy, Sir Richard but more forgetful than Letho, and—*supra te loquor*—it were well if he were away, for I shall never see him again without my head aching. Moreover, he put my son Jack upon the fire last Wednesday, as you would put a football, though he is a year older, your worship, because, he said, he looked so like a roasting pig, Sir Richard.'

'Alas, poor Jack!'

'And what's more, your worship, he is *pur-nux, bellicosus, gladiator*, a fire eater and swash-buckler, beyond all Christian measure, a very smacking Entellus, Sir Richard, and will do to death some of her Majesty's hedges ere long, if he be not wisely curbed. It was but a month ago that he bemoaned himself, I hear, as Alexander did, because there were no more worlds to conquer, saying that it was a pity he was so strong; for, now he had thrashed all the Bideford lads, he had no sport left, and

so, as my Jack tells me, last Tuesday week he fell upon a young man of Barnstaple, Sir Richard, a hoiser's man, sir, and *plebeus* (which I consider unfit for one of his blood), and, moreover, a man full grown, and as big as either of us (Vindex stood five feet four in his high-heeled shoes), and smote him clean over the quay into the mud, because he said that there was a prettier maid in Barnstaple (your worship will forgive my speaking of such toys, to which my fidelity compels me) than ever Bideford could show, and then offered to do the same to any man who dare say that Mistress Rose Salterne, his Worship the Mayor's daughter, was not the fairest lass in all Devon.'

'Eh? Say that over again, my good sir,' quoth Sir Richard, who had thus arrived, as we have seen, at the second count of the indictment. 'I say, good sir, whence dost thou hear all these pretty stories?'

'My son Jack, Sir Richard, my son Jack, *ingenus vultus puer*.'

'But not, it seems, *ingenus pudoris*. Tell thee what, Mr Schoolmaster, no wonder if thy son gets put on the fire, if thou employ him as a tale-bearer. But that is the way of all pedagogues and their sons, by which they train the lads up eavesdroppers and savor curriers, and prepare them—sirrah, do you hear?—for a much more lasting and hotter fire than that which has scorched thy son Jack's nether-tackle. Do you mark me, sir?'

The poor pedagogue, thus gummingly caught in his own trap, stood trembling before his patron, who, as hereditary head of the Bridge Trust, which endowed the school and the rest of the Bideford chafties, could, by a turn of his finger, sweep him forth with the besom of destruction, and he gasped with terror as Sir Richard went on—

'Therefore, mind you, Sir Schoolmaster, unless you shall promise me never to hint word of what has passed between us two, and that neither you nor yours shall henceforth carry tales of my godson, or speak his name within a day's march of Mistress Salterne's, look to it, if I do not—'

What was to be done in default was not spoken, for down went poor old Vindex on his knees—

'O Sir Richard! *Excellentissime, immo preclarissime Domine et Senator*. I promise! (1) sir, *Miles et Eques* of the Garter, Bath, and Golden Fleece, consider your dignities, and my old age—and my great family—nine children—O Sir Richard, and eight of them girls—Do eagles war with mice? says the ancient.'

'Thy large family, eh? How old is that fat-witted son of thine?'

'Sixteen, Sir Richard, but that is not his fault, indeed!'

'Nay, I suppose he would be still sucking his thumb if he dared—get up, man, get up and seat yourself.'

'Heaven forbid!' murmured poor Vindex with deep humility.

'Why is not the rogue at Oxford, with a murrain on him, instead of lurching about here carrying tales, and ogling the maidens?'

'I had hoped, Sir Richard—and therefore I said it was not his fault—but there was never a servitorship at Exeter open.'

'Go to, man—go to! I will speak to my brethren of the Trust, and to Oxford he shall go this autumn, or else to Exeter gaol, for a strong rogue, and a masterless man. Do you hear?'

'Hear!—oh, sir, yes' and return thanks. Jack shall go, Sir Richard, doubt it not—I were mad else, and, Sir Richard, may I go too?'

And therewith Vindex vanished, and Sir Richard enjoyed a second mighty laugh, which brought in Lady Grenville, who possibly had overheard the whole, for the first words she said were—

'I think, my sweet life, we had better go up to Burrough.'

So to Burrough they went, and after much talk, and many tears, matters were so concluded that Amyas Leigh found himself riding joyfully towards Plymouth, by the side of Sir Richard, and being handed over to Captain Drake, vanished for three years from the good town of Bideford.

And now he is returned in triumph, and the observed of all observers, and looks round and round, and sees all faces whom he expects, except one, and that the one which he had rather see than his mother's! He is not quite sure of his own shame on himself!

And now the prayers being ended, the Rector ascends the pulpit, and begins his sermon on the text—

'The heaven and the heaven of heavens are the Lord's; the whole earth hath he given to the children of men;' deducting therefrom (raftily, to the exceeding pleasure of his hearers, the iniquity of the Spaniards in dispossessing the Indians, and in arrogating to themselves the sovereignty of the tropic seas, the vanity of the Pope of Rome in pretending to bestow on them the new countries of America, and the justice, valour, and glory of Mr Drake and his expedition, as testified by God's miraculous protection of him and his, both in the Straits of Magellan, and in his battle with the Galleon, and last, but not least, upon the rock by Celebes, when the *Pelican* lay for hours firmly fixed, and was floated off unhurt, as it were by miracle, by a sudden shift of wind.

Ay, smiles reader, if you will, and, perhaps, there was matter for a smile in that honest sermon, interlarded, as it was, with scraps of Greek and Hebrew, which no one understood, but every one expected as their right (for a preacher was nothing then who could not prove himself 'a good Latiner'), and graced, moreover, by a somewhat peevish and lengthy refutation from Scripture of Dan Horace's cockney horror of the sea—

'Ull' robar et eo triplex, etc.

and his infidel and ungodly slander against the 'unpious rates,' and their crews.

Smile, if you will: but those were days (and there were never less superstitious ones) in which Englishmen believed in the living God, and were not ashamed to acknowledge, as a matter of course, His help and providence, and calling, in the matters of daily life, which we now in our covert Atheism term 'secular and casual'; and when, the sermon ended, the Communion Service had begun, and the bread and the wine were given to those five mariners, every gallant gentleman who stood near them (for the press would not allow of more) knelt and received the elements with them as a thing of course, and then rose to join with heart and voice not merely in the *Gloria in Excelsis*, but in 'Gloria Te Deum,' which was the closing act of all. And no sooner had the clerk given out the first verse of that great hymn, than it was taken up by five hundred voices within the church, in bass and tenor, treble and alto (for every one could sing in those days, and the west country folk, as now, were fuller than any of innards); the chaunt was caught up by the crowd outside, as I rang away over roof and river, up to the woods of Amory, and down to the marshes of the Taw, in wave on wave of harmony. And as it died away, the shipping in the river made answer with their thunder, and the crowd stemmed out again toward the Bridge Head, whither Sir Richard Grenville, and Sir John Chicheater, and Mr Salterne, the Mayor, led the two heroes of the day to await the pageant which had been prepared in honour of them. And as they went by, there were few in the crowd who did not press forward to shake them by the hand, and not only them, but their parents and kinsfolk who walked behind, till Mrs Leigh, her stately joy quite broken down at last, could only answer between her sobs, 'Go along, good people—God a merry, go along!—and God send you all such sons!'

'God give me back mine!' cried an old red-cloaked dame in the crowd, and then, struck by some hidden impulse, she sprang forward, and catching hold of young Amyas's sleeve—

'Kind sir! dear sir! For Christ His sake answer a poor old widow woman!'

'What is it, dame?' quoth Amyas, gently enough.

'Did you see my son to the Indies?—my son Salvation?'

'Salvation?' replied he, with the air of one who recollected the name.

'Yes, sure, Salvation Yeo, of Clovelly. A tall man and black, and swearth awfully in his talk, the Lord forgave him!'

Amyas recollected now. It was the name of the sailor who had given him the wondrous horn five years ago.

'My good dame,' said he, 'the Indies are a very large place, and your son may be safe and sound enough there, without my having seen him. I knew one Salvation Yeo. But he must

have come with——. By the bye, godfather, has Mr. Oxenham come home?

There was a dead silence for a moment among the gentlemen round, and then Sir Richard said solemnly, and in a low voice, turning away from the old dame—

'Amyas, Mr. Oxenham has not come home, and from the day he sailed, no word has been heard of him and all his crew.'

'Oh, Sir Richard! and you kept me from sailing with him! Had I known this before I went into church, I had had one mercy more to thank God for.'

'Thank Him all the more in thy life, my child!' whispered his mother.

'And no news of him whatsoever!'

'None, but that the year after he sailed, a ship belonging to Andrew Barker, of Bristol, took out of a Spanish caravel, somewhere off the Honduras, his two brass guns, but whence they came the Spaniard knew not, having bought them at Nombre de Dios.'

'Yes!' cried the old woman; 'they brought home the guns and never brought home my boy!'

'They never saw your boy, mother,' said Sir Richard.

'But I've seen him! I saw him in a dream four years last Whitsuntide, as plain as I see you now, gentles, a-lying upon a rock, calling for a drop of water to cool his tongue, like Dives to the torment! Oh! dear me!' and the old dame wept bitterly.

'There is a rose noble for you!' said Mrs Leigh.

'And there another!' said Sir Richard. And in a few minutes four or five gold coins were in her hand. But the old dame did but look wonderingly at the gold a moment, and then—

'Ah! dear gentles, God's blessing on you, and Sir Cary's mighty good to me already, but God won't buy back childer! Oh! young gentleman! young gentleman! make me a promise, if you want God's blessing on you this day, bring me back my boy, if you find him sailing on the seas! Bring him back, and an old widow's blessing be on you!'

Amyas promised—what else could he do?—and the group hurried on, but the lad's heart was heavy in the midst of joy, with the thought of John Oxenham, as he walked through the churchyard, and down the short street which led between the ancient school and still more ancient town-house, to the head of the long bridge, across which the pageant, having arranged 'east-the-water,' was to deile, and then turn to the right along the quay.

However, he was bound in all courtesy to turn his attention now to the show which had been prepared in his honour; and which was really well enough worth seeing and hearing. The English were, in those days, an altogether dramatic people, ready and able, as in Bideford that day, to extemporise a pageant, a masque, or any effort of the Thespian art short of the

regular drama. For they were, in the first place, even down to the very poorest, a well-fed people, with fewer luxuries than we, but more abundant necessities, and while beef, ale, and good woollen clothes could be obtained in plenty, without overworking either body or soul, men had time to amuse themselves in something more intellectual than mere toying in pot-houses. Moreover, the half-century after the Reformation in England was one not merely of new intellectual freedom, but of immense animal good spirits. After years of dumb confusion and cruel persecution, a breathing-time had come. Mary and the fires of Smithfield had vanished together like a hideous dream, and the mighty shout of joy which greeted Elizabeth's entry into London, was the keynote of fifty glorious years, the expression of a new-found strength and freedom, which vented itself at home in drama and in song, abroad in mighty conquests, achieved with the laughing recklessness of boys at play.

So first, preceded by the wits, came along the bridge toward the town-hall, a device prepared by the good rector, who, standing by, acted as showman, and explained anxiously to the bystanders the import of a certain 'allegory,' wherein on a great banner was depicted Queen Elizabeth herself, who, in ample ruff and farthingale, a bible in one hand and a sword in the other, stood triumphant upon the necks of two sufficiently abject personages whose triple tiara and imperial crown proclaimed them the Pope and the King of Spain; while a label, issuing from her royal mouth, informed the world that—

'By land and sea a virgin queen I reign,
And spurs to dust both Antichrist and Spain.'

Which having been received with due applause, a well-bedizened lad, having in his cap as a jossy 'Loyalty,' stepped forward, and delivered himself of the following verses—

'Oh, great Eliza! oh, world famous crew!
Which shall I hail more blest, your queen or you?
While without other either falls to wrack,
And light must eys, or eyes their light must lack
She without you, a diamond sunk in mine,
Its worth unprized, to self alone must shine,
You without her, like hands bereft of head,
Like Ajax rage, by blindfold lust misled
She light, you eyes, she head, and you the hands,
In fair proportion knit by heavenly bands,
Servants in queen, and queen in servants blest,
Your only glory, how to serve her best,
And here how best the adventurous might to gush
Which knows no check of foemen, wind, or tide,
So fair Eliza's spotless fame may fly
Triumphant round the globe, and shake the astounded sky!'

With which sufficiently bad verses Loyalty, passed on, while my Lady Bath hinted to Sir Richard, not without reason, that the poet, in trying to exalt both parties, had very sufficiently snubbed both, and intimated, that it was hardly safe for country wits to attempt that euphuistic, pantheistic, and delicately concealed vein, whose proper fountain was in Whitehall. However, on went Loyalty, very well pleased with himself, and next, amid much cheering, two great

tinsel fish, a salmon, and a trout, symbolical of the wealth of Torridge, waddled along, by means of two human legs and a staff apiece, which protruded from the fishes' stomachs. They drew (or seemed to draw, for half the 'prentices in the town were shoving it behind, and cheering on the panting monarchs of the flood) a bar wherein sat, amid reeds and river-flags, three or four pretty girls in robes of gray-lilac spangled with gold, their heads wreathed one with a crown of the sweet bog-myrtle, another with hops and white convolvulus, the third with pale heather and golden fern. They stopped opposite Amyas, and she of the myrtle wreath, rising and bowing to him and the company, began with a pretty blush to say her say —

'Hither from my moonland home,
Nymph of Torridge, proud I come,
Leaving fen and fuzzy brake,
Haunt of eft and spotted snake,
Where to fill mine urns I use,
Dally with Atlantic dews,
While beauteous reedy flood
Wink sleek leads her paddling brood
For this morn, as Phœbus gay
Chased through heaven the night mist gray,
Close beside me, pranked in pride,
Sister Tamar rose, and cried,
'Sluggard, up! 'Tis holiday,
In the lowlands far away
Hark! how peen'd Plymouth bells,
Wandering up through mazy dells,
Call me down, with snubs to hail,
My darling lirake's returning sail.'
'Thine alone?' I answer'd 'Nay,
Mine as well the joy to-day
Hears a train'd on Northern wave,
To that Argosy I gave.
Lent to thee, they roam'd the main,
Give me, nymph, my sons again!
'Gn, they wait thee, Tamar cried,
Southward bounding from my side
(Oad I rose, and at my call,
Came my Nalada, one and all
Dundling of the mountain sky,
Leaving Dian's choir on high,
Down her cataracts laughing loud,
Or kinest leapt from crag and cloud,
Larding thauy a nymph, who dwells
Where wild deer drink in ferny dells,
While the Oreade as they pass
Peep'd from bridle Tors aghast.
By alder copse, sliding slow
Knee deep in flowers came gentler Ye
And paused awhile her locks to twine
With musky hops and white woodbine,
Then joined the silver fogged hand,
Which eluded down my golden sand,
By dappled park, and harbour shaly,
Haunt of love torn knight and lady,
My thrice renowned sons to greet,
With rustic song and pageant meet.
For joy! the griled robe around
Eliza's name henceforth shall sound,
Whose venturous fleets to conquest start,
Where'er and once the seaman's chart,
While: Irking Sol his steps shall count
Henceforth Linn Thule's western mount,
And lead new rulers round the seas
From farthest Casatides
For found is now the golden tree,
S'deal'd the Atlantic mystery,
Fluck'd the dragon guarded fruit,
While around the charmed rook,
Wailing loud, the Hen erids
Watch their warder's drooping lids
Low in lies with grisly wound,
While the sorceress triple crown'd
In her scarlet robe doth shield him,
Till her cunning spells have heal'd him

Ye, meanwhile, around the earth
Bear the prize of manful worth:
Yet a nobler meed than gold
Waits for Albion's children bold,
Great Eliza's virgin hand
Welcomes you to Fairy land,
While your native Naiads bring
Nativa wreaths as offering
Simple though their show may be,
Britain's worship in them see.
'Tis not price, nor outward fairness,
Gives the victor's palm its rareness
Simplest tokens can impart
Noble throb to noble heart
Gracia, prize thy parsley crown,
Least thy laurel, Caesar's town,
Moorland myrtle still shall be
Badge of Devon's Chivalry!

And so ending, she took the wreath of fragrant gale from her own head, and stooping from the car, placed it on the head of Amyas Leigh, who made answer—

'There is no place like home, my fair mistress, and no scent to my taste like this old home scent in all the spiro-islands that I ever sailed by!'

'Her song was not so bad,' and Sir Richard to Lady Bath—'but how came she to hear Plymouth bells at Tamar head, full fifty miles way! That's too much of a poet's licence, is it not?

'The river-nymphs, as daughters of Oceanus, and thus of immortal parentage are born'd to possess organs of more than mortal keenness, but, as you say, the song was not so bad—rudite, as well as prettily conceived—and, saving for a certain rustical simplicity and monosyllabic baldness, snacks rather of the for's of Castaly than those of Torridge.'

So spake my Lady Bath, for whom Sir Richard readily answered not, for she was a terribly learned member of the college of critics, and disputed even with Sidney's sister the chiefancy of the Euphuists, so Sir Richard answered not, but answer was made for him.

'Since the whole choir of Muses, madam, have migrated to the Court of Whitehall, no wonder if some dews of Parnassus should fertilise at times even our Devon moors.'

The speaker was a tall and slim young man, some five-and-twenty years old, of so rare and delicate a beauty, that it seemed that some Greek statue, or rather one of those pensive and pious knights whom the old German artists took delight to paint, had condescended to tread awhile this work-day earth in living flesh and blood. The forehead was very lofty and smooth, the eyebrows thin and greatly arched (the envious gallants whispered that something at least of their curve was due to art, as was also the exceeding smoothness of those delicate cheeks). The face was somewhat long and thin, the nose aquiline, and the languid mouth showed, perhaps, too much of the ivory upper teeth, but the most striking point of the speaker's appearance was the extraordinary brilliancy of his complexion, which shamed with its whiteness that of all fair ladies around, save where open on each cheek a bright red spot gave warning, as did the long thin neck and

the taper hands, of sad possibilities, perhaps not far off, possibilities which all saw with an inward sigh, except she whose doting glances, as well as her resemblance to the fair youth, proclaimed her at once his mother, Mrs. Leigh herself.

Master Frank, for he it was, was dressed in the very extravagance of the fashion,—not so much from vanity, as from that delicate instinct of self-respect which would keep some men spruce and spotless from one year's end to another upon a desert island, 'for,' as Frank used to say in his sententious way, 'Mr. Frank Leigh at least beholds me, though none else be by, and why should I be more disconcerted to him than I permit others to be? Be sure that he who is a Goliath in his own company will, sooner or later, become a Goliath in that of his friends.'

So Mr. Frank was arrayed apothecally, but after the latest fashion of Milan, not in trunk hose and slashed sleeves, nor in 'French standing collar, treble quadruple dardanian ruff, or still-necked rabato, that had more arches for pride, propped up with wire and timber, than five London Bridges,' but in a close-fitting and perfectly plain suit of dove colour, which set off cunningly the delicate proportions of his figure, and the delicate hue of his complexion, which was shaded from the sun by a broad dove-coloured Spanish hat, with feather to match, lopped up over the right ear with a pearl brooch, and therein a crownlet of, supposed by the dunces of Bideford to stand for Elizabeth, which was whispered to be the gift of some most illustrious hand. This same looping up was not without good reason and purpose—pre-emptive, thereby all the world had full view of a beautiful little ear, which looked as if it had been cut of cameo, and made, as my Lady Ruth once told him, 'to hearken only to the music of the sycamore, or to the chants of cherubim.' Behind the said ear was stuck a fresh rose, and the golden hair was all drawn smoothly back and round to the left temple, whence, tied with a pink ribbon in a great true lover's knot, a mighty love lock, 'curled as it had been laid in press,' rolled down low upon his bosom. Oh, Frank! Frank! have you consented on purpose to break the hearts of all Bideford daughters? And if so, did you expect to further that triumph by dying that pretty little pointed laurel (with shame I repeat it) of a bright vermillion? But we know you better, Frank, and so does your mother, and you are but a misquenching angel after all, in spite of your knots and your perfumes, and the gold chain round your neck which a German princess gave you, and the emerald ring on your right fore-finger which Hattai gave you, and the pair of pearl-fanned gloves in your kit which Sidney's sister gave you, and the silver-hilted Toledo which an Italian marquis gave you on a certain occasion of which you never choose to talk, like a prudent and modest gentleman as you are, but of which the gossip talk, of course, all the more, and

whisper that you saved his life from bravoes—a dozen, at the least, and had that sword for your reward, and might have had his beautiful sister's hand beside, and I know not what else, but that you had so many lady-loves already that you were loth to burden yourself with a fresh one. That, at least, we know to be a lie, fair Frank, for your heart is as pure this day as when you knelt in your little cell at Burrough, and said—

'Four corners to my bed,
Four angels round my head,
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on.'

And who could doubt it (if, being pure themselves, they have instinctive sympathy with what is pure), who ever looked into those great deep blue eyes of yours, 'the black fringed curtains of whose azure lids,' usually slow and quiet as if in deepest thought, you raise slowly, almost wonderingly each time you speak, as if awakening from some fair dream whose home is rather in your Platonic 'eternal world of suprasensible forms,' than on that work-day earth wherein you in veritable acquit yourself so well? There—I must stop describing you, or I shall catch the infection of your own Enthusiasm and talk of you as you would have talked of Saladyr or of Spenser, or of that Swan of Avon, whose song had just begun when yours—but I will not anticipate, my Lady Bath is waiting to give you her rejoinder.

'Ah, my silver-tongued scholar' and are you, then, the poet? or have you been drawing on the inexhaustible bank of your friend Raleigh, or my cousin Sidney? or has our new Cygnet Immerito lent you a few unpublished leaves from some fresh Shepherd's Calendar?

'Had either, madam, of that cynical trial been within call of my most humble importunities, your ears had been delectate with far nobler melody.'

'But got our eyes with fairer faces, eh? Well, you have chosen your nymphs, and had good store from whence to pick, I doubt not. Few young Dulcianas round but must have been glad to take service under so renowned a captain.'

'The only difficulty, gracious Countess, has been to know where to fix the wandering choice of my bewildered eyes, where all alike are fair, and all alike famed.'

'We understand,' said she, smiling—

'Din Cupid, choosing midst his mother's grace
Himself more fair, made scorn of fairest faces.'

The young scholar capped her flourish forthwith, and bowing to her with a meaning look,

'Then, Goddess, turn, he cried, "and veil thy light,
Blinded by them, what eyes can choose to fight."

'Go, amey sir, and my lady, in high glee
'The pageant stays your sportive pleasure.'

And away went Mr. Frank as master of the revels, to bring up the 'juventices' pageant, while, for his sake, the nymph of Torrington was forgotten for awhile by all young ladies, and

inset young gentlemen and his mother heaved a deep sigh, which Lady Bath overheard—

'What! in the dumps, good maiden, while all are rejoicing in your joy? Are you afraid that we court-dames shall turn your young Adonis' brain for him?'

'I do, indeed, fear lest your condescension should make him forget that he is only a poor squire's orphan.'

'I will warrant him never to forget aught that he should recollect,' said my Lady Bath

And she spoke truly. But soon Frank's silver voice was heard calling out—

'Room there, good people, for the gallant 'prentice lads!'

And on they came, headed by a giant of buckram and pasteboard armour, forth of whose stomach looked, like a clock-face in a steeple, a human visage, to be greeted, as was the fashion then, by a volley of quips and puns from high and low

Young Mr William Cary, of Clovelly, who was the wit of those parts, opened the fire by asking him whether he were Goliath, Hognagog, or Grantorto in the romance—for giants' names always began with a G. To which the giant's stomach answered pretty surly—

'Mine don't, I begin with an O'

'Then thou criest out before thou art hurt, O cowardly giant!'

'Let me out, lads,' quoth the irascible visage, struggling in his buckram prison, 'and I soon show him whether I be a coward!'

'Nay, if thou gettest out of thyself, thou wouldst be beside thyself, and so wert but a mad giant!'

'And that were pity,' said Lady Bath, 'for by the romances, giants have never overmuch wit to spare.'

'Mercy, dear Lady!' said Frank, 'and let the giant begin with an O.'

'A—'

'A false start, giant! you were to begin with an O.'

'I'll make you end with an O, Mr William Cary!' roared the toasty tower of buckram

'And so I do, for I end with "Fico!"'

'Be mollified, sweet giant,' said Frank, 'and spare the rash youth of yon foolish Knight. Shall elephants catch flies, or Hurlo-Thurlo stain his club with brains of Dagonet the jester? Be mollified; leave thy caverned grumbings, like Etna when its windy wrath is past, and discourse eloquently from thy central omphalos, like Pythoness ventriloquising!'

'If you do begin laughing at me too, Mr Leigh—' said the giant's clock-face, in a piteous tone.

'I laugh not. Art thou not Ordulf the earl, and I thy humblest squire? Speak up, my Lord, your cousin, my Lady Bath, commands you.'

And at last the giant began—

'A giant I, Earl Ordulf men me call,—
Gaiest Paynim foes Devon's champion tall,
In single fight six thousand Turks I slew,

Pull'd off a lion's head, and ate it too
With one shrewd blow, to let Saint Edward be,
I smote the gates of Exeter in twain,
Till aged grown, by angels warn'd in dream,
I built an abbey fair by Tavy stream
But treacherous time hath tripped my gables up,
The staunch old hound must yield to stauncher pup,
Here's one so tall as I, and twice so bold,
Where I took only cuffs, takes good red gold
From pole to pole resound his wondrous works,
Who slew more Spaniards than I ere slew Turk,
I strode across the Tavy stream but he
Stride round the world and back, and here 'a he'

'Oh, bathos!' said Lady Bath, while the 'prentices shouted applause. 'Is this hedge-bantling to be fathered on you, Mr Frank?'

'It is necessary, by all laws of the drama, Madam,' said Frank with a sly smile, 'that the speech and the speaker shall set each other off as on, Earl Ordulf, a more learned worthy waits.'

Whereon, up came a fresh member of the procession, namely no less a person than Vindex Brimblecombe, the ancient schoolmaster, with five-and-forty boys at his heels, who halting, pulled out his spectacles, and thus signified his forgiveness of his whilom broken head—

'That the world should have been circumnavigated, ladies and gentlemen, were matter enough of jubilation to the student of Herodotus and Plato, Plinius and—ahem! much more when the circumnavigators are Britons, more, again, when Dannoniens.'

'Don't swear, master,' said young Will Cary
'Gulielmo Cary, Gulielmo Cary, hast thou forgotten thy—'

'Whippings! Never, old lad! Go on, but let not the licence of the scholar overtop the modesty of the Christian.'

'More again, as I said, when, *incola*, inhabitants of Devon, but, most of all, men of Bidford School O renowned school! O schoolboys ennobled by fellowship with him! O most happy pedagogue, to whom it has befallen to have chastised a circumnavigator, and, like another Chiron, trained another Hercules, yet more than Hercules, for he played his pillars on the ocean shore, and then returned, but my scholar's voyage—'

'Hark how the old fox is praising himself all along on the sly,' said Cary.

'Mr. William, Mr. William, peace,—*silenzium*, my graceless pupil! Urge the foaming steed, and strike terror into the rapid stag, but meddle not with matters too high for thee.'

'He has given you the dor now, sir,' said Lady Bath; 'let the old man say his say.'

'I bring, therefore, as my small contribution to this day's feast, first, a Latin epigram as thus—'

'Latin! Let us hear it forthwith,' cried my Lady

And the old pedant mouthed out,

'Tortiguanus Tortoris ne spernat, Leighus addet
Mox terras terribiles, hylete Drake, tuis.'

'Nest, I' faith, is I! Whoreon all the rest, as in duty bound, approved also

'This for the erudite: for vulgar ears the

vernacular is more consonant, sympathetic, instructive, as thus—

'Famed Argo ship, that noble chit, by doughty Jason's steering,
Brought back to Greece the golden fleece, from Colchis home careering,
But now her fame is put to shame, while new Devonian Argo,
Round earth doth run in wake of sun, and brings a wealthier cargo'.

'Runs with a right fa-lal-la,' observed Cary, 'and would go nobly to a fiddle and a big drum'.

'Ye Spaniards, quake! our doughty Drake a royal swan is tested,
On wing and oar, from shore to shore, the raging main who brasted—
But never needs to cheat his slews, like swan that lies a-dying,
So far his name by trump of fame, around the sphere is flying'.

'Hillo ho! schoolmaster!' shouted a voice from behind, 'move on, and make way for Father Neptune!' Whereon a whole storm of railery fell upon the hapless pedagogue!

'We wanted for the parson's alligator, but we won't for your'n'.

'Allegory! my childreu, allegory!' shrieked the man of letters.

'What do you call he an alligator for? He is but a poor little starved cat!'

'Out of the road, Old Custis! March on, Don P'almado!'

These allusions to the usual instrument of torture in west country schools made the old gentleman wince, especially when they were followed home by—

'Who stole Admiral Grenville's browns, because birch rods were dear!'

But proudly he shook his bald head, as a bull shakes off the flies, and returned to the charge once more.

'On it, Alexander, famed commander, west and east a politer,

At conquering only half the world, but Drake had conquer'd t'other,

And Hercules to brink of seas'—

'On it—'

And lapping both hands to the back of his neck, the schoolmaster began dancing frantically about, while his boys broke out tittering.

'Oh! the ochidore! look to the blue ochidore! Who vo put ochidore to maister's poll!'

It was too true neatly inserted, as he stooped forward, between his neck and his collar, was a large live shore-crab, holding on tight with both hands.

'Gentles! good Christians! save me! I am mare-rode! Incubo vel ab incubo, opprimor! Satanus has me by the poll! Help! he tears my jugular, he wrings my neck, as he does to Dr Faustus in the play *Confiteor*!—I confess! Satan, I defy thee! Good people, I confess! *Bacarijūni*! The truth will out. Mr Francis Laigh wrote the epigram!' And living through the crowd, the pedagogus vanished howling, while Father Neptune, crowned with seaweeds, a trident in one hand and a live dog-fish in the

other, swaggered up the street surrounded by a tall bodyguard of mariners, and followed by a great banner, on which was depicted a globe, with Drake's ship sailing thereon upside down, and overwritten—

'See every man the *Felton*,
Which round the world did go,
While her stern-post was uppermost,
And tinnists down below
And by the way she lost a day,
Out of her log was stole
But Neptune kind with favouring wind,
Hath brought her safe and whole'.

'Now, lads!' cried Neptune, 'hand me my parable that's writ for me, and here goth! And at the top of his bull-voice, he began roaring—

I am King Neptune bold,
The ruler of the seas,
I don't understand much singing upon land,
But I hope what I say will please

Here be five Bidford men,
Which have sail'd the world around,
And I wat'rd them well, as they all can tell,
And brought them home safe and sound

'For it is the men of Devon
To see them I take delight,
Both to tack and to haul, and to brace and to pull
And to prove themselves in fight

Where be those Spaniards proud,
That make their valiant boasts,
And think for to keep the poor Indians for their sheep,
And to farm my golden coasts'

'Twas the devil and the Pope gave them
My kingdom for their own
But my nephew Francis Drake, he caused them to quake
And he pick'd them to the bone

'For the sea my realm it is
As good Queen Bess's in the land
So freely come again, all merry Devon men,
And there's old Neptune's hand!'

'Holla, boys! holla! Blow up, Triton, and bring forward the freedom of the seas'

Triton, roaring through a crouch, brought forward a cockle-shell full of salt water, and delivered it solemnly to Amyas who, of course, put a noble into it, and returned it after Gregvile had done the same.

'Holla, Dick Admiral!' cried Neptune, who was pretty far gone in liquor, 'we knew thou hadst a right English heart in thee, for all thou standest there as tant as a Don who has swallowed his rapier.'

'Grammercy, stop thy bellowing, fellow, and on, for thou smell'st vilely of fish.'

'Everything smells sweet in its right place I'm going home.'

'I thought thou wert there all along, being already half-seas over,' said Cary.

'Ay, right Upsee-Dutch, and that's more than thou ever wilt be, thou long-shore stay-at-home. Why wast making sheep's eyes at Mistress Salterne here, while my pretty little chuck of Burrough there was playing at shore-groat with Spanish doubloons!'

'Go to the devil, sirrah!' said Cary. Neptune had touched on a sore subject, and more

cheeks than Anyas Leigh's reddened at the hint.

'Amén, if Heaven so please!' and on rolled the monarch of the seas, and so the pageant ended.

The moment Anyas had an opportunity, he asked his brother Frank, somewhat peevishly, where Rose Salterne was.

'What! the mayor's daughter? With her mule by Kilkhampton, I believe.'

Now cunning Master Frank, whose daily wish was to 'seek peace and ensue it,' told Anyas this, because he must needs speak the truth, but he was purposed at the same time to speak as little truth as he could, for fear of accidents; and, therefore, omitted to tell his brother how that he, two days before, had enticed Rose Salterne herself to appear as the nymph of Torr ridge, which honour she, who had no objection either to exhibit her pretty face, to recite pretty poetry, or to be trundled thereto by the cynosure of North Devon, would have assented willingly, but that her father stopped the pretty project by a peremptory countermove, and sneaked her off, in spite of her tears, to the said uncle on the Atlantic cliffs, after which he went up to Burrough, and laughed over the whole matter with Mrs. Leigh.

'I am but a burgher, Mrs. Leigh, and you a lady of blood, but I am too proud to let any man say that Simon Salterne threw his daughter at your son's head,—no, not if you were an empress!'

'And to speak truth, Mr. Salterne, there are young gallants enough in the country quivering about her pretty face every day, without making her a tourney-queen to tilt about.'

Which was very true, for during the three years of Anyas's absence, Rose Salterne had grown into so beautiful a girl of eighteen, that half North Devon was mad about the 'Rose of Torr ridge,' as she was called, and there was not a young gallant for ten miles round (not to speak of her father's clerks and 'prentices, who moped about after her like so many Malvolios, and treasured up the very parings of her nails) who would not have gone to Jerusalem to win her. So that all along the vales of Torr ridge and of Taw, and even away to Clovelly (for young Mr. Cary was one of the sick), not a gay bachelor but was frowning on his fellows, and vying with them in the fashion of his clothes, the set of his ruffs, the harness of his horse, the carriage of his hawk, the pattern of his sword-belt, and those were golden days for all tailors and armourers, from Exmoor to Okhampton town. But of all those foolish young lads not one would speak to the other, either out hunting, or at the archery butts, or in the tilt-yard, and my Lady Bath (who confessed that there was no use in bringing out her daughters where Rose Salterne was in the way) prophesied in her classical fashion that Rose's wedding day far to be a very bridal of Atalanta, and feast of the Lapithæ, and poor Mr. Will Cary (who always blurted out the truth), when old Salterne once

asked him angrily in Bideford Market, 'What a plague business had he making sheep's eyes at his daughter?' broke out before all bystanders, 'And what a plague business had you, old boy, to throw such an apple of discord into our merry meetings hereabouts? If you choose to have such a daughter, you must take the consequences, and be hanged to you.' To which Mr. Salterne answered with some truth, 'That she was none of his (choosing, nor of Mr. Cary's neither.' And so the door being given, the belligerents parted laughing, but the war remained *in statu quo*, and not a week passed but, by mysterious hands, some nosegay, or languishing sonnet, was conveyed into The Rose's chamber, all which she stowed away, with the simplicity of a country girl, finding it mighty pleasant, and took all compliments quietly enough, probably because, on the authority of her mirror, she considered them no more than her due.

And now, to add to the general confusion, home was come young Anyas Leigh, more desperately in love with her than ever. For, as is the way with sailors (who after all are the truest lovers, as they are the truest fellows, God bless them, upon earth), his lonely ship-work had been spent in imprinting on his imagination, month after month, year after year, every feature and gesture and tone of the fair lass whom he had left behind him, and, but all the more intensely, because, beside his mother, he had no one else to think of, and was as pure as the day he was born, having been trained as naïf as a brave young man was then, to look upon profligacy not as a proof of manhood, but as what the old Germans, and those Gerties in us who crowned the offender with wool, knew it to be, a cowardly and infeminate sin.

CHAPTER III

OF TWO GENTLEMEN OF WARREN, AND HOW THEY RUNNED WITH THE HOUNDS, AND YET CAN WITH THE DEER.

'I know that Deformed, he has been a vile thief this seven year, he goes up and down like a gentleman. I remember his name—*Much Ado about Nothing*.'

Anyas slept that night a tired and yet a troubled sleep, and his mother and Frank, as they bent over his pillow, could see that his brain was busy with many dreams.

And no wonder; for over and above all the excitement of the day, the recollection of John Oxenham had taken strange possession of his mind, and all that evening, as he sat in the bay-windowed room where he had seen him last, Anyas was recalling to himself every look and gesture of the lost adventurer, and wondering at himself for so doing, till he retired to sleep, only to renew the fancy in his dreams. At last he found himself, he knew not how, sailing westward ever, up the wake of the setting sun,

in chase of a tiny sail which was John Oxenham's. Upon him was a painful sense that, unless he came up with her in time, something fearful would come to pass—but the ship would not sail. All around floated the sargasso beds, clogging her bows with their long snaky coils of weed, and still he tried to sail, and tried to fancy that he was sailing, till the sun went down and all was utter dark. And then the moon arose, and in a moment John Oxenham's ship was close aboard, her sails were torn and fluttering, the pitch was streaming from her sides, her bulwarks were rotting to decay. And what was that line of dark objects dangling along the mainyard?—A line of hanged men! And, horror of horrors, from the yard arm close above him, John Oxenham's corpse looked down with ghastly eyes, and beckoned and pointed, as if to show him his way, and strove to speak, and could not, and pointed still, not forward, but back along their course. And when Amyas looked back, behold, behind him was the snow range of the Andes glittering in the moon, and he knew that he was in the South Seas once more, and that all America was between him and home. And still the corpse kept pointing back, and back, and looking at him with yearning eyes of agony, and lips which longed to tell some awful secret, till he sprang up, and woke with a shout of terror, and found himself lying in the little covered chamber in dear old Burrough, with the gray autumn morning already stealing in.

Feverish and excited, he tried in vain to sleep again, and after an hour's tossing, rose and dressed, and started for a bath on his beloved old pebble ridge. As he passed his mother's door, he could not help looking in. The dim light of morning showed him the bed, but its pillow had not been pressed that night. His mother, in her long white night-dress, was kneeling at the other end of the chamber at her prie-dieu, absorbed in devotion. Gently he slipped in without a word, and knelt down at her side. She turned, smiled, pressed her arm around him, and went on silently with her prayers. Why not? They were for him, and he knew it, and prayed also, and his prayers were for her, and for poor lost John Oxenham, and all his vanished crew.

At last she rose, and standing above him, parted the yellow locks from off his brow, and looked long and lovingly into his face. There was nothing to be spoken, for there was nothing to be concealed between these two souls as clear as glass. Each knew all which the other meant, each knew that its own thoughts were known. At last the mutual gaze was over, she stooped and kissed him on the brow, and was in the act to turn away, as a tear dropped on his forehead. Her little bare feet were peeping out from under her dress. He bent down and kissed them again and again, and then looking up, as if to excuse himself—

'You have such pretty foot, mother!'

Instinctively, with a woman's instinct, she had

hidden them. She had been a beauty once, as I said; and though her hair was gray, and her roses had faded long ago, she was beautiful still, in all eyes which saw deeper than the mere outward red and white.

'Your dear father used to say so thirty years ago.'

'And I say so still—you always were beautiful, you are beautiful now.'

'What is that to you, silly boy! Will you play the lover with an old mother? Go and take your walk, and think of younger ladies, if you can find any worthy of you.'

And so the son went forth, and the mother returned to her prayers.

He walked down to the pebble ridge, where the surges of the bay have defeated their own fury, by rolling up in the course of ages a rampart of gray boulder-stones, some two miles long, as cunningly curved, and smoothed, and fitted, as if the work had been done by human hands, which protects from the high tides of spring and autumn a fertile sheet of smooth, alluvial turf. Smelling the keen salt air like a young sea dog, he stripped and plunged into the breakers, and dived, and rolled, and tossed about the foam with stalwart arms, till he heard himself hailed from off the shore, and looking up, saw standing on the top of the rampart the tall figure of his cousin Eustace.

Amyas was half-disappointed at his coming, for, love-lorn mortal, he had been dreaming all the way thither of Rosa Salterne, and had no wish for a companion who would prevent his dreaming of her all the way back. Nevertheless, not having seen Eustace for three years, it was but civil to scramble out and dress while his cousin walked up and down upon the turf inside.

Eustace Laigh was the son of a younger brother of Laigh of Burrough, who had more or less cut himself off from his family, and indeed from his countrymen, by remaining a Papist. True, though born a Papist, he had not always been one; for, like many of the gentry, he had become a Protestant under Edward the Sixth, and then a Papist again under Mary. But, to his honour be it said, at that point he had stopped, having too much honesty to turn Protestant a second time, as hundreds did, at Elizabeth's accession. So a Papist he remained, living out of the way of the world in a great, rambling, dark house, still called 'Chapel,' on the Atlantic cliffs, in Moorwinstow parish, not far from Sir Richard Grenville's house of Stow. The penal laws never troubled him, for, in the first place, they never troubled any one who did not make conspiracy and rebellion an integral doctrine of his religious creed; and next, they seldom troubled even them, unless fired with the glory of martyrdom, they bullied the long-suffering of Elizabeth and her council into giving them their deserts, and, like poor Father Southwell in after years, insisted on being hanged, whether Burleigh liked or not. Moreover, in such a no-man's-

land and end-of-all-the earth was that old house at Moorwinstow, that a dozen conspiracies might have been hatched there without any one hearing of it; and Jesuits and seminary priests skulked in and out all the year round, unquestioned though noblest, and found a sort of piquant pleasure, like naughty boys who have crept into the store-closet, in living in mysterious little dens in a lonely turret, and going up through a trap-door to celebrate mass in a secret chamber in the roof, where they were allowed by the powers that were to play as much as they chose at persecuted saints, and preach about hiding in dens and caves of the earth. For once, when the zealous parson of Moorwinstow, having discovered (what everybody knew already) the existence of 'mass priests and their idolatry' at Chapel House, made formal complaint thereof to Sir Richard, and called on him, as the nearest justice of the peace, to put in force the Act of the fourteenth of Elizabeth, that worthy knight only rated him soundly for a fantastical Puritan, and bade him mind his own business, if he wished not to make the place too hot for him, whereas (for the temporal authorities, happily for the peace of England, kept in those days a somewhat tight hand upon the spiritual ones) the worthy parson subsided, — for, after all, Mr Thomas Leigh paid his tithes regularly enough, — and was content, as he expressed it, to bow his head in the house of Rimmon like Naaman of old, by eating Mr Leigh's dinners as often as he was invited, and ignoring the vocation of old Father Francis, who sat opposite to him, dressed as a layman, and calling himself the young gentleman's pedagogue.

But the said birds of ill-omen had a very considerable lien on the conscience of poor Mr Thomas Leigh, the father of Eustace, in the form of certain lands once belonging to the Abbey of Hartland. He more than half believed that he should be lost for holding those lands, but he did not believe it wholly, and, therefore, he did not give them up, which was the case, as poor Mary Tudor found to her sorrow, with most of her 'Catholic' subjects, whose consciences, while they compelled them to return to the only safe fold of Mother Church (*extra quam nulla salus*), by no means compelled them to disgorge the wealth of which they had plundered that only hope of their salvation. Most of them, however, like poor Tom Leigh, felt the abbey rents burr in their purses, and, as John Bull generally does in a difficulty, compromised the matter by a second folly (as if two wrong things made one right one), and putted foreign priests, and listened, or pretended not to listen, to their plottings and their practisings, and gave up a son here, and a son there, as a sort of a sin-offering and scapegoat, to be carried off to Douay, or Rheims, or Rome, and trained as a seminary priest, in plain English, to be taught the science of villainy, on the motive of superstition. One of such hapless scapegoats, and children who had been cast into the fire to

Moloch, was Eustace Leigh, whom his father had sent, giving the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul, to be made a liar of at Rheims.

And a very fair liar he had become. Not that the lad was a bad fellow at heart, but he had been chosen by the harpies at home, on account of his 'peculiar vocation'; in plain English, because the wily priests had seen in him certain capacities of vague hysterical fear of the unseen (the religious sentiment, we call it nowadays), and with them that tendency to be a rogue, which superstitious men always have. He was now a tall, handsome, light-complexioned man, with a huge upright forehead, a very small mouth, and a dry and set expression of face, which was always trying to get free, or rather to seem free, and indulged in smiles and wrinkles which were proper, for one ought to have Christian love, and if one had love one ought to be cheerful, and when people were cheerful they smiled, and therefore he would smile, and tried to do so, but his charity pretence looked no more alluring than malice pretence would have done, and, had he not been really a handsome fellow, many a woman who raved about his sweetness would have likened his frankness to that of a skeleton dancing in fetters, and his smiles to the grimaces thereof.

He had returned to England about a month before, in obedience to the proclamation which had been set forth for that purpose (and certainly not before it was needed), that 'whosoever had children, wards, etc., in the parts beyond the seas, should send in their names to the ordinary, and within four months call them home again.' So Eustace was now staying with his father at Chapel, having, nevertheless, his private matters to transact in behalf of the virtuous society by whom he had been brought up, one of which private matters had brought him to Bidford the night before.

So he sat down beside Amyas on the pebbles, and looked at him all over out of the corners of his eyes very gently, as if he did not wish to hurt him, or even the lines of his back, and Amyas faced right round, and looked him full in the face, with the heartiest of smiles, and held out a hon's paw, which Eustace took impatiently, and a great shaking of hands ensued, Amyas gripping with a great round hat, and a quiet quiver thereof, as much as to say, 'I am glad to see you', and Eustace pinching hard with quite straight fingers, and sawing the air violently up and down, as much as to say, 'Don't you see how glad I am to see you?' A very different greeting from the former.

'Hold hard, oh! lad,' said Amyas, 'before you break my elbow. And where do you come from?'

'From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it,' said he, with a little smile and nod of mysterious self-importance.

'Like the devil, eh? Well, every man has his pattern. How is my uncle?'

Now, if there was one man on earth above

another, of whom Eustace Leigh stood in dread, it was his cousin Amyas. In the first place, he knew Amyas could have killed him with a blow, and there are natures who, instead of rejoicing in the strength of men of greater prowess than themselves, look at such with irritation, dread, at last, spite, expecting, perhaps, that the stronger will do to them what they feel they might have done in his place. Every one, perhaps, has the same envious, inwardly devil haunting about his heart, but the brave men, though they be very sparrows, kick him out, the cowards keep him, and foster him, and so did poor Eustace Leigh.

Next, he could not help feeling that Amyas despised him. They had not met for three years, but before Amyas went, Eustace never could argue with him, simply because Amyas treated him as beneath argument. No doubt he was often rude and unfair enough, but the whole mass of questions concerning the unseemly world, which the priests had stimulated in his cousin's mind into an unhealthy fungus crop, were to Amyas simply, as he expressed it, 'wind and moonshine', and he treated his cousin as a sort of harmless lunatic, and, as they say in Devon, 'half baked'. And Eustace knew it, and knew, too, that his cousin did him an injustice. 'He used to undervalue me,' and he to himself, 'let us see whether he does not find me a match for him now'. And then went off into an agony of secret contrition for his self-seeking and his forgetting that 'the glory of God, and not his own exaltation,' was the object of his existence.

There, dear readers, *Eco pede Hercule*, I cannot tire myself or you (especially in this book) with any wire-drawn soul-dissections. I have tried to hint to you two opposite sorts of men. The one trying to be good with all his might and main, according to certain approved methods and rules, which he has got by heart, and, like a weak oarsman, feeling and fingering his spiritual muscles over all day, to see if they are growing. The other, not even knowing whether he is good or not, but just doing the right thing without thinking about it, as simply as a little child, because the Spirit of God is with him. If you cannot see the great gulf fixed between the two, I trust that you will discover it some day.

But in justice be it said, all this came upon Eustace, not because he was a Romanist, but because he was educated by the Jesuits. Had he been saved from them, he might have lived and died as simple and honest a gentleman as his brothers, who turned out like true Englishmen (as did all the Roundish laity) to face the great Armada, and one of whom was fighting at that very minute under St. Leger in Ireland, and as brave and loyal a soldier as those Roman Catholics whose noble blood has stained every Cæsar's battle-field, but his fate was appointed otherwise, and the Upas-shadow which has blighted the whole Romish Church blighted him also.

'Ah, my dearest cousin!' said Eustace, 'how disappointed I was this morning at finding I had arrived just a day too late to witness your triumph! But I hastened to your home as soon as I could, and learning from your mother that I should find you here, hurried down to bid you welcome again to Devon.'

'Well, old lad, it does look very natural to see you. I often used to think of you walking the deck o' nights. Unelo and the girls are all right, then? But is the old pony dead yet? And how's Dick the smith, and Nancy? Grown a fine man by now, I warrant. 'Slid, it seems half a life that I've been away.'

'And you really thought of your poor cousin? Be sure that he, too, thought of you, and offered up nightly his weak prayers for your safety (doubtless without avail) to those saints, to whom would that you—'

'Halt there, or if they are half as good fellows as you and I take them for, they'll help me without asking.'

'They have helped you, Amyas.'

'Maybe I'd have done as much, I'm sure, for them, if I'd been in their place.'

'And do you not feel, then, that you owe a debt of gratitude to them, and, above all, to her, whose intercessions have, I doubt not, availed for your preservation? Her, the star of the sea, the all-compassionate guide of the mariner?'

'Humph!' said Amyas. 'Here's Frank, let him answer.'

And, as he spoke, up came Frank, and after due greetings, sat down beside them on the rug.

'I say, brother, here's Eustace trying already to convert me, and telling me that I owe all my luck to the Blessed Virgin's prayers for me.'

'It may be so,' said Frank, 'at least you owe it to the prayers of that most pure and peerless virgin, by whose commands you sailed, the sweet ingense of whose orisons has gone up for you daily, and for whose sake you were preserved from flood and foe, that you might spread the fame and advance the power of the spotless championess of truth, and right, and freedom,—Elizabeth, your queen.'

Amyas answered this rhapsody, which would have been then both fashionable and sincere, by a loyal chuckle. Eustace smiled meekly but answered somewhat venomously nevertheless—

'I, at least, am certain that I speak the truth, when I call my patroness a virgin undehled.'

Both the Brothers' brows climbed at once. Amyas, as he lay on his back on the pebbles, said quietly to the gulls over his head—

'I wonder what the Frenchman, whose head I cut off at the Azores, thinks by now about all that.'

'Cut off a Frenchman's head!' said Frank.

'Yes, faith; and so flashed my maiden sword I'll tell you. It was in some tavern, I and George Drake had gone in, and there sat this Frenchman, with his sword on the table, ready

for a quarrel (I found afterwards he was a noted bully), and begun with us loudly enough about this and that, but, after awhile, by the instigation of the Devil, what does he vent but a dozen slanders against her Majesty's honour, one atop of the other. I was ashamed to hear them, and I should be more ashamed to repeat them.

'I have heard enough of such,' said Frank. 'They come mostly through lewd rumours about the French ambassador, who have been bred (God help them) among the filthy vices of that Medicean Court, in which the Queen of Scots had her schooling, and can only perceive in a virtuous freedom, a cloak for licentiousness like their own. Let the curs bark, *Honi soit qui mal y pense* is our motto, and shall be for ever.'

'But I didn't let the cur bark, for I took him by the ears to shew him out into the street. Whereon he got to his sword, and I to mine, and a very near chance I had of never bathing on the pebble-ridge more, for the fellow did not fight with edge and buckler, like a Christian, but had some newfangled French devil's device of scryming and foaming with his paint, bawling and stamping, and traucing at me, that I expected to be full of cylet holes ere I could close with him.'

'Thank God that you are safe then!' said Frank. 'I know that play well enough, and dangerous enough it is.'

'Of course you know it, but I didn't, more's the pity.'

'Well, I'll teach it thee, lad, as well as Rowland Yorke himself,

Thy fineture, carriage, and sly passata,
Thy stramazou, and resolute stockata,
Wiping mandrilla, cloving embrocata,
And all the cant of the honourable fencing mystery

'Rowland Yorke! Who's he, then?'

'A very roastingascal, who is making good profit in London just now by teaching this very art of fence, and is as likely to have his mortal throat clipt in a tavern brawl, as thy Frenchman. But how did you escape his pinking iron?'

'How! Had it through my left arm before I could look round; and at that I got mad, and leapt upon him, and caught him by the wrist, and then had a fair side-blow, and, as fortune would have it, off tumbled his head on to the table, and there was an end of his slanders.'

'So perish all his enemies!' said Frank, and Eustace, who had been trying not to listen, rose and said—

'I trust that you do not number me among them?'

'As you speak, I do, coz,' said Frank. 'But for your own sake, let me advise you to put faith in the true report of those who have daily experience of their mistress's excellent virtue, as they have of the sun's shining, and of the earth's bringing forth fruit, and not in the tattle of a few cowardly back-stair rogues, who wish to curry favour with the Gfines. Come, we will say no more. Walk round with us by Appledore, and then home to breakfast.'

But Eustace declined, having immediate business, he said, in Northam town, and then in Bideford, and so left them to lounge for another half-hour on the beach, and then walk across the smooth sheet of turf to the little white fishing village, which stands some two miles above the bar, at the meeting of the Torridge and the Taw.

Now it came to pass, that Eustace Leigh, as we have seen, told his cousins that he was going to Northam; but he did not tell them that his point was really the same as their own, namely, Appledore, and, therefore, after having satisfied his conscience by going as far as the very nearest house in Northam village, he struck away sharp to the left across the fields, repeating I know not what to the blessed Virgin all the way; whereby he went several miles out of his road, and also, as is the wont of crooked spirits, Jesuits especially (as three centuries sufficiently testify), only outwitted himself. For his cousins going merrily, like honest men, along the straight road across the turf, arrived in Appledore, opposite the little 'Mariner's Rest' Inn, just in time to see what Eustace had taken so much trouble to hide from them, namely, four of Mr Thomas Leigh's horses standing at the door, held by his groom, saddles and mailbags on back, and mounting three of them, Eustace Leigh and two strange gentlemen.

'There's one he already this morning,' growled Amyas, 'he told us he was going to Northam.'

'And we do not know that he has not been there,' blandly suggested Frank.

'Why, you are as bad a Jesuit as he, to help him out with such a fetch.'

'So may have changed his mind.'

'Bless your pure imagination, my sweet boy,' said Amyas, laying his great hand on Frank's head, and mimicking his mother's manner. 'I say, dear Frank, let's step into this shop and buy a pennyworth of whipcord.'

'What do you want with whipcord, man?'

'To spin my top, to be sure.'

'Top! how long hast had a top?'

'I'll buy one, then, and save my conscience, but the upshot of this sport I must see. Why may not I have an excuse ready made as well as Master Eustace?'

So saying, he pulled Frank into the little shop, unobserved by the party at the inn door.

'What strange cattle has he been importing now? Look at that three-legged fellow, trying to get aloft on the wrong side. How he claws at his horse's ribs, like a cat scratching an elder stem!'

The three-legged man was a tall, meek-looking person, who had bedizened himself with gorgeous garments, a great feather, and a sword so long and broad, that it differed little in size from the very thin and stiff shanks between which it wandered uncomfortably.

'Young David in Saul's weapons,' said Frank. 'He had better not go in them, for he certainly has not proved them.'

'Look, if his third leg is not turned into a

tail! Why does not some one in charity haul in half a yard of his belt for him?

It was too true; the sword, after being kicked out three or four times from its uncomfortable point between his legs, had returned unconquered, and the hilt getting a little too far back by reason of the too great length of the belt, the weapon took up its post triumphantly behind, standing out point in air, a tail contest, amid the tittering of the outlers and the cheers of the sailors.

At last the poor man, by dint of a chair, was mounted safely, while his fellow-stranger, a burly, coarse-looking man, equally gay, and rather more handy, made so fierce a rush at his saddle, that, like 'vaulting ambition who o'erleaps his self,' he fell on t'other side, 'or would have fallen, had he not been brought up short by the shoulders of the ostler at his off-stirrup. In which shock off came hat and feather.

'Parble, the bulldog-faced one is a fighting man! Most see, Frank! he has had his head broken.'

'That scar came not, my son, but by a pair of most Catholic and apostolic scissors. My gentle buzzard, that is a priest's tonsure.'

'Hang the dog! Oh, that the sailors may but see it, and put him over the quay head. I've a half-mind to go and do it myself.'

'My dear Amyas,' said Frank, laying two fingers on his arm, 'these men, whosoever they are, are the guests of our uncle, and therefore the guests of our family. Hain gained little by publishing Noah's shame; neither shall we, by publishing our uncle's.'

'Murrain on you, old Franky, you never let a man speak his mind, and shame the devil.'

'I have lived long enough in courts, old Amyas, without a murrain on you, to have found out first, that it is not so easy to shame the devil; and secondly, that it is better to outwit him, and the only way to do that, sweet chuck, is very often not to speak your mind at all. We will go down and visit them at Chapel in a day or two, and see if we cannot serve these reynards as the badger did the fox, when he found him in his hole, and could not get him out by evil savours.'

'How then?'

'Stuck a sweet nosegay in the door, which turned Reynard's stomach at once; and so overcame evil with good.'

'Well, thou art too good for this world, that's certain; so we will go home to breakfast. Those rogues are out of sight by now.'

Nevertheless, Amyas was not proof against the temptation of going over to the inn door, and asking who were the gentlemen who went with Mr. Leigh.

'Gentlemen of Wales,' said the ostler, 'who came last night in a pinnace from Milford-haven, and their names, Mr. Morgan Evans and Mr. Evan Morgans.'

'Mr. Judas Iscariot and Mr. Iscariot Judas, said Amyas between his teeth, and then oh w. n.

served aloud, 'that the Welsh gentlemen seemed rather poor horsemen.'

'So I said to Mr. Leigh's groom, your worship. But he says that those parts be so uncommon rough and mountainous, that the poor gentlemen, you see, being enforced to hunt on foot, have no such opportunities as young gentlemen hereabout, like your worship, whom God preserve, and send a virtuous lady, and one worthy of you.'

'Thou hast a villainously glib tongue, fellow,' said Amyas, who was thoroughly out of humour, 'and a sneaking down visage too, when I come to look at you. I doubt but you are a Papist too, I do.'

'Well, sir! and what if I am! I trust I don't break the Queen's laws by that. If I don't attend Northam church, I pay my month's shilling for the use of the poor, as the Act directs; and beyond that, neither you nor any man dare demand of me.'

'Dare! Act directs! You fassally lawyer, you! and whence does an ostler like you get your shilling to pay withal? Answer me! The examine found it so difficult to answer the question, that he suddenly became afflicted with deafness.'

'Do you hear?' roared Amyas, ca'ching at him with his hon's paw.

'Yes, missus, snon, anon, missus,' quoth he to an imaginary landlady inside, and twisting under Amyas's hand like an eel, vanished into the house, while Frank got the hot-headed youth away.

'What a plague is one to do, then? That fellow was a Papist spy!'

'Of course he was,' said Frank.

'Then, what is one to do, if the whole country is full of them?'

'Not to make fools of ourselves about them, and so leave them to make fools of themselves.'

'That's all very fine, but—well, I shall remember the villain's face if I see him again.'

'There is no harm in that,' said Frank.

'Glad you think so!'

'Don't quarrel with me, Amyas, the first day.'

'Quarrel with thee, my darling old fellow! I had sooner kiss the dust off thy feet, if I were worthy of it. So now away home; my inside cries enj-board.'

In the meanwhile Messrs. Evans and Morgans were riding away, as fast as the rough 18-lanes would let them, along the fresh coast of the bay, steering carefully clear of Northam town on the one hand, and on the other, of Portledge, where dwelt that most Protestant justice of the peace, Mr. Coffin. And it was well for them that neither Amyas Leigh, nor indeed any other loyal Englishman, was by when they entered, as they shortly did, the lonely woods which stretch along the southern wall of the bay. For there Eustace Leigh pulled up short, and both he and his groom, leaping from their horses, knelt down humbly in the wet grass, and implored the blessing of the two valiant gentlemen of

Wales, who, having graciously bestowed it with three fingers apiece, became thenceforth no longer Morgan Evans and Evan Morgans, Welshmen and gentlemen, but Father Parsons and Father Campian, Jesuits, and gentlemen in no sense in which that word is applied in this book.

After a few minutes, the party were again in motion, ambling steadily and cautiously along the high table land, towards Moorwinstow in the west, while beneath them on the right, at the mouth of rich-wooded glens, opened vistas of the bright blue bay, and beyond it the sandhills of Braunton, and the ragged rocks of Morte; while far away to the north and west the lonely isle of Lundy hung like a soft grey cloud.

But they were not destined to reach their point as peaceably as they could have wished. For just as they got opposite Clovelly Dike, the huge old Roman encampment which stands about midway in their journey, they heard a halloo from the valley below, answered by a fainter one far ahead. At which, like a couple of rogues (as indeed they were), Father Campian and Father Parsons looked at each other, and then both stared round at the wild, desolate, open pasture (for the country was then all unenclosed), and the great dark furze grown banks above their heads, and Campian remarked gently to Parsons, that this was a very dreary spot, and likely enough for robbers.

'A liker spot for us, Father,' said Eustace, punning. 'The old Romans knew what they were about when they put their legions up aloft here to overlook land and sea for miles away, and we may thank them some day for their leavings. The banks are all round, there is plenty of good water inside and' (added he in Latin), 'in case our Spanish friends—you understand!'

'*Pater verba*, my son!' said Campian, but as he spoke, up from the ditch close beside him, as if rising out of the earth, burst through the furze-bushes an armed cavalier.

'Pardon, gentlemen!' shouted he, as the Jesuit and his horse recoiled against the groom. 'Stand, for your lives!'

'*Mater colorum*!' roared Campian, while Parsons, who, as all the world knows, was a blustering bully enough (at least with his tongue), asked 'What a murrain right had he to stop honest folks on the Queen's highway!' confirming the same with a mighty oath, which he set down as *peccatum veniale*, on account of the sudden necessity, nay, indeed *fraus mea*, as proper to support the character of that valiant gentleman of Wales, Mr. Evan Morgans. But the horseman, taking no notice of his hint, dashed across the nose of Eustace Leigh's horse, with a 'Hillo, old lad! where ridest so early?' and peering down for a moment into the ribs of the narrow track-way, struck, spurs into his horse, shouting, 'A fresh slot! right away for Hartland! Forward, gentlemen all! follow, follow, follow!'

'Who is this roysterer?' asked Parsons loftily.

'Will Cary, of Clovelly, an awful horetic—and here come more behind!'

And as he spoke four or five more mounted gallants plunged in and out of the great dikes, and thundered on behind the party, whose horses, quite understanding what guine was up, burst into full gallop, neighing and squealing, and in another minute the hapless Jesuits were hurling along over moor and moss after a 'hart of grease.'

Parsons, who, though a vulgar bully, was no coward, supported the character of Mr. Evan Morgans well enough, and he would have really enjoyed himself, had he not been in agonies of fear lest those precious saddles, as in front of him should break from their lashings, and falling to the earth, expose to the scoffs of heretic horses, perhaps to the gaze of heretic eyes, such a cargo of bulls, dispensations, secret correspondences, seditious tracts, and so forth, that at the very thought of their being seen his head felt loose upon his shoulders. But the future martyr behind him, Mr. Morgan Evans, gave himself up at once to abject despair, and as he bumped and rolled along, sought vainly for comfort in professional quotations in the Latin tongue.

'*Mater intemerata! Eripe me*—Ugh! I am down! *Adhuc parvulus sum!*—No! I am not! *Et dilectum tuum e perditum canis*—Ah! *Audisti me inter canes caninum?*' Put this, too, down in—ugh! thy account in favour of my poor—oh, sharpness of this saddle! Oh why, he, barbarians! rulers!'

Now riding on his quarter, not in the rough track-way like a cockney, but through the soft heather like a spaurin, was a very gallant knight whom we all know well by this time, Richard Grenville by name, who had made Mr. Cary and the rest his guests the night before, and then ridden out with them at five o'clock that morning, after the whole some early work of the time, to rouse a well known stag in the glens at Buckish, by help of Mr. Collin's hounds from Portledge. Who being as good a Latiner as Campian's self, and overhearing both the scraps of psalm and the 'barbarous islanders,' pushed his horse alongside of Mr. Eustace Leigh, and at the first check said, with two low bows towards the two strangers.

'I hope Mr. Leigh will do me the honour of introducing me to his guests. I should be sorry, and Mr. Cary also, that any gentle strangers should become neighbours of ours, even for a day, without our knowing who they are who honour our western Thule with a visit; and showing them ourselves all due requital for the compliment of their presence.'

After which, the only thing which poor Eustace could do (especially as it was spoken loud enough for all bystanders) was to introduce in due form Mr. Evan Morgans and Mr. Morgan Evans, who, hearing the name, and what was worse, seeing the terrible face with its quiet searching eye, felt like a brace of partridge-poults

cowering in the stable, with a hawk hanging ten feet over their heads.

'Gentlemen,' said Sir Richard blandly, cap in hand, 'I fear that your mails must have been somewhat in your way in this unexpected gallop. If you will permit my groom, who is behind, to disencumber you of them and carry them to Chapel, you will both confer an honour on me, and he enabled yourselves to see the most more pleasantly.'

A twinkle of fun, in spite of all his efforts, played about good Sir Richard's eye as he gave this searching hint. The two Welsh gentlemen stammered out clumsy thanks; and pleading great haste and fatigue from a long journey, contrived to fall to the rear and vanish with their guides, as soon as the slot had been recovered.

'Will!' said Sir Richard, pushing alongside of young Cary.

'Your worship?'

'Jesuits, Will!'

'May the father of lies fly away with them over the nearest cliff!'

'He will not do that while this Irish trouble is about. Those fellows are come to practise here for Saunders and Desmond.'

'Perhaps they have a consecrated banner in their bags, the "omudrels"! Shall I and young Collin ou and stop them? Haud if the honest men may not rob the thieves once in a way.'

'No, give the devil rope, and he will hang himself. Keep thy tongue at home, and thine eyes too, Will.'

'How then?'

'Let Clovelly hearh be watched night and day like any mouschule. No one can land round Hutty Point with these south-westerns. Stop every fellow who has the ghost of an Irish brigue, come he in or go he ont, and send him over to me.'

'Some one should guard Bude haven, sir.'

'Leave that to me. Now then, forward, gentlemen all, or the stag will take the sea at the Abbey.'

And on they crashed down the Hartland glen, through the oak scrub and the great crown-ferns, and the baying of the slow hound and the tautarars of the horn died away farther and fainter toward the blue Atlantic, while the conspirators, with lightened hearts, pricked fast across Bursdon upon their evil errand. But Eustace Leigh had other thoughts and other cares than the safety of his father's two mysterious guests, so important as that was in his eyes, for he was one of the many who had drunk in sweet poison (though in his case it could hardly be called sweet) from the magic glances of the Rose of Torridge. He had seen her in the town, and for the first time in his life fallen utterly in love, and now that she had come down close to his father's house, he looked on her as a lamb fallen unawares into the jaws of the greedy wolf, which he felt himself to be. For Eustace's love had little or nothing of chivalry, self-sacrifice, or purity in it, those were virtues which were not

taught at Rheims. Careful as the Jesuits were over the practical morality of their pupils, this severe restraint had little effect in producing real habits of self-control. What little Eustace had learnt of women from them, was as base and vulgar as the rest of their teaching. What could it be else, if instilled by men educated in the schools of Italy and France, in the age which produced the foul novels of Cinthio and Bandello, and compelled Rabelais, in order to escape the rack and stake, to hide the light of his great wisdom, not beneath a bushel, but beneath a dunghill, the age in which the Roman Church had made marriage a legalised tyranny, and the lady, by a natural and pardonable revulsion, had exalted adultery into a virtue and a science? That all love was hurt, that all women had their price, that profligacy, though an ecclesiastical sin, was so pardonable, if not necessary, as to be hardly a moral sin, were notions which Eustace must needs have gathered from the lips of his preceptors, for their written works bear to this day fullest and foulest testimony that such was their opinion, and that their conception of the relation of the sexes was really not a whit higher than that of the profligate lady who consorted to them. He longed to marry Rose Salterne, with a wild selfish fury, but only that he might be able to claim her as his own property, and keep all others from her. Of her as a co-equal and ennobling helpmate, as one in whose honour, glory, growth of heart and soul, his own were inextricably wrapped up, he had never dreamed. Marriage would prevent God from being angry with that, with which otherwise He might be angry, and therefore the sanction of the Church was the more 'probable and safe' course. But as yet his suit was in very embryo. He could not even tell whether Rose knew of his love, and he wasted miserable hours in maddening thoughts, and lost all night upon his sleepless bed, and rose next morning fierce and pale, to meet fresh expenses for going over to her uncle's house, and lingering about the fruit which he dared not snatch.

CHAPTER IV

THE TWO WAYS OF BEING CROST IN LOVE

'I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.' LOVE ET AL.

AND what all this while has become of the fair breaker of so many hearts, to whom I have not yet even introduced my readers?

She was sitting in the little farmhouse beside the mill, buried in the green depths of the Valley of Combe, half-way between Stow and Chapel, sulking as much as her sweet nature would let her, at being thus shut out from all the grand things at Bideford, and forced to keep a Martinmas Lent in that far western glen. So lonely was she, in fact, that though she regarded Eustace Leigh with somewhat of aversion, and (being a

good Protestant) with a great deal of suspicion, she could not find it in her heart to avoid a chat with him whenever he came down to the farm and to its mill, which he contrived to do, on I know not what would-be errand, almost every day. Her uncle and aunt at first looked stiff enough at these visits, and the latter took care always to make a third in every conversation, but still Mr Leigh was a gentleman's son, and it would not do to be rude to a neighbouring squire and a good customer, and Rose was the rich man's daughter and they poor cousins, so it would not do either to quarrel with her, and besides, the pretty maid, half by wilfulness, and half by her sweet winning tricks, generally contrived to get her own way wheresoever she went, and she herself had been wise enough to beg her aunt never to leave them alone,—for she could not a-bear the sight of Mr. Eustace, only she must have some one to talk with down here. On which her aunt considered, that she herself was but a simple country-woman, and that town-folks' ways of course must be very different from hers, and that people knew their own business best; and so forth, and let things go on their own way. Eustace, in the meanwhile, who knew well that the difference in creed between him and Rose was likely to be the very hardest obstacle in the way of his love, took care to keep his private opinions well in the background, and instead of trying to convert the folk at the mill, daily bought milk or cream from them, and gave it away to the old women in Moorwinstow (who agreed that after all, for a Papist, he was a godly young man enough), and at last, having taken counsel with Campian and Parsons on certain political plots then on foot, came with them to the conclusion that they would all three go to church the next Sunday. Where Messrs Evan Morgans and Morgan Evans, having crammed up the rubrics beforehand, behaved themselves in a most orthodox and unexceptionable manner, as did also poor Eustace, to the great wonder of all good folks, and then went home flattering himself that he had taken in parson, clerk, and people, not knowing in his simple unsophistication, and cunning foolishness, that each good wife in the parish was saying to the other, 'He turned Protestant! The devil turned monk! He's only after Mistress Salterno, the young hypocrite.'

But if the two Jesuits found it expedient, for the holy cause in which they were embarked, to reconcile themselves outwardly to the powers that were, they were none the less busy in private in plotting their overthrow.

Ever since April last they had been playing at hide-and-seek through the length and breadth of England, and now they were only lying quiet till expected news from Ireland should give them their cue, and a great rising of the West should sweep from her throne that stiff-necked, persecuting, excommunicate, reprobate, illegitimate, and profigate usurper, who falsely called herself the Queen of England.

For they had as stoutly persuaded themselves

in those days, as they have in these (with a real Baconian contempt of the results of sensible experience), that the heart of England was really with them, and that the British nation was on the point of returning to the bosom of the Catholic Church, and giving up Elizabeth to be led in chains to the feet of the rightful Lord of Creation, the Old Man of the Seven Hills. And this fair hope, which has been skipping just in front of them for centuries, always a step farther off, like the place where the rainbow touches the ground, they used to announce at times, in language which terrified old Mr. Leigh. One day, indeed, as Eustace entered his father's private room, after his usual visit to the mill, he could hear voices high in dispute; Parsons, as usual, blustering; Mr. Leigh piously deprecating, and Campian, who was really the sweetest-natured of men, trying to pour oil on the troubled waters. Whereat Eustace (for the good of the cause, of course) stopped outside and listened.

'My excellent sir,' said Mr. Leigh, 'does not your very presence here show how I am affected toward the holy cause of the Catholic faith? But I cannot in the meanwhile forget that I am an Englishman.'

'And what is England?' said Parsons. 'A heretic and schismatic Babylon, whereof it is written, "Come out of her, my people, lest you be partaker of her plagues." Yea! what is a country? An arbitrary division of territory by the princes of this world, who are nought, and come to nought. They are created by the people's will, their existence depends on the sanction of him to whom all power is given in heaven and earth—our Holy Father the Pope. Take away the latter, and what is a king?—the people who have made him may unmake him.'

'My dear sir, recollect that I have sworn allegiance to Queen Elizabeth!'

'Yes, sir, you have, sir, and, as I have shown at large in my writings, you were absolved from that allegiance from the moment that the bull of Pius the Fifth declared her a heretic and excommunicate, and thereby to have forfeited all dominion whatsoever. I tell you, sir, what I thought you should have known already, that since the year 1589, England has had no queen, no magistracy, no laws, no lawful authority whatsoever, and that to own allegiance to any English magistrate, sir, or to plead in an English court of law, is to disobey the apostolic precept, "How dare you go to law before the unbelievers?" I tell you, sir, rebellion is now not merely permitted, it is a duty.'

'Take care, sir, for God's sake, take care!' said Mr. Leigh. 'Right or wrong, I cannot have such language used in my house. For the sake of my wife and children, I cannot!'

'My dear brother Parsons, deal more gently with the flock,' interposed Campian. 'Your opinion, though probable, as I well know, in the eyes of most of our order, is hardly safe enough here; the opposite is at least so safe that Mr. Leigh may well excuse his conscience for

accepting it. After all, are we not sent hither to proclaim this very thing, and to relieve the souls of good Catholics from a burden which has seemed to them too heavy?

'Yes,' said Parsons half sulkily, 'to allow all Balaams who will to sacrifice to Baal, while they call themselves by the name of the Lord.'

'My dear brother, have I not often reminded you that Naaman was allowed to bow himself in the house of Rimmon? And can we therefore complain of the office to which the Holy Father has appointed us, to declare to such as Mr Leigh his especial grace, by which the bull of Pius the Fifth (on whose soul God have mercy!) shall henceforth bind the Queen and the heretics only, but in no ways the Catholics, at least as long as the present illness prevents the pious purposes of the bull?'

'Be it so, sir; be it so. Only observe this, Mr Leigh, that our brother Campian confesses this to be a tyranny. Observe, sir, that the bull does still bind the so called Queen, and that she and her magistrates are still none the less usurpers, nonentities, and shadows of a shade. And observe this, sir, that when that which is lawful is excused to the weak, it remains no less lawful to the strong. The seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal did not slay his priests, but Elijah did, and won to himself a good reward. And if the rest of the children of Israel sinned not in not slaying Eglon, yet Ehud's deed was none the less justified by all laws human and divine.'

'For Heaven's sake, do not talk so, sir' or I must leave the room. What have I to do with Eglon and Eglon, and slaughters, and tyrannies? Our queen is a very good queen, if Heaven could but grant her repentance, and turn her to the true faith. I have never been troubled about religion, nor any one else that I know of in the West country.'

'You forget Mr. Trudgeon of Launceston, father, and poor Father Mayne,' interposed Eustace, who had by this time slipped in, and Campian added softly—

'Yes, your West of England also has been honoured by its martyrs, as well as my London by the precious blood of St. Mary.'

'What, young malaprop?' cried poor Leigh, facing round upon his son, glad to find any one on whom he might vent his ill-humour, 'are you too against me, with a murrain on you? And pray, what the devil brought Cuthbert Mayne to the gallows, and turned Mr Trudgeon (he was always a foolish hot-head) out of house and home, but just such treasonable talk as Mr. Parsons must needs hold in my house, to make a beggar of me and my children, as he will before he has done.'

'The blessed Virgin forbid!' said Campian.

'The blessed Virgin forbid? But you must help her to forbid it, Mr Campian. We should never have had the law of 1571, against bulls, and Agnus Dei, and blessed grains, if the Pope's bull of 1569 had not made them matter of treason, by preventing a poor creature's saving his soul

in the true Church without putting his neck into a halter by denying the Queen's authority.'

'What, sir!' almost roared Parsons, 'do you dare to speak evil of the edicts of the Vicar of Christ?'

'I? No. I didn't. Who says I did? All I meant was, I am sure—Mr Campian, you are a reasonable man, speak for me.'

'Mr Leigh only meant, I am sure, that the Holy Father's prudent intentions have been so far defeated by the perverseness and invincible misunderstanding of the heretics, that that which was in itself meant for the good of the oppressed English Catholics has been perverted to their harm.'

'And thus, reverend sir,' said Eustace, glad to get into his father's good graces again, 'my father attaches blame, not to the Pope—Heaven forbid!—but to the perversity of his enemies.'

'And it is for this very reason,' said Campian, 'that we have brought with us the present merciful explanation of the bull.'

'I'll tell you what, gentlemen,' said Mr Leigh, who, like other weak men, grew in valour as his opponent seemed inclined to make peace, 'I don't think the declaration was needed. After the new law of 1571 was made, it was never put in force till Mayne and Trudgeon made fools of themselves, and that was full six years. There were a few offenders, they say, who were brought up and admonished, and let go; but even that did not happen down here, and need not happen now, unless you put my son here (for you shall never put me, I warrant you) upon some deed which had better be left alone, and so bring us all to shame.'

'Your son, sir, is not openly vowed to God, has, I hope, a due sense of that inward vocation which we have seen in him, and reverences his spiritual fathers too well to listen to the temptations of his earthly father.'

'What, sir, will you teach my son to disobey me?'

'Your son is out of also, sir. This is strange language in one who owes a debt to the Church, which it was charitably fancied he meant to pay in the person of his child.'

These last words gouched poor Mr. Leigh in a sore point, and breaking all bounds, he swore roundly at Parsons, who stood foaming with rage.

'A plague upon you, sir, and a black assizes for you, for you will come to the gallows yet! Do you mean to taint me in my own house with that Hartland land? You had better go back and ask those who sent you where the dispensation to hold the land is, which they promised to get me years ago, and have gone on putting me off, till they have got my money, and my son, and my conscience, and I now before all the saints, seem now to want my head over and above God help me!'—and the poor man's eyes fairly filled with tears.

Now was Eustace's turn to be roused, for, after all, he was an Englishman and a gentleman, and he said, kindly enough, but firmly—

'Courage, my dearest father. Remember that I am still your son, and not a Jesuit yet, and whether I ever become one, I promise you, will depend mainly on the treatment which you meet with at the hands of these reverend gentlemen, for whom I, as having brought them hither, must consider myself as surety to you.'

If a powder-barrel had exploded in the Jesuits' faces, they could not have been more amazed. Campian looked blank at Parsons, and Parsons at Campian, till the stouter-hearted of the two, recovering his breath at last—

'Sir! do you know, sir, the curse pronounced on those who, after putting their hand to the plough, look back?'

Eustace was one of those impulsive men, with a lack of moral courage, who dare raise the devil, but never dare fight him after he has been raised, and he now tried to pass off his speech by winking and making signs in the direction of his father, as much as to say that he was only trying to quiet the old man's fears. But Campian was too frightened, Parsons too angry, to take his hints, and he had to carry his part through.

'All I read is, Father Parsons, that such are not fit for the kingdom of God, of which high honour I have for some time past felt myself unworthy. I have much doubt just now as to my vocation, and in the meanwhile have not forgotten that I am a citizen of a free country.' And so saying, he took his father's arm, and walked out.

His last words had hit the Jesuits hard. They had put the poor cobweb-spinners in mind of the humiliating fact, which they have had thrust on them daily from that time till now, and yet have never learnt the lesson, that all their scholastic cunning, plotting, intriguing, bulls, pardons, indulgences, and the rest of it, are, on this side the Channel, a mere enchanter's cloud-castle and Fata Morgana, which vanishes into empty air by one touch of that magic wand, the constable's staff. 'A citizen of a free country'!—there was the rub, and they looked at each other in more utter perplexity than ever. At last Parsons spoke.

'There's a woman in the wind. I'll lay my life on it. I saw him blush up crimson yesterday when his mother asked him whether some Rose Salterne or other was still in the neighbourhood.'

'A woman! Well the spirit may be willing, though the flesh be weak. We will inquire into this. The youth may do us good service as a layman; and if anything should happen to his elder brother (whom the saints protect!) he is heir to some wealth. In the meanwhile, our dear brother Parsons will perhaps see the expediency of altering our tactics somewhat while we are here.'

And thereupon a long conversation began between the two, who had been sent together, after the wise method of their order, in obedience to the precept, 'Two are better than one,'

in order that Campian might restrain Parsons' vehemence, and Parsons spur on Campian's gentleness, and so each act as the supplement of the other, and each also, it must be confessed, gave advice pretty nearly contradictory to his fellow's if occasion should require, 'without the danger,' as their writers have it, 'of seeming changeable and inconsistent.'

The upshot of this conversation was, that in a day or two (during which time Mr Leigh and Eustace also had made the *amende honorable*, and matters went smoothly enough) Father Campian asked Father Francis the household chaplain to allow him, as an especial favour, to hear Eustace's usual confession on the ensuing Friday.

Poor Father Francis dared not refuse so great a man, and assented with an inward groan, knowing well that the intent was to worm out some family secrets, whereby his power would be diminished, and the Jesuits increased. For the regular priesthood and the Jesuits throughout England were toward each other in a state of armed neutrality, which wanted but little at any moment to become open war, as it did in James the First's time, when those meek missionaries, by their gentle moral tortures, literally hunted to death the poor Popish bishop of Hippopotamus (that is to say, London) for the time being.

However, Campian heard Eustace's confession, and by putting to him such questions as may be easily conceived by those who know anything about the confessional, discovered satisfactorily enough that he was what Campian would have called 'in love'—though I should question much the propriety of the term as applied to any facts which poor prudent Campian discovered, or indeed knew how to discover, seeing that a swine has no eye for pearls. But he had found out enough. He smiled, and set to work, next vigorously to discover who the lady might be.

If he had frankly said to Eustace, 'I feel for you, and if your desires are reasonable, or lawful, or possible; I will help you with all my heart and soul,' he might have had the young man's secret heart, and saved himself an hour's trouble; but, of course, he took instinctively the crooked and suspicious method, expected to find the case the worst possible,—as a man was bound to do who had been trained to take the lowest possible view of human nature, and to consider the basest motives as the mainspring of all human action,—and began his moral torture accordingly by a series of delicate questions, which poor Eustace dodged in every possible way, though he knew that the good father was too cunning for him, and that he must give in at last. Nevertheless, like a rabbit who runs squealing round and round before the weasel, into whose jaws it knows that it must jump at last by force of fascination, he parried and parried, and pretended to be stupid, and surprised, and honourably scrupulous, and even angry; while every question as to her being married or single, Catholic or heretic, English

or foreign, brought his tormentor a step nearer the goal. At last, when Campian, finding the business not such a very bad one, had asked something about her worldly wealth, Eustace saw a door of escape and sprang at it.

'Even if she be a heretic, she is heiress to one of the wealthiest merchants in Devon.'

'Ah!' said Campian thoughtfully 'And she is but eighteen, you say?'

'Only eighteen.'

'Ah! well, my son, there is time. She may be reconciled to the Church, or you may change.'

'I shall die first.'

'Ah, poor soul! Well, she may be reconciled, and her wealth may be of use to the cause of Heaven.'

'And it shall be of use. Only absolve me, and let me be at peace. Let me have but her,' he cried piteously 'I do not want her wealth, —not I! Let me have but her, and that but for one year, one month, one day —and all the rest,—money, fame, talents, yea, my life itself, hers if it be needed,—are at the service of Holy Church. Ay, I shall glory in showing my devotion by some special sacrifice,—some desperate deed. Prove me now, and see what there is I will not do!'

And so Eustace was absolved, after which Campian added—

'This is indeed well, my son, for there is a thing to be done now, but it may be at the risk of life.'

'Prove me!' cried Eustace impatiently.

'Here is a letter which was brought me last night, no matter from whence, you can understand it better than I, and I longed to have shown it you, but that I feared my son had become—'

'You feared wrongly, then, my dear Father Campian.'

So Campian translated to him the cipher of the letter.

'This to Eyan Morgau, gentleman, at Mr Leigh's house in Moorwinshaw, Devonshire. News may be had by one who will go to the shore of Clovelly, any evening after the 25th of November, at dead low tide, and there watch for a boat, rowed by one with a red beard, and a Portugal by his speech. If he be asked, "How many?" he will answer, "Eight hundred and one." Take his letters and read them. If the shore be watched, let him who comes show a light three times in a safe place under the cliff above the town, below is dangerous landing. Farewell, and expect great things!'

'I will go,' said Eustace, 'to-morrow is the 25th, and I know a sure and easy place. Your friend seems to know these shores well.'

'Ah! what is it we do not know?' said Campian, with a mysterious smile. 'And now?'

'And now, to prove to you how I trust to you, you shall come with me, and see this—the lady of whom I spoke, and judge for yourself whether my fault is not a venial one.'

'Ah, my son, have I not absolved you

already? What have I to do with fair faces? Nevertheless, I will come, both to show you that I trust you, and it may be to help towards reclaiming a heretic, and saving a lost soul, who knows?'

So the two set out together, and, as it was appointed, they had just got to the top of the hill between Chapel and Stow mill, when up the lane came none other than Mistress Rose Salterne herself, in all the glories of a new scarlet hood, from under which her large dark languid eyes gleamed soft lightnings through poor Eustace's heart and marrow. Up to them she tripped on delicate ankles and tiny feet, tall, lithe, and graceful, a true West country lass, and as she passed them with a pretty blush and courtesy, even Campian looked back at the fair innocent creature, whose long dark curls, after the then country fashion, rolled down from beneath the hood below her waist, entangling the soul of Eustace Leigh within their glossy nets.

'There!' whispered he, trembling from head to foot. 'Can you excuse me now?'

'I had excused you long ago,' said the kind-hearted father. 'Alas, that so much fair red and white should have been created only as a feast for worms!'

'A feast for gods you mean!' cried Eustace, on whose common sense the naive absurdity of the last speech struck keenly, and then, as if to escape the scolding which he deserved for his heathenry—

'Will you let me return for a moment? I will follow you—let me go!'

Campian saw that it was of no use to say no, and nodded. Eustace darted from his side, and running across a field, met Rose full at the next turn of the road.

She started, and gave a pretty little shriek. 'Mr Leigh! I thought you had gone forward.'

'I came back to speak to you, Rose—Mistress Salterne, I mean.'

'To me?'

'To you I must speak, tell you all, or die! And he pressed up close to her. She shrank back somewhat frightened.

'Do not stir; do not go, I implore you! Rose, only hear me! And hereely and passionately seizing her by the hand, he poured out the whole story of his love, heaping her with every fantastic epithet of admiration which he could devise.

There was little, perhaps, of all his words which Rose had not heard many a time before, but there was a quiver in his voice, and a fire in his eye, from which she shrank by instinct.

'Let me go!' she said; 'you are too rough, sir!'

'Av!' he said, seizing now both her hands, 'rougher, perhaps, than the gay gallants of Bideford, who serenade you, and write sonnets to you, and send you posies. Rougher, but more loving, Rose! Do not turn away! I shall die if you take your eyes off me! Tell me, —

tell me, now here—this moment—before we part—if I may love you!

'Go away!' she answered, struggling and bursting into tears. 'This is too rude. If I am but a merchant's daughter, I am God's child. Remember that I am alone. Leave me, go! or I will call for help.'

Eustace had heard or read somewhere that such expressions in a woman's mouth were mere *façons de parler*, and on the whole signs that she had no objection to be alone, and did not intend to call for help, and he only grasped her hands the more fiercely, and looked into her face with keen and hungry eyes; but she was in earnest, nevertheless, and a loud shriek made him aware that, if he wished to save his own good name, he must go: but there was one question, for an answer to which he would risk his very life.

'Yes, proud woman! I thought so.' Some one of those gay gallants has been beforehand with me. Tell me who—'

But she broke from him, and passed him, and fled down the lane.

'Mark it!' cried he after her. 'You shall rue the day when you despised Eustace Leigh! Mark it, proud beauty!' And he turned back to join Campian, who stood in some trepidation.

'You have not hurt the maiden, my son? I thought I heard a scream.'

'Hurt her? No. Would God that she were dead, nevertheless, and I by her! Say no more to me, father. We will home.' Even Campian knew enough of the world to guess what had happened, and they both hurried home in silence.

And so Eustace Leigh played his move, and lost it.

Poor little Rose, having run nearly to Chapel, stopped for very shame, and walked quietly by the cottages which stood opposite the gate, and then turned up the lane towards Moorwinstow village, whither she was bound. But on second thoughts, she felt herself so 'red and flustered,' that she was afraid of going into the village, for fear (as she said to herself) of making people talk, and so, turning into a by-path, struck away toward the cliffs, to cool her blushes in the sea-breeze. And there finding a quiet grassy nook beneath the crest of the rocks, she sat down on the turf, and fell into a great meditation.

Rose Salterne was a thorough specimen of a West-coast maiden, full of passionate impulsive affections, and wild dreamy imaginations, a fit subject, as the North-Devon women are still, for all romantic and gentle superstitions. Left early without a mother's care, she had fed her fancy upon the legends and ballads of her native land, till she believed—what did she not believe!—of mermaids and pixies, charms and witches, dreams and omens, and all that world of magic in which most of the countrywomen, and countrymen too, believed firmly enough but twenty years ago. Therefore her father's house was

seldom without some merchant or sea-captain from foreign parts, who, like Othello, had his tales of—

'Autres vast, and deserts idle,
Of rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads reach
heaven.'

And—

'And of the cannibals that each other eat,
The anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders.'

All which tales she, like *Deidemonia*, devoured with greedy ears, whenever she could 'the house affairs with hasty despatch.' And when these failed, there was still boundless store of wonders open to her in old romances which were then to be found in every English house of the better class. *The Legend of King Arthur, Florio, and Blanchefleur, Sir Yvain, Sir Guy of Warwick, Palamon and Arcite*, and the *Roman of the Rose*, were with her text-books and canonical authorities. And lucky it was, perhaps, for her that Sidney's *Arcadia* was still in petto, or Mr. Frank (who had already seen the first book or two in manuscript, and extolled it above all books past, present, or to come) would have surely brought a copy down for Rose, and thereby have turned her poor little flighty brains upside down for ever. And with her head full of these, it was no wonder if she had likened herself of late more than once to some of those peerless princesses of old, for whose fair hand paladins and kaisers thundered against each other in tilted field, and perhaps she would not have been sorry (provided, of course, no one was killed) if duels and passages of arms in honour of her, as her father reasonably dreaded, had actually taken place.

For Rose was not only well aware that she was wooed, but found the said wooing (and little shame to her) a very pleasant process. Not that she had any wish to break hearts, she did not break her heart for any of her admirers and why should they break theirs for her? They were all very charming, each in his way (the gentlemen, at least, for she had long since learnt to turn up her nose at merchants and burghers), but one of them was not so very much better than the other.

Of course, Mr. Frank Leigh was the most charming, but then, as a courtier and squire of dames, he had never given her a sign of real love, nothing but sonnets and compliments, and there was no trusting such things from a gallant who was said (though, by the bye, most scandalously) to have a lady love at Milan, and another at Vienna, and half a dozen in the Court, and half a dozen more in the city.

And very charming was Mr. William Cary, with his quips and his jests, and his galliards and lavoltas, over and above his rich inheritance; but then, charming also Mr. Coffin of Portledge, though he were a little proud and stately; but which of the two should she choose? It would be very pleasant to be mistress of Clovelly Court; but just as pleasant to find

herself lady of Portledge, where the Coffins had lived ever since Noah's flood (if, indeed, they had not merely returned thither after that temporary displacement), and to bring her wealth into a family which was as proud of its antiquity as any nobleman in Devon, and might have made a fourth to that famous trio of Devonshire C's, of which it is written,—

'Crocker, Cruwys, and Copplostone,
When the Conqueror came were all at home. e

And Mr Hugh Fortescue, too—people said that he was certain to become a great soldier—perhaps as great as his brother Arthur—and that would be pleasant enough, too, though he was but the younger son of an unimpaired family—but then, so was Amyas Leigh. Ah, poor Amyas! Her girl's fancy for him had vanished, or rather, perhaps, it was very much what it always had been, only that four or five more girl's fancies beside it had entered in, and kept it in due subjection. But still, she could not help thinking a good deal about him, and his voyage, and the reports of his great strength, and beauty, and valour, which had already reached her in that out-of-the-way corner, and though she was not in the least in love with him, she could not help hoping that he had at least (to put her pretty little thought in the mildest shape) not altogether forgotten her, and was hungering, too, with all her fancy, to give him no peace till he had told her all the wonderful things which he had seen and done in this over-memorable voyage. So that altogether it was no wonder if in her last night's dream the figure of Amyas had been even more forward and troublesome than that of Frank or the rest.

But, moreover, another figure had been forward and troublesome enough in last night's sleep-world; and forward and troublesome enough, too, now in to day's waking-world, namely, Eustace, the rejected. How strange that she should have dreamt of him the night before! and dreamt, too, of his fighting with Mr Frank and Mr Amyas! It must be a warning—see, she had met him the very next day in this strange way, so the first half of her dream had come true, and after what had past, she only had to breathe a whisper, and the second part of the dream would come true also. If she wished for a passage of arms in her own honour, she could easily enough compass one. Not that she would do it for worlds! And after all, though Mr Eustace had been very rude and naughty, yet still it was not his own fault, he could not help being in love with her. And—and, in short, the poor little maid felt herself one of the most important personages on earth, with all the cares (or hearts) of the country in her keeping, and as much perplexed with matters of weight as ever was any Cleopatra, or Dianeme, Flordisyna or Flordaluce, in verse run tame, or prose run mad.

Poor little Rose! Had she but had a mother! But she was to learn her lesson, such as it was, in another school. She was too shy (too proud

perhaps) to tell her aunt her mighty troubles; but a counsellor she must have; and after sitting with her head in her hands, for half an hour or more, she arose suddenly, and started off along the cliffs towards Marsland. She would go and see Lucy Passmore, the white witch; Lucy knew everything, Lucy would tell her what to do, perhaps even whom to marry.

Lucy was a fat, jolly woman of fifty, with little pig-eyes, which twinkled like sparks of fire, and eyebrows which sloped upwards and outwards, like those of a satyr, as if she had been (as indeed she had) all her life looking out of the corners of her eyes. Her qualifications as white witch were boundless, cunning, equally boundless good nature, considerable knowledge of human weaknesses, some meagre power, some skill in 'yarbs,' as she called her simples, a firm faith in the virtue of her own incantations, and the faculty of holding her tongue. By dint of these she contrived to gain a fair share of money, and also (which she liked even better) of power, among the simple folk for many miles round. If a child was scalded, a tooth ached, a piece of silver was stolen, a huffer shrew-struck, a pig bewitched, a young damsel crost in love, Lucy was called in, and Lucy found a remedy, especially for the latter complaint. Now and then she found herself on ticklish ground, for the kind-heartedness which compelled her to help all distressed damsels out of a scrape, sometimes compelled her also to help them into one, whereon enraged fathers called Lucy ugly names, and threatened to send her into Boker gaul for a witch, and she smiled quietly, and hinted that if she were 'like some that were ready to retain evil for evil, such talk as that would bring no blessing on them that spoke it,' which being translated into plain English, meant, 'If you trouble me, I will overlook (i.e. fascinate) you, and then your pigs will die, your horses stray, your cream turn sour, your barns be fired, your son have St. Vitus's dance, your daughter fits, and so on, woe on woe, till you are very probably starved to death in a ditch, by virtue of this terrible little eye of mine, at which, in spite of all your swearing and bullying, you know you are now shaking in your shoes for fear. So you had much better hold your tongue, give me a drink of cider, and leave ill alone, lest you make it worse.'

Not that Lucy ever proceeded to any such fearful extremities. On the contrary, her boast and her belief too, was, that she was sent into the world to make poor souls as happy as she could, by lawful means, of course, if possible, but if not—why unlawful ones were better than none, for she 'couldn't a-bear to see the poor creatures taking on, she was too, too tender-hearted.' And so she was, to every one but her husband, a tall, simple-hearted, rabbit-faced man, a good deal older than herself. Fully agreeing with Sir Richard Grenville's great axiom, that he who cannot obey cannot rule, Lucy had been for the last five-and-twenty years training him pretty smartly to obey her, with the inten-

tion, it is to be charitably hoped, of letting him rule her in turn when his lesson was perfected. He bore his honour, however, meekly enough, having a boundless respect for his wife's wisdom, and a firm belief in her supernatural powers, and let her go her own way and earn her own money, while he got a little more in a truly pastoral method (not extinct yet along those lonely cliffs), by feeding a herd of some dozen donkeys and twenty goats. The donkeys fetched, at each low-tide, white shell-sand which was to be sold for manure to the neighbouring farmers, the goats furnished milk and 'kiddy-mies', and when there was neither milking nor sand-carrying to be done, old Will Pismore just sat under a sunny rock and watched the buck-goats fatten their horns together, thinking about nothing at all, and taking very good care all the while neither to inquire nor to see who came in and out of his little cottage in the glee.

The Prophetess, when Rose approached her oracular cave, was seated on a tripod in front of the fire, distilling strong waters out of penny royal. But no sooner did her distinguished visitor appear at the hatch, than the still was left to take care of itself, and a clean apron and natch having been slipped on, Lucy welcomed Rose with endless courtesies, and—'Bless my dear soul alive, who ever would have thought to see the Rose of Torridge to my poor little place!'

Rose sat down and then? How to begin was more than she knew, and she stayed silent a full five minutes, looking earnestly at the point of her shoe, till Lucy, who was an adept in such cases, thought it best to proceed to business at once, and save Rose the delicate operation of opening the hall herself, and so, in her own way, half fawning, half familiar—

'Well, my dear young lady, and what is it I can do for ye? For I guess you want a bit of old Lucy's help, oh? Though I'm most mazed to see ye here, surely I should have supposed that pretty face could manage they sort of matters for itself. Eh?'

Rose, thus bluntly charged, confessed at once, and with many blushes and hesitations, made her soon understand that what she wanted was 'To have her fortune told.'

'Eh? Oh! I see. The pretty face has managed it a bit too well already, eh? Tu many o'mug, pure fellows! Well, tain't overy mayden has her pick and choose, like some I know of, as be blest in love by stars above. So you h'ant made up your mind, then?'

Rose shook her head.

'Ah—well,' she went on, in a half bantering tone. 'Not so ay, is it, then? One's gude for one thing, and one for another, eh? One has the blood, and another the money.'

And so the 'cunning woman' (as she truly was), talking half to herself, ran over all the names which she thought likely, peering at Rose all the while out of the corners of her foxy bright eyes, while Rose stirred the peat ashes steadfastly with the point of her little shoe, half

angry, half ashamed, half frightened, to find that 'the cunning woman' had guessed so well both her suitors and her thoughts about them, and tried to look unconcerned at each name as it came out.

'Well, well,' said Lucy, who took nothing by her move, simply because there was nothing to take, 'think over it—think over it, my dear life; and if you did set your mind on any one—why, then—then maybe I might help you to a sight of him.'

'A sight of him?'

'His spirit, dear life, his spirit only, I mane. I 'udn't have no keeping company in my house, no, not for gowld untowld, I 'udn't, but the spirit of man—to ye, whether man would be true or not, you'd like to know that, now, 'udn't you, my darling?'

Rose sighed, and stirred the ashes about vehemently.

'I must first know who it is to be. If you could show me that—now—'

'Oh, I can show ye that, tu, I can. Ben there's a way to 't, a sure way, but 'tis mortal cold for the time o' year, ye see.'

'But what is it, then?'

said Rose, who had in her heart been longing for something of that very kind, and had half made up her mind to ask for a charm.

'Why, you'm not afraid to go into the say by night for a minute, ar you? And to-morrow night would serve, too, 'twill be just low tide to midnight.'

'If you would come with me perhaps—'

'I'll come, I'll come, and stand within call, to be sure. Only do ye mind this, dear soul alive, not to go telling a crumb about man, nor, not for the world, or ye'll see nought at all, indeed, now. And beside, there's a noxious business grow'd up against me up to Chapel there; and I hear tell how Mr. Leigh, saith I shall to Exeter gaol for a witch—did ye ever hear the likes?—because his groom Jan saith I overlooked man—the Papist dog! And now never he nor 'th' owl Father Francis goo by me without a speting, and saying of their Aves and Maligas—I do know what their Romanian Latin do mane, so well as ever they, I du!—and a making o' their charms and incantations to their saints and idols! They be mortal feared of witches, they Papists, and mortal hard on 'em, even on a pure body like me, that doth a lat in the white way, 'case why you see, dear life,' said she, with one of her humorous twinkles, 'tu to a trade ye never agree. Do ye try my bit of a charm, now, do ye?'

Rose could not resist the temptation; and between them both the charm was agreed on, and the next night was fixed for its trial, on the payment of certain current coins of the realm (for Lucy, of course, must live by her trade), and slipping a tester into the dame's hand as earnest, Rose went away home, and got there in safety.

But in the meanwhile, at the very hour that Eustace had been prosecuting his suit in the

lane at Moorwinstow, a very different scene was being enacted in Mrs. Leigh's room at Burrongh.

For the night before, Amyas, as he was going to bed, heard his brother Frank in the next room tune his lute, and then begin to sing. And both their windows being open, and only a thin partition between the chambers, Amyas's admiring ears came in for every word of the following canzonet, buffy in that delicate and mellow tenor voice for which Frank was famed among all fair ladies—

'Ah, tyrant Love, Mignonne's serpents bearing,
Why thus requite my sighs with venom'd snar?
Ah, ruthless dove, the vulture's talons wearing,
Why flesh them, traitress, in this faithful heart?
Is this my meed? Most dragons' teeth alone
In Venus' lap, by lovers' hands be sown?
'Nay, gentlest Cupid, 'twas my pride misdeed me,
Nay, guiltless dove, thy mine own wound I fell
To worship, not to wed, Celestials bid me
I dreamt to mate in heaven, and wake in hell,
For ever doom'd, Ixion-like, to reel
On mine own passions' ever burning wheel

At which the simple sailor sighed, and longed that he could write such neat verses, and sing them so sweetly. How he would besiege the ear of Rose Salterne with amorous ditties! But still, he could not be every thing, and if he had the bone and muscle of the family, it was but fair that Frank should have the brains and voice, and, after all, he was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and it was just the same as if he himself could do all the fine things which Frank could do, for as long as one of the family won honour, what matter which of them it was? Whereon he shouted through the wall, 'Good night, old song-thrush, I suppose I need not pay the musician.'

'What, awake?' answered Frank. 'Come in here, and lull me to sleep with a sea-song.'

So Amyas went in, and found Frank laid on the outside of his bed not yet undrest.

'I am a bad sleeper,' said he, 'I spend more time, I fear, in burning the midnight oil than prudent men should. Come and be my jongleur, my mine-singer, and tell me about Andes, and cannibals, and the ice-regions, and the fire-regions, and the paradises of the West.'

So Amyas sat down, and told—but somehow, every story which he tried to tell came round, by crooked paths, yet sure, to none other point than Rose Salterne, and how he thought of her here and thought of her there, and how he wondered what she would say if she had seen him in this adventure, and how he longed to have had her with him to show her that glorious sight, till Frank let him have his own way, and then out came the whole story of the simple fellow's daily and hourly devotion to her, through those three long years of world-wide wanderings.

'And oh, Frank, I could hardly think of anything but her in the church the other day, God forgive me! and it did seem so hard for her to be the only face which I did not see—and have not seen her yet, either.'

'So I thought, dear lad,' said Frank, with one of his sweetest smiles, 'and tried to get

her father to let her impersonate the nymph of Torrbridge.'

'Did you, you dear kind fellow? That would have been too delicious.'

'Just so, too delicious, wherefore, I suppose, it was ordained not to be, that which was being delicious enough.'

'And is she as pretty as ever?'

'Ten times as pretty, dear lad, as half the young fellows round have discovered. If you mean to win her and wear her (and God grant you may fare no worse!) you will have rivals enough to get rid of.'

'Humph!' said Amyas, 'I hope I shall not have to make short work with some of them.'

'I hope not,' said Frank, laughing. 'Now go to bed, and to-morrow morning give your sword to mother to keep, lest you should be tempted to draw it on any of her Majesty's lieges.'

'No fear of that, Frank, I am no awash buckler, thank God, but if any one gets in my way, I'll serve him as the mastiff did the terrier, and just drop him over the quay into the river, to cool himself, or my name's not Amyas.'

And the giant strong himself laughing out of the room, and slept all night like a seal, not without dreams, of course, of Rose Salterne.

The next morning, according to his wont, he went into his mother's room, whom he was sure to find up and at her prayers, for he liked to say his prayers, too, by her side, as he used to do when he was a little boy. It seemed so homelike, he said, after three years' knocking up and down in no-man's-land. But coming gently to the door, for fear of disturbing her, and entering unperceived, beheld a sight which stopped him short.

Mrs. Leigh was sitting in her chair, with her face bowed fondly down upon the head of his brother Frank, who lay before her, his face buried in her lap. Amyas could see that his whole form was quivering with stifled emotion. Then mother was just finishing the last words of a well-known text—'for my sake, and the Gospel's, shall receive a hundredfold in this present life, fathers, and mothers, and brothers, and sisters.'

'But not a wife!' interrupted Frank, with a voice stifled with sobs, 'that was too precious a gift for even Him to promise to those who gave up a first love for His sake.'

'And yet,' said he, after a moment's silence, 'has He not heaped me with blessings enough already, that I must repine and rage at His refusing me one more, even though that one be—No, mother! I am your son, and God's, and you shall know it, even though Amyas never does!' And he looked up with his clear blue eyes and white forehead, and his face was as the face of an angel.

Both of them saw that Amyas was present, and started and blushed. His mother motioned him away with her eyes, and he went quietly out, as one stunned. Why had his name been mentioned?

Love, cunning love, told him right at once

This was the meaning of last night's canzonet! This was why its words had seemed to fit his own heart so well! His brother was his rival And he had been telling him all his love last night. What a stupid brute he was! How it must have made poor Frank wince! And then Frank had listened so kindly, even bid him God speed in his suit. What a gentleman old Frank was, to be sure! No wonder the Queen was so fond of him, and all the Court ladies! —Why, if it came to that, what wonder if Rose Salterno should be fond of him too? Hey-day! 'That would be a pretty fish to find in my net when I come to haul it!' quoth Amyas to himself, as he paced the garden, and clutching desperately hold of his locks with both hands, as if to hold his poor confused head on its shoulders, he strode and tramped up and down the shell-paved garden walks for a full half-hour, till Frank's voice (as cheerful as ever, though he more than suspected all) called him 'Come in to breakfast, lad, and stop grinning and creaking upon those miserable limpets, before thou hast set every tooth in many head on edge!'

Amyas, whether by dint of holding his head straight, or by higher means, had got the thoughts of the said head straight enough by this time, and in he came, and fell to upon the broiled fish and strong ale, with a sort of fury, as determined to do his duty to the utmost in all matters that day, and therefore, of course, in that most important matter of bodily sustenance, while his mother and Frank looked at him, not without anxiety and even terror, doubting what turn his fancy might have taken in so new a case, at last—

'My dear Amyas, you will really heat your blood with all that strong ale! Remember, those who drink beer, drink beer.'

'Then they think right good thoughts, mother And in the meanwhile, those who drink water, think water. Eh, old Frank! and here's your health.'

'And clouds are water,' said his mother, somewhat reassured by his genuine good-humour, 'and so are rainbows; and clouds are angels' thrones, and rainbows the sign of God's peace on earth.'

Amyas understood the hint, and laughed 'Then I'll pledge Frank out of the next ditch, if it please you and him. But first—I say—he must hearken to a parable, a manner mystery, miracle play, I have got in my head, like what they have at Easter, to the town-hall. Now then, hearken, madam, and I and Frank will act.' And up rose Amyas, and shoved back his chair, and put on a solemn face.

Mrs. Leigh looked up, trembling, and Frank, he scarce knew why, rose.

'No, you pitch again. You are King David, and sit still upon your throne. David was a great singer, you know, and a player on the viols, and ruddy, too, and of a fair countenance, so that will fit. Now, then, mother, don't look so frightened. I am not going to

play Goliath, for all my cubits; I am to present Nathan the prophet. Now, David, hearken, for I have a message unto thee, O King!

'There were two men in one city, one rich, and the other poor; and the rich man had many flocks and herds, and all the fine ladies in Whitehall to court if he liked, and the poor man had nothing but—'

And in spite of his broad honest smile, Amyas's deep voice began to tremble and choke.

Frank sprang up and burst into tears:—'Oh, Amyas, my brother, my brother! stop! I cannot endure this. Oh, God! was it not enough to have entangled myself in this fatal fancy, but over and above, I must meet the shame of my brother's discovering it!'

'What shame, then, Ed? to know!' said Amyas, recovering himself. 'Look here, brother Frank! I've thought it all over in the garden, and I was an ass and a braggart for talking to you as I did last night. Of course you love her! Everybody must; and I was a fool for not recollecting that; and if you love her, your taste and mine agree, and what can be better! I think you are a sensible fellow for loving her, and you think me one. And as for who has her, why, you're the eldest; and first come first served is the rule, and best to keep to it. Besides, brother Frank, though I'm no scholar, yet I'm not so blind but that I tell the difference between you and me, and of course your chance against mine, for a hundred to one, and I am not going to be fool enough to row against wind and tide too. I'm good enough for her, I hope; but if I am, you are better, and the good dog may run, but it's the best that takes the hare, and so I have nothing more to do with the matter at all, and if you marry her, why, it will set the old house on its legs again, and that's the first thing to be thought of, and you may just as well do it as I, and better too. Not but that it's a plague, a horrible plague!' went on Amyas, with a ludicrously doleful visage, 'but so are other things too, by the dozen; it's all in the day's work, as the huntsman said when the lion ate him. One would never get through the furze-croft if one stopped to pull out the prickles. The pig didn't scramble out of the ditch by squeaking; and the less said the sooner mended, nobody was sent into the world only to smelt honey-pots. What must be must, man is but dust; if you can't get crumb, you must fain eat crust. So I'll go and join the army in Ireland, and get it out of my head, for cannon balls fright away love as well as poverty does; and that's all I've got to say.' Wherewith Amyas sat down, and returned to the beer, while Mrs. Leigh wept tears of joy.

'Amyas! Amyas!' said Frank; 'you must not throw away the hopes of years, and for me, too! Oh, how just was your parable! Ah! mother mine! to what use is all my scholarship and my philosophy, when this dear simple sailor-lad outdoes me at the first trial of courtesy!'

'My children, my children, which of you shall I love best? Which of you is the more noble? I thanked God this morning for having given me one such son, but to have found that I possess two!' And Mrs. Leigh laid her head on the table, and buried her face in her hands, while the generous battle went on.

'But, dearest Amyas!—'

'But, Frank! if you don't hold your tongue, I must go forth. It was quite trouble enough to make up one's mind, without having you afterwards trying to unmake it again.'

'Amyas! if you give her up to me, God do so to me, and more also, if I do not hereby give her up to you!'

'He had done it already—this morning!' said Mrs. Leigh, looking up through her tears. 'He renounced her for ever on his knees before me! only he is too noble to tell you so.'

'The more reason I should copy him,' said Amyas, setting his lips, and trying to look desperately determined, and then suddenly jumping up, he leaped upon Frank, and throwing his arms round his neck, sobbed out, 'There, there, now! For God's sake, let us forget all, and think about our mother, and the old house, and how we may win her honour before we die! and that will be enough to keep our hands full, without fretting about this woman and that.—What an ass I have been for years, instead of learning my calling, dreaming about her, and don't know at this minute whether she cares more for me than she does for her father's 'prentices!'

'O Amyas! every word of yours puts me to fresh shame! Will you believe that I know as little of her likings as you do!'

Don't tell me that, and play the devil's game by putting fresh hopes into me, when I am trying to kick them out. I won't believe it. If she is not a fool, she must love you, and if she don't, why, beheaded if she is worth loving!

'My dearest Amyas! I must ask you to make no more such speeches to me. All those thoughts I have forsworn.'

'Only this morning; so there is time to catch them again before they are gone too far.'

'Only this morning,' said Frank, with a quiet smile. 'but centuries have passed since then.'

'Centuries! I don't see many gray hairs yet.'

'I should not have been surprised if you had, though,' answered Frank, in so sad and meaning a tone that Amyas could only answer—

'Well, you are an angel!'

'You, at least, are something even more to the purpose, for you are a man!'

And both spoke truth, and so the little ended; and Frank went to his books, while Amyas, who must needs be doing, if he was not to dream, started off to the dockyard to potter about a new ship of Sir Richard's, and forget his woes, in the capacity of Sir Oracle among the sailors. And so he had played his move for Rose, even as Eustace had, and lost her; but not as Eustace had.

CHAPTER V

CLOVELLY COURT IN THE OLDEN TIME

'It was among the ways of good Queen Bess,
Who ruled as well as ever mortal can, sir,
When she was stog'd, and the country in a mess,
She was wont to send for a Devon man, sir.'
West Country Song

THE next morning Amyas Leigh was not to be found. Not that he had gone out to drown himself in despair, or even to bemoan himself 'down by the Torridge side'. He had simply ridden off, Frank found, to Sir Richard Grenville at Stow. His mother at once divined the truth, that he was gone to try for a post in the Irish army, and sent off Frank after him to bring him home again, and make him at least reconsider himself.

So Frank took horse and rode thereon ten miles or more. And then, as there were no inns on the road in those days, or indeed in these, and he had some ten miles more of hilly road before him, he turned down the hill towards Clovelly Court, to obtain, after the hospitable humane fashion of those days, good entertainment for man and horse from Mr. Cary the squire.

And when he walked self-invited, like the loud-shouting Menelaus, in the long dark wainscoted hall of the Court, the first object he beheld was the mighty form of Amyas, who, seated at the long table, was alternately burying his face in a pasty, and the pasty in his face, his sorrows having, as it seemed, only sharpened his appetite, while young Will Cary, kneeling on the opposite bench, with his elbows on the table was in that graceful attitude laying down the law fiercely to him in a low voice.

'Hillo! la!', cried Amyas, 'come hither and deliver me out of the hands of this here ester, who I verily believe will kill me, if I do not let him kill some one else.'

'Ah! Mr. Frank,' said Will Cary, who, like all other young gentlemen of these parts, held Frank in high honour, and considered him a very oracle and cyusure of fashion and chivalry, 'welcome here! I was just longing for you, too; I wanted your advice on half a dozen matters. Sit down, and eat. There is the ale.'

'Nouse so early, thank you.'

'Ah no!' said Amyas, burying his head in the tankard, and then unlicking Frank, 'avoy! strong ale o' mornings. It heats the blood, thickens the animal spirits, and obfuscates the cerebrum with frenetic and lymphatic idola, which cloud the quintessential light of the pure reason. Eh! young Plato, young Daniel, come hither to judgment! And yet, though I cannot see through the bottom of the tankard already, I can see plain enough 'gill to see this, that Will shall not fight.'

'Shall I not, eh? who says that?' Mr. Frank, I appeal to you, now, only hear.'

'We are in the judgment seat,' said Frank, settling to the pasty. 'Proceed, appellant.'

'Well, I was telling Amyas, that Tom Coffin, of Portledge; I will stand him no longer.'

'Let him be, then,' said Amyas, 'he could stand very well by himself, when I saw him last.'

'Plague on you, hold your tongue. Has he any right to look at me as he does, whenever I pass him?'

'That depends on how he looks, a cat may look at a king, provided she don't take him for a mouse.'

'Oh, I know how he looks, and what he means too, and he shall stop, or I will stop him. And the other day, when I spoke of Rome Salterno.'—'Ah!' groaned Frank, 'At's apple again!'—(never mind what I said) he burst out laughing in my face, and is not that a fair quarrel? And what is more, I know that he wrote a sonnet, and sent it to her to Stow by a market woman. What right has he to write sonnets when I can't? It's not fair play, Mr Frank, or I am a Jew, and a Spaniard, and a Papist; it's not!' And Will smote the table till the plates danced again.

'My dear knight of the burning pestle, I have a plan, a device, a disentanglement, according to most approved rules of chivalry. Let us fix a day, and summon by tuck of drum all young gentlemen under the age of thirty, dwelling within fifteen miles of the habitation of that peerless Oriana.'

'And all prentice-boys too,' cried Amyas out of the paste.

'And all prentice-boys. The bold lads shall fight first, with good quarter-staves, in Billfold Market, till all heads are broken, and the head which is not broken, let the back belonging to it pay the penalty of the noble member's cowardice. After which grand tournament, to which that of Tottenham shall be but a flea-bite and a batrachomyomachy—'

'Confound you, and your long words, sir,' said poor Will, 'I know you are flouting me.'

'Parienza, Signor Cavaliere, that which is to come is no flouting, but bloody and valiant earnest. For afterwards all the young gentlemen shall adjourn into a convenient field, sand, or bog—which last will be better, as no man will be able to run away, if he be up to his knees in soft peat and there stripping to our shirts, with rapiers of equal length and keenest temper, each shall slay his man, each who catch can, and the conquerors fight again, like a most valiant man of gamecocks as we are, till all be dead, and out of their woes, after which the survivor, bewailing before heaven and earth the cruelty of our fair Oriana, and the slaughter which her basiliscan eyes have caused, shall fall gracefully upon his sword, and so end the woes of this our lovelorn generation. *Piacetne Domini?* as they used to ask in the Senate at Oxford.'

'Really,' said Cary, 'this is too bad.'

'So is, pardon me, your fighting M. Coffin with anything longer than a bodkin.'

'Bodkins are too short for such fierce Bohadils,' said Amyas, 'they would close in so near,

that we should have them falling to fistcuffs after the first bout.'

'Then let them fight with squirts across the market-place, for by heaven and the Queen's laws, they shall fight with nothing else.'

'My dear Mr Cary,' went on Frank, suddenly changing his bantering tone to one of the most winning sweetness; 'do not fancy that I cannot feel for you, or that I, as well as you, have not known the stings of love and the bitterer stings of jealousy. But oh, Mr Cary, does it not seem to you an awful thing to waste selfishly upon your own quarrel that divine wrath, which, as Plato says, is the very root of all virtues, and which has been given you, like all else which you have, that you may spend it in the service of her whom all bad souls fear, and all virtuous souls adore,—our peerless Queen? Who dares, while she rules England, call his sword or his courage his own, or any one's but hers. Are there no Spaniards to conquer, no wild Irish to deliver from their oppressors, that two gentlemen of Devon can find no better place to flesh their blades than in each other's valiant and honourable hearts?'

'By heaven!' cried Amyas, 'Frank speaks like a book; and for me, I do think that Christian gentlemen may leave love quarrels to bulls and rams.'

'And that the heir of Clovelly,' said Frank, smiling, 'may find more noble examples to copy than the stags in his own deer park.'

'Well,' said Will penitently, 'you are a great scholar, Mr. Frank, and you speak like one, but gentlemen must fight sometimes, or where would be their honour?'

'I speak,' said Frank, a little proudly, 'not merely as a scholar, but as a gentleman, and one who has fought ere now, and to whom it has happened, Mr. Cary, to kill his man (on whose soul may God have mercy), but it is my pride to remember that I have never yet fought in my own quarrel, and my trust in God that I never shall. For as there is nothing more noble and blessed than to fight in behalf of those whom we love, so to fight in our own private behalf is a thing not to be allowed to a Christian man, unless refusal imports utter loss of life or honour, and even then, at may be (though I would not lay a burden on any man's conscience), it is better not to resist evil, but to overcome it with good.'

'And I can tell you, Will,' said Amyas, 'I am not troubled with fear of ghosts; but when I cut off the Frenchman's head I said to myself, "If that braggart had been slandering me instead of her gracious Majesty, I should expect to see that head lying on my pillow every time I went to bed at night."'

'God forbid!' said Will, with a shudder. 'But what shall I do for to the market to-morrow I will go, if it were choke-full of Coffins, and a ghost in each coffin of the lot.'

'Leave the matter to me,' said Amyas. 'I have my device, as well as scholar Frank here, and if there be, as I suppose there must be, a quarrel in the market to-morrow, see if I do not—'

'Well, you are two good fellows,' said Will. 'Let us have another tankard in.'

'And drink the health of Mr. Cossin, and all gallant lads of the North,' said Frank; 'and new to my business. I have to take this run-away youth home to his mother, and if he will not go quietly, I have orders to carry him across my saddle.'

'I hope your nag has a strong back, then,' said Amyas; 'but I must go on and see Sir Richard, Frank. It is all very well to jest as we have been doing, but my mind is made up.'

'Stop,' said Cary. 'You must stay here to-night; first, for good fellowship's sake, and next, because I want the advice of our Phoenix here, our oracle, our paragon. There, Mr. Frank, can you converse that for me? Speak low, though, gentlemen both; there comes my father; you had better give me the letter again. Well, father, whence this morning?'

'Eh, company here? Young men, you are always welcome, and such as you. Would there were more of your sort in these dirty times. How is your good mother, Frank, eh? Where have I been, Will? Round the house-farm, to look at the beaver. That silver heifer of Prowse's is all wrong; her coat shines like a hedge-pig's. Tell Jewell to go up and bring her in before night. And then up the forty acres, spring two coveys, and pick a leach out of them. The Irish hawk flies as wild as any haggard still, and will never make a bird. I had to hand her to Tom, and take the little peregrine. Give me a Clovelly hawk against the world, after all, and—heigh ho, I am very hungry! Half-past twelve, and dinner not served! What, Master Amyas, spoiling your appetite with strong ale? Better have tried sack, lad, have some now with me.'

And the worthy old gentleman, having finished his oration, settled himself on a great bench beside the chimney, and put his hawk on a perch over his head, while his cokers coiled themselves up close to the warm pent-ashes, and his son set to work to pull off his father's boots, and sundry warnings to take care of his corns.

'Come, Master Amyas, a pint of white wine and sugar, and a bit of a shoeing-horn to it ere we dine. Some pickled prawns, now, or a rasher off the coals, to what you?'

'Thank you,' quoth Amyas, 'but I have drunk a mort of outlandish liquors, better and worse, in the last three years, and yet never found ought to come up to good ale, which needs neither shoeing horn before nor after, but takes care of itself, and of all honest stomachs too, I think.'

'You speak like a book, boy,' said old Cary, 'and after all, what a plague comes of these new-fangled hot wines, and aqua vitæ, which have come in since the wars, but maddening of the brains, and fever of the blood?'

'I fear we have not seen the end of that yet,' said Frank. 'My friends write me from the Netherlands that our men are falling into a swinish trick of swilling like the Hollanders.'

Heaven grant that they may not bring home the fashion with them.'

'A man must drink, they say, or die of the ague, in those vile swamps,' said Amyas. 'When they get home here, they will not need it.'

'Heaven grant it,' said Frank, 'I should be sorry to see Devonshire a drunken county; and there are many of our men out there with Mr. Champernoun.'

'Ah,' said Cary, 'there, as in Ireland, we are proving her Majesty's saying true, that Devonshire is her right hand, and the young children thereof like the arrows in the hand of the giant.'

'They may well be,' said his son, 'when some of them are giants themselves, like my tall schoolfellow opposite.'

'He will be up and doing again presently, I'll warrant him,' said old Cary.

'And that I shall,' quoth Amyas. 'I have been devising brave deeds, and see in the distance suchanther to be bound, dragons choked, empires conquered, though not in Holland.'

'You do?' asked Will a little sharply; for he had had a half suspicion that more was meant than met the ear.

'Yes,' said Amyas, turning off his jest again, 'I go to what Raleigh calls the Land of the Nymphs. Another month, I hope, will see me abroad in Ireland.'

'Abroad? Call it rather at home,' said old Cary, 'for it is full of Devon men from end to end, and you will be among friends all day long. George Bourchier from Tavistock has the army now in Munster, and Warham St. Leger is Marshal, George Carew is with Lord Grey of Wilton (poor Peter Carew was killed at Glendalough), and after the defeat last year, when that villain Desmond cut off Herbert and Price, the companies were made up with six hundred Devon men, and Arthur Fortescue at their head, so that the old county holds her head as proudly in the Land of the Lion as she does in the Low Countries and the Spanish Main.'

'And where,' asked Amyas, 'is a Davils of Marsland, who used to teach me how to catch trout, when I was staying down at Stow? He is in Ireland, too, is he not?'

'Ah, my lad,' said Mr. Cary, 'that is a sad story. I thought all England had known it.'

'You forget, sir, I am a stranger. Surely he is not dead?'

'Murdered foully, lad! Murdered like a dog, and by the man whom he had treated as his son, and who pretended, the false knave, to call him father.'

'His blood is avenged!' said Amyas fiercely.

'No, by heaven, not yet! No, don't cry out again. I am getting old—I must tell my story my own way. It was last July—was it not, Will?—Over comes to Ireland Sanders, one of those Jesuit foxes, as the Pope's legate, with money and bulls, and a banner hallowed by the Pope, and the devil knows what beside, and with him James Fitzmaurice, the same fellow who had sworn on his knees to Perrott, in the church at Kilmallock, to be a true liege-

man to Queen Elizabeth, and confirmed it by all his saints, and such a world of his Irish howling, that Porrott told me he was fain to stop his own ears. Well, he had been practising with the King of France, but got nothing but laughter for his pains, and so went over to the Most Catholic King, and promises him to join Ireland to Spain, and set up Popery again, and what not. And he, I suppose, thinking it better that Ireland should belong to him than to the Pope's bastard, fits him out, and sends him off on such another errand as Stukely's,—though I will say, for the honour of Devon, if Stukely lived like a fool, he died like an honest man."

"Sir Thomas Stukely dead too?" said Amyas.

"Wait a while, lad, and you shall have that tragedy afterwards. Well, where was I? Oh, Fitzmaurice and the Jesuits land at Smerwick, with three ships, choose a place for a fort, bless it with their holy water, and their moppings and their scourgings, and the rest of it, to purify it from the stain of heretic dominion; but in the meanwhile one of the Courtenays—a Courtenay of Haccombe, was it?—or a Courtenay of Boconnock? Silence, Will, I shall have it in a minute—yes, a Courtenay of Haccombe it was, lying at anchor near by, in a ship of war of his, cuts out the three ships, and cuts off the Dons from the sea. John and James Desmond, with some small rabble, go over to the Spaniards. Earl Desmond will not join them, but will not fight them, and stands by to take the winning side, and then in comes poor Davils, sent down by the Lord Deputy to charge Desmond and his brothers, in the Queen's name, to assault the Spaniards. Folks say it was rash of his Lordship, but I say, what could be better done? Every one knows that there never was a stoutier or shrewder soldier than Davils, and the young Desmonds, I have heard him say many a time, used to look on him as their father. But he found out what it was to trust Englishmen turned Irish. Well, the Desmonds found out on a sudden that the Dons were such desperate Paladins that it was madness to meddle, though they were five to one, and poor Davils, seeing that there was no fight in them, goes back for help, and sleeps that night at some place called Tralee. Arthur Carter of Bideford, St. Legu's lieutenant, as stout an old soldier as Davils himself, sleeps in the same bed with him, the lacquey-boy, who is now with Sir Richard at Stow, on the floor at their feet. But in the dead of night, who should come up but James Desmond, sword in hand, with a dozen of his ruffians at his heels, each with his glib over his ugly face, and his skene in his hand. Davils springs up in bed, and asks "What is the matter, my son?" whereon the treacherous villain, without giving him time to say a prayer, strikes at him, naked as he was, crying, "Thou shalt be my father no longer, nor I thy son! Thou shalt die!" and at that all the rest fall on him. The poor little lad (so he says) leaps up to cover

his master with his naked body, gets three or four stabs of skenes, and so falls for dead; with his master and Captain Carter, who were dead indeed—God reward them! After that the ruffians ransacked the house, till they had murdered every Englishman in it, the lacquey-boy only excepted, who crawled out, wounded as he was, through a window, while Desmond, if you will believe it, went back, up to his elbows in blood, and vaunted his deeds to the Spaniards, and asked them—"There! Will you take that as a pledge that I am faithful to you?" And that, my lad, was the end of Henry Davils, and will be of all who trust to the faith of wild savages."

"I would go a hundred miles to see that Desmond hanged!" said Amyas, while great tears ran down his face. "Poa Mr. Davils! And now, what is the story of Sir Thomas?"

"Your brother must tell you that, lad, I am somewhat out of breath."

"And I have a right to tell it," said Frank, with a smile. "Do you know that I was very near being Earl of the bog of Allen, and one of the peers of the realm to King Buoncompagna, son and heir to his Holiness Pope Gregory the Thirteenth?"

"No, surely!"

"As I am a gentleman. When I was at Rome I saw poor Stukely often; and this and more he offered me on the part (as he said) of the Pope, if I would just oblige him in the two little matters of being reconciled to the Catholic Church, and joining the invasion of Ireland."

"Poor deluded heretic," said Will Cary, "to have lost an earldom for your family by such silly scruples of loyalty!"

"It is not a matter for jesting, after all," said Frank; "but I saw Sir Thomas often, and I cannot believe he was in his senses, so frantic was his vanity and his ambition; and all the while, in private matters as honourable a gentleman as ever. However, he sailed at last for Ireland, with his eight hundred Spaniards and Italians, and what is more, I know that the King of Spain paid their charges. Marquis Vinola—Jaimes Buoncompagna, that is—stayed quietly at Rome, preferring that Stukely should conquer his paternal heritage of Ireland for him while he took care of the *bona robas* at home. I went down to Civita Vecchia to see him off, and though his younger by many years, I could not but take the liberty of entreating him, as a gentleman and a man of Devon, to consider his faith to his queen and the honour of his country. There were high words between us, God forgive me if I spoke too fiercely, for I never saw him again."

"Too fiercely to an open traitor, Frank! Why not have run him through?"

"Nay, I had no clean life for Sundays, Amyas; so I could not throw away my week-day one, and as for the weal of England, I knew that it was little he would damage it, and told him so. And at that he waxed utterly mad, for it touched his pride, and swore that if the wind had not

been fair for sailing, he would have fought me there and then; to which I could only answer, that I was ready to meet him when he would, and he parted from me, saying, "It is a pity, sir, I cannot fight you now, when next we meet, it will be beneath my dignity to measure swords with you."

"I suppose he expected to come back a prince at least—Heaven knows; I owe him no ill-will, nor I hope does any man. He has paid all debts now in full, and got his receipt for them."

"How did he die, then, after all?"

"On his voyage he touched in Portugal. King Sebastian was just sailing for Africa with his new ally, Mohammed the Prince of Fez, to help King Abdallah, and conquer what he could. He persuaded Stukely to go with him. There were those who thought that he, as well as the Spaniards, had no stomach for seeing the Pope's son King of Ireland. Others used to say that he thought an island too small for his ambition, and must needs conquer a continent—I know not why it was, but he went. They had heavy weather in the passage, and when they landed, many of their soldiers were sea-sick. Stukely, reasonably enough, counselled that they should wait two or three days and recruit, but Don Sebastian was so mad for the assault that he must needs have his *vent, val, val*, and so ended with a *vent, val, peris*, for he, Abdallah, and his son Mohammed, all perished in the first battle at Alcasar, and Stukely, surrounded and overpowered, fought till he could fight no more, and then died like a hero with all his wounds in front, and may God have mercy on his soul."

"Ah!" said Amyas, "we heard of that battle off Lanna, but nothing about poor Stukely."

"That last was a Popish prayer, Master Frank," said old Mr. Cary.

"Most worshipful sir, you surely would not wish God not to have mercy on his soul?"

"No—oh? Of course not—but that's all settled by now, for he is dead, poor fellow."

"Certainly, my dear sir. And you cannot help being a little foul of him still."

"Eh? why, I should be a brute if I were not. He and I were schoolfellows, though he was some what the younger, and many a good thrashing have I given him, and one cannot help having a tenderness for a man after that. Beside, we used to hunt together in Exmoor, and have royal nights afterward into Ilfracombe, when we were a couple of mad young blades. Fond of him? Why, I would have sooner given my forefinger than that he should have gone to the dogs thus."

"Then, my dear sir, if you feel for him still, in spite of all his faults, how do you know that God may not feel for him still, in spite of all his faults? For my part," quoth Frank in his fanciful way, "without behaving in that Popish Purgatory, I cannot help holding with Plato, that such heroic souls, who have wanted but little of true greatness, are hereafter by some strict discipline brought to a better mind, perhaps, as many ancients have held with the

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Indian Gymnosophists, by transmigration into the bodies of those animals whom they have resembled in their passions; and indeed, if Sir Thomas Stukely's soul should now animate the body of a lion, all I can say is that he would be a very valiant and royal lion, and also doubtless become in due time heartily ashamed and penitent for having been nothing better than a lion."

"What now, Master Frank? I don't trouble my head with such matters—I say Stukely was a right good-hearted fellow at bottom, and if you plague my head with any of your dialectics, and propositions, and college quips and quiddities, you shan't have any more sack, sir. But here come the knaves, and I hear the cook knock to dinner."

After a maltrigal or two, and an Italian song of Master Frank's, all which went sweetly enough, the ladies rose, and went. Whereon Will Cary, drawing his chair close to Frank's, put quietly into his hand a dirty letter.

"This was the letter left for me," whispered he, "by a country fellow this morning. Look at it and tell me what I am to do."

Whereon Frank opened, and read—

'Mister Cary, be you wary
By deer park end to night
If Irish foxes come out of run
Grip and hold hym tight'

"I would have showed it my father," said Will, "but—"

"I verily believe it to be a blind. See now, this is the handwriting of a man who has been trying to write vilely, and yet cannot. Look at that B, and that G, their *forme formative*, never were begotten in a hedge-school. And what is more, this is no Devon man's handiwork. We say "to" and not "by," Will, eh? in the West country?"

"Of course."

"And "man," instead of "him"?"

"True, O Daniel! But am I to do nothing therefore?"

"On that matter I am no judge. Let us ask much-enduring Ulysses here, perhaps he has not sailed round the world without bringing home a device or two."

Whereon Amyas was called to counsel, as soon as Mr. Cary could be stopped in a long cross-examination of him as to Mr. Doughty's famous trial and execution.

Amyas pondered awhile, thrusting his hands into his long curls, and then—

"Will, my lad, have you been watching at the Deer Park End of late?"

"Never."

"Where, then?"

"At the town-beach."

"Where else?"

"At the town head."

"Where else?"

"Why, the fellow is turned lawyer! Above Freshwater."

"Where is Freshwater?"

"Why, where the waterfall comes over the cliff, half a mile from the town. There is a path there up into the forest."

"I know! I'll watch there to-night. Do you keep all your old haunts safe, of course, and send a couple of stout knaves to the mill, to watch the beach at the Deer Park End, on the chance, for your poct may be a true man, after all. But my heart's faith is, that this comes just to draw you off from some old beat of yours, upon a wild goose chase. If they shoot the miller by mistake, I suppose it don't much matter!"

"Marry, no."

"When a miller's knock'd on the head,
The loss of flour makes the more of bread."

"Or, again," chimed in old Mr. Cary, "as they say in the North—"

"Find a miller that will not steal,
Or a webster that is leal,
Or a priest that is not greedy,
And lay them three a dead corpse by,
And by the virtue of them three,
The said dead corpse shall quicken'd be."

"But why are you so ready to watch Freshwater to night, Master Anyas?"

"Because, sir, those who come, if they come, will never land at Mouthmill, if they are strangers, they dare not, and if they are bay's men, they are too wise, as long as the westerly swell sets in. As for landing at the town, that would be too great a risk, but Freshwater is as lonely as the Bermudas, and they can beach a boat up under the cliff at all tides, and in all weathers, except north and north-west. I have done it many a time, when I was a boy."

"And give us the fruit of your experience now in your old age, eh? Well, you have a gray head on green shoulders, my lad; and I verily believe you are right. Who will you take with you to watch?"

"Sir," said Frank, "I will go with my brother and that will be enough."

"Enough? He is big enough, and you brave enough, for ten, but still, the more the merrier."

"But the fewer, the better fare. If I might ask a first and last favour, worshipful sir," said Frank very earnestly, "you would grant me two things that you would let none go to Freshwater but me and my brother, and that whatsoever we shall bring you back shall be kept as secret as the commonweal and your loyalty shall permit." I trust that we are not so unknown to you, or to others, that you can doubt for a moment but that whatsoever we may do will satisfy at once your honour and our own."

"My dear young gentleman, there is no need of so many courtier's words. I am your father's friend, and yours. And God forbid that a Cary—for I guess your drift—should ever wish to make a head or a heart ache, that is, more than—"

"Those of whom it is written, 'Though thou bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his folly depart from him,'" interposed Frank, in so sad a tone that no one at the table replied; and

few more words were exchanged, till the two brothers were safe outside the house; and then—

"Anyas," said Frank, "that was a Devon man's handiwork, nevertheless; it was Eustaco's handiwork."

"Impossible!"

"No, lad. I have been secretary to a prince, and learnt to interpret cipher, and to watch every pen-stroke; and, young as I am, I think that I am not easily deceived. Would God I were! Come on, lad, and strike no man hastily, lest thou cut off thine own flesh."

So forth the two went, along the park to the eastward, and past the head of the little wood embosomed fishing-town, a steep stair of houses clinging to the cliff far below them, the bright slate roofs and white walls glistening in the moonlight, and on some half-mile farther, along the steep hillside, fenced with oak-wood down to the water's edge, by a narrow forest path, to a point where two glens meet and pour their streamlets over a cascade some hundred feet in height into the sea below. By the side of this waterfall a narrow path climbs upward from the beach, and here it was that the two brothers expected to meet the messenger.

Frank insisted on taking his station below Anyas. He said that he was certain that Eustaco himself would make his appearance, and that he was more fit than Anyas to bring him to reason by parley, that if Anyas would keep watch some twenty yards above, the escape of the messenger would be impossible. Moreover, he was the elder brother, and the post of honour was his right. So Anyas obeyed him, after making him promise that if more than one man came up the path, he would let them pass him before he challenged, so that both might bring them to bay at the same time.

So Anyas took his station under a high marl bank, and, bedded in luxuriant crown-ferns, kept his eye steadily on Frank, who sat down on a little knoll of rock (where is now a garden on the cliff-edge) which parts the path and the dark chasm down which the stream rushes to its final leap over the cliff.

There Anyas sat a full half-hour, and glanced at times from Frank to look upon the scene around. Outside the south-west wind blew fresh and strong, and the moonlight danced upon a thousand crests of foam, but within the black jagged point which sheltered the town, the sea did but heave, in long oily swells of rolling silver, onward into the black shadow of the hills, within which the town and pier lay invisible, save where a twinkling light gave token of some lonely fisher's wife, watching the weary night through for the boat which would return with dawn. Here and there upon the sea, a black speck marked a herring-boat, drifting with its line of nets, and right off the mouth of the glen, Anyas saw, with a beating heart, a large two-masted vessel lying-to—that must be the *Portugal*! Eagerly he looked up the glen, and listened; but he heard nothing but the sweeping of the wind across the downs

five hundred feet above, and the sough of the waterfall upon the rocks below, he saw nothing but the vast black sheets of oak-wood sloping up to the narrow blue sky above, and the broad bright hunter's moon, and the woodcocks, which, chuckling to each other, hawked to and fro, like swallows, between the tree-tops and the sky.

At last he heard a rustle of the fallen leaves, he shrank closer and closer into the darkness of the bank. Then swift light steps—not down the path, from above, but upward, from below, his heart beat quick and loud. And in another half-minute a man came in sight, within three yards of Frank's hiding-place.

Frank sprang out instantly. Amyas saw his bright blade glanced in the clear October moonlight.

'Stand, in the Queen's name!'

The man drew a pistol from under his cloak, and fired full in his face. Had it happened in these days of 'detonators,' Frank's chance had been small, but to get a ponderous wheel-lock under weigh was a longer business, and before the fizzing of the flint had ceased, Frank had struck up the pistol with his rapier, and it exploded harmlessly over his head. The man instantly dashed the weapon in his face and closed.

The blow, luckily, did not take effect on that delicate forehead, but struck him on the shoulder. nevertheless, Frank, who with all his grace and agility was as fragile as a lily, and a very bubble of the earth, staggered, and lost his guard, and before he could recover himself, Amyas saw a dagger gleam, and one, two, three blows fiercely repeated.

Mad with fury, he was with them in an instant. They were scuffling together so closely in the shade that he was afraid to use his sword point; but with the hilt he dealt a single blow full on the ruffian's cheek. It was enough, with a hideous shriek, the fellow rolled over at his feet, and Amyas set his foot on him, in act to run him through.

'Stop! stay!' almost screamed, Frank, 'it is Eustace! our cousin Eustace!' and he leant against a tree.

Amyas sprang towards him. But Frank waved him off.

'It is nothing—a scratch. He has papers. I am sure of it. Take them, and for God's sake let him go!'

'Villain! give me your papers!' cried Amyas, setting his foot once more on the writhing Eustace, whose jaw was broken across.

'You struck me foully from behind,' moaned he, his vanity and envy even then coming out, in that faint and foolish attempt to prove Amyas not so very much better a man.

'Hound, do you think that I dare not strike you in front! Give me your papers, letters, whatever Popish devilry you carry, or as I live, I will cut off your head, and take them myself, even if it cost me the shame of stripping your corpse. Give them up! Traitor, murderer!

give them, I say!' And setting his foot on him afresh, he raised his sword.

Eustace was usually no craven—but he was cowed. Between agony and shame, he had no heart to resist. Martyrdom, which looked so splendid when consummated *selon les règles* on Tower Hill or Tyburn, before pitying, or (still better) scoffing multitudes, looked a confused, dirty, ugly business there in the dark forest; and as he lay, a stream of moonlight bathed his mighty cousin's broad clear forehead, and his long golden locks, and his white terrible blade, till he seemed, to Eustace's superstitious eye, like one of those fair young St. Michaels tramping on the fiend, which he had seen abroad in old German pictures. He shuddered, pulled a packet from his bosom, and threw it from him, murmuring, 'I have not given it.'

'Swear to me that these are all the papers which you have in cipher or out of cipher. Swear on your soul, or you die!'

Eustace swore.

'Tell me, who are your accomplices?'

'Never,' said Eustace. 'Cruel! have you not degraded me enough already?' and the wretched young man burst into tears, and hid his bleeding face in his hands.

One hint of honour made Amyas as gentle as a lamb. He lifted Eustace up, and bade him run for his life.

'I am to owe my life, then, to you?'

'Not in the least, only to your being a Leigh. Go, or it will be worse for you.' And Eustace went, while Amyas, catching up the precious packet, hurried to Frank. He had fainted already, and his brother had to carry him as far as the park before he could find any of the other watchers. The blind, as far as they were concerned, was complete. They had heard and seen nothing. Whosoever had brought the packet had landed they knew not where; and so all returned to the Court, carrying Frank, who recovered gradually, having rather bruises than wounds; for his foe had struck wildly, and with a trembling hand.

Half an hour after, Amyas, Mr Carr, and his son Will were in deep consultation over the following epistle, the only paper in the packet which was not in cipher—

✠ DEAR BROTHER N. S. in *Chm et Ecclesia*

'This is to inform you and the friends of the cause, that S. Josephus has landed in Sinerack, with eight hundred valiant Crusaders, burning with holy zeal to imitate last year's martyrs of Carrigfolium, and to expiate their offences (which I fear may have been many) by the propagation of our most holy faith. I have purified the fort (which they are strenuously rebuilding) with prayer and holy water, from the stain of heretical footstep, and consecrated it afresh to the service of Heaven, as the first-fruits of the 'isle of saints,' and having displayed the consecrated banner to the adoration of the faithful, have returned to Earl Desmond, that I may establish his faith, weak as yet, by reason of the

allurements of this world though since, by the valour of his brother James, he that hindered was taken out of the way (I mean Davils the heretic, sacrifice well-pleasing in the eyes of Heaven!), the young man has lent a more obedient ear to my counsels. If you can do anything, do it quickly, for a great door and effectual is opened, and there are many adversaries. But be swift, for so do the poor lambs of the Church tremble at the fury of the heretics, that a hundred will flee before one Englishman. And indeed, were it not for that divine charity towards the Church (which covers the multitude of sins) with which they are resplendent, neither they nor their country would be, by the carnal judgment, counted worthy of so great labour in their behalf. For they themselves are given much to lying, theft, and drunkenness, vain babbling, and profane dancing and singing, and are still, as St. Gildas reports of them, "more careful to shroud their villainous faces in bushy hair, than devoutly to cover their bodies", while their land (by reason of the tyranny of their chieftains, and the continual wars and plunderings among their tribes, which leave them weak and divided, an easy prey to the myrmidons of the excommunicate and usurping Englishwoman) lies utterly waste with fire, and defaced with corpses of the starved and slain. But what are these things, while the holy virtue of Catholic obedience still flourishes in their hearts? The Church cares not for the conservation of body and goods, but of immortal souls.

'If any devout lady shall so will, you may obtain from her liberality a shirt for this worthless tabernacle, and also a pair of hose, for I am unsavoury to myself and to others, and of such luxuries none here has superfluity; for all live in holy poverty, except the fleas, who have that consolation in this world for which this unhappy nation, and those who labour among them, must wait till the world to come.'

'Your loving brother,
'N S'

'Sir Richard must know of this before day-break,' cried old Cary. 'Eight hundred men landed! We must call out the Posse Comitatus, and sail with them bodily. I will go myself, old as I am. Spaniards in Ireland? not a dog of them must go home again.'

'Not a dog of them,' answered Will, 'but where is Mr Wynter and his squadron?'

'Safe in Milford Haven, a messenger must be sent to him too.'

'I'll go,' said Amiyas. 'but Mr Cary is right. Sir Richard must know all first.'

'And we must have those Jesuits.'

'What? Mr Evans and Mr Morgans? God help us—they are at my uncle's! Consider the honour of our family.'

'Judge for yourself, my dear boy,' said old Mr. Cary gently: 'would it not be rank treason to let these foxes escape, while we have this damning proof against them?'

§ See note at end of chapter

'I will go myself, then.'

'Why not? You may keep all straight, and Will shall go with you. (All a grooin, Will, and get your horse saddled, and my Yorkshire grey, he will make better play with this big fellow on his back, than the little pony astride of which Mr. Leigh came walking in (as I hear) this morning. As for Frank, the ladies will see to him well enough, and glad enough, too, to have so fine a bird in their cage for a week or two.'

'And my mother?'

'We'll send to her to-morrow by daylight. Come, a stirrup cup to start with, hot and hot. Now, boots, cloaks, swords, a deep pull and a warm one, and away!'

And the jolly old man bustled them out of the house and into their saddles, under the broad bright winter's moon.

'You must make your pace, lads, or the moon will be down before you are over the moors.' And so away they went.

Neither of them spoke for many a mile. Amiyas, because his mind was fixed firmly on the one object of saving the honour of his house, and Will, because he was hesitating between Ireland and the wars, and Rose Salterne and love-making. At last he spoke suddenly.

'I'll go, Amiyas.'

'Whither?'

'To Ireland with you, old man. I have dragged my anchor at last.'

'What anchor, my lad of parables?'

'See, here am I, a tall and gallant ship.'

'Modest even if not true.'

'Inclination, like an anchor, holds me tight.'

'To the mud.'

'Nay, to a bed of roses—not without their thorns.'

'Hillo! I have seen oysters grow on fruit trees before now, but never an anchor in a rose garden.'

'Silence, or my allegory will go to noggin-staves.'

'Against the rocks of my sin's discernment.'

'Pooh—well. Up comes duty like a jolly breeze, blowing dead from the north-east, and as bitter and cross as a north-easter too, and tugs me away toward Ireland. I hold on by the rose-bed—any ground in a storm—till every strand is parted, and off I go, westward ho! to get my throat cut in a bog hole with Amiyas Leigh.'

'Earnest, Will?'

'As I am a sinful man.'

'Well done, young hawk of the White Cliff.'

'I had rather have called it Gallantry Bower still, though,' said Will, pinning on the double name of the noble precipice which forms the highest point of the deer park.

'Well, as long as you are on land, you know it is Gallantry Bower still. but we always call it White Cliff when you see it from the sea-board, as you and I shall do, I hope, to-morrow evening.'

'What, so soon?'

'Dare we lose a day?'

'I suppose not: heigh ho!'

And they rode on again in silence, Amyas in the meanwhile being not a little content (in spite of his late self-renunciation) to find that one of his rivals at least was going to raise the siege of the Rose garden for a few months, and withdraw his forces to the coast of Kerry.

As they went over Murslon, Amyas pulled up suddenly.

'Did you not hear a horse's step on our left?'

'On our left—coming up from Welsford moor? Impossible at this time of night. It must have been a stag, or a sownder of wild swine, or may be only an old cow.'

'It was the ring of iron, friend. Let us stand and watch.'

Murslon and Welsford were then, as now, a rolling range of dreary moors, unbroken by tor or tree, or anything save few and far between a world-old furze bank which marked the common rights of some distant cattle farm, and crossed then, not as now, by a decent road, but by a rough confused trackway, the remnant of an old Roman road from Glocelly dikes to Lancreston. To the left it trended down towards a lower range of moors, which form the watershed of the heads of Torrulge, and thither the two young men peered down over the expanse of bog and furze, which glittered for miles beneath the moon, one sheet of frosty silver, in the heavy autumn dew.

'If any of Fustace's party are trying to get home from Fishwater, they might save a couple of miles by coming across Welsford, instead of going by the main track, as we have done.' So said Amyas, who, though (luckily for him) no 'genius', was cunning as a fox in all matters of tactic and practice, and would have in these days proved his right to be considered an intellectual person by being a thorough man of business.

'If any of his party are mad, they'll try it, and be staggered till the day of judgment. There are bogs in the bottom twenty feet deep. Plague on the fellow, whoever he is, he has dodged us! Look there!'

It was too true. The unknown horseman had evidently dismounted below, and led his horse up on the other side of a long furze-dike, till coming to the point where it turned away again from his intended course, he appeared against the sky, in the act of leading his nag over a gap.

'Ride like the wind!' and both youths galloped across furze and heather at him; but ere they were within a hundred yards of him, he had leapt again on his horse, and was away far ahead.

'There is the door to us, with a vengeance,' cried Cary, putting in the spurs.

'It is but a lad; we shall never catch him.'

'I'll try, though, and do you lumber after as you can, old heavy-wades,' and Cary pushed forward.

Amyas lost sight of him for ten minutes, and then came up with him dismounted, and feeling disconsolately at his horse's knees.

'Look for my head. It lies somewhere about

among the furze there; and oh! I am as full of needles as ever was a pincushion.'

'Are his knees broken?'

'I daren't look. No, I believe, not. Come along, and make the best of a bad matter. The fellow is a mile ahead, and to the right, too.'

'He is going for Moorwinstow, then, but where is my cousin?'

'Behind us, I dare say. We shall nab him at least.'

'Cary, promise me that if we do, you will keep out of sight, and let me manage him.'

'My boy, I only want Evan Morgans and Morgan Evans. He is but the cat's paw, and we are after the cats themselves.'

And so they went on another dreary six miles, till the land trended downwards, showing dark glens and masses of woodland far below.

'Now, then, straight to Chapel, and stop the foxes' earth? Or through the King's Park to Stow, and get out Sir Richard's hounds, hue and cry, and queen's warrant in proper form?'

'Let us see Sir Richard first, and whatever he decides about my uncle, I will endure as a loyal subject must.'

So they rode through the King's Park, while Sir Richard's colts came whinnying and stearing round the intenders, and down through a rich woodland lane five hundred feet into the valley, till they could hear the brawling of the little trout-stream, and beyond, the everlasting thunder of the ocean surf.

Down through warm woods, all fragrant with dying autumn flowers, leaving far above the kee Atlantic breeze, into one of those delicious Western Coombes, and so past the mill, and the little knot of flower-clad cottages. In the window of one of them a light was still burning. The two young men knew well whose window that was, and both hearts beat fast, for Row Salterne slept, or rather seemed to wake, in that chamber.

'Folks are late in Combe to night,' said Amyas as carelessly as he could.

Cary looked earnestly at the window, and then sharply enough at Amyas, but Amyas was busy setting his stirrup, and Cary rode on, unconscious that every fibre in his companion's huge frame was trembling like his own.

'Muggy and close down here,' said Amyas, who, in reality, was quite faint with his own inward struggles.

'We shall be at Stow gate in five minutes,' said Cary, looking back and down longingly as his horse climbed the opposite hill, but a turn of the zigzag road hid the cottage, and the next thought was, how to effect an entrance into Stow at three in the morning without being eaten by the ban dogs, who were already howling and growling at the sound of the horse's hoofs.

However, they got safely in, after much knocking and calling, through the postern-gate in the high west wall, into a mansion, the description whereof I must defer to the next chapter, seeing that the moon has already sunk into the Atlantic, and there is darkness over land and sea.

Sir Richard, in his long gown, was soon downstairs in the hall, the letter read, and the story told, but ere it was half finished—

'Anthony, call up a groom, and let him bring me a horse round. Gentlemen, if you will excuse me five minutes, I shall be at your service.'

'You will not go alone, Richard!' asked Lady Grenville, putting her beautiful face in its night-coif out of an adjoining door.

'Surely, sweet chuck, we three are enough to take two poor polecats of Jesuits. Go in, and help me to boot and gird.'

In half an hour they were down and up across the valley again, under the few low ashes elipt flat by the sea-breezes which stood round the lonely gate of Chapel.

'Mr. Cary, there is a back path across the downs to Marsland; go and guard that.' Cary rode off, and Sir Richard, as he knocked loudly at the gate—

'Mr. Leigh, you see that I have consulted your honour, and that of your poor uncle, by adventuring thus alone. What will you have me do now, which may not be unfit for me and you?'

'Oh, sir!' said Amyas, with tears in his honest eyes, 'you have shown yourself once more what you always have been—my dear and beloved master on earth, not second even to my admiral Sir Francis Drake.'

'Or the Queen, I hope,' said Grenville, smiling, 'but *poco palabras*. What will you do?'

'My wretched cousin, sir, may not have returned—and if I might watch for him on the main road—unless you want me with you.'

'Richard Grenville can walk alone, lad. But what will you do with your cousin?'

'Send him out of the country, never to return, or if he refuses, run him through on the spot.'

'Go, lad.' And as he spoke, a sleepy voice asked inside the gate, 'Who was there?'

'Sir Richard Grenville. Open, in the Queen's name!'

'Sir Richard! He is in bed, and he hanged to you. No honest folk come at this hour of night.'

'Amyas!' shouted Sir Richard. Amyas rode back.

'Burst that gate for me, while I hold your horse.'

Amyas leaped down, took up a rock from the roadside, such as Homer's heroes used to send at each other's heads, and in an instant the door was flat on the ground, and the serving-man on his back inside, while Sir Richard, quietly entering over it, like Una into the hut, told the fellow to get up and hold his horse for him (which the clown, who knew well enough that terrible voice, did without further murmurs), and then strode straight to the front door. It was already opened. The household had been up and about all along, or the noise at the entry had aroused them.

Sir Richard knocked, however, at the open door; and, to his astonishment, his knock was answered by Mr. Leigh himself, fully dressed, and candle in hand.

'Sir Richard Grenville! What, sir! is this

neighbourly, not to say gentle, to break into my house in the dead of night?'

'I broke your outer door, sir, because I was refused entrance when I asked in the Queen's name. I knocked at your inner one, as I should have knocked at the poorest cottager's in the parish, because I found it open. You have two Jesuits here, sir! and here is the Queen's warrant for apprehending them. I have signed it with my own hand, and, moreover, serve it now, with my own hand, in order to save you scandal—and it may be, worse. I must have these men, Mr. Leigh.'

'My dear Sir Richard!—'

'I must have them, or I must search the house, and you would not put either yourself or me to so shameful a necessity?'

'My dear Sir Richard!—'

'Must I, then, ask you to stand back from your own doorway, my dear sir?' said Grenville. And then changing his voice to that fearful lion's roar, for which he was famous, and which it seemed impossible that lips so delicate could utter, he thundered, 'Knave, behind there! Back!'

This was spoken to half a dozen grooms and serving-men, who, well armed, were clustered in the passage.

'What? swords out, you sons of cliff rabbits? And in a moment, Sir Richard's long blade flashed out also, and putting Mr. Leigh gently aside, as if he had been a child, he walked up to the party, who vanished right and left, having expected a cur dog, in the shape of a parish constable, and come upon a lion instead. They were stout fellows enough, no doubt, in a fair fight; but they had no stomach to be hanged in a row at Launceston Castle, after a preliminary running through the body by that redoubtable admiral and most unpeppery justice of the peace.

'And now, my dear Mr. Leigh,' said Sir Richard, as blandly as ever, 'where are my men? The night is cold; and you as well as I need to be in our beds.'

'The men, Sir Richard—the Jesuits—they are not here, indeed.'

'Not here, sir?'

'On the word of a gentleman, they left my house an hour ago. Believe me, sir, they did I will swear to you if you need.'

'I believe Mr. Leigh of Chapel's word without oaths. Whither are they gone?'

'Nay, sir—how can I tell? They are—they are, as I may say, fled, sir; escaped.'

'With your connivance, at least with your son's. Where are they gone?'

'As I live, I do not know.'

'Mr. Leigh—is this possible? Can you add untruth to that treason from the punishment of which I am trying to shield you?'

Poor Mr. Leigh burst into tears.

'O my God! my God! is it come to this?'

Over and above having the fear and anxiety of keeping these black rascals in my house, and having to stop their villainous mouths every minute, for fear they should hang me and!

themselves, I am to be called a traitor and a liar in my old age, and that, too, by Richard Grenville! Would God I had never been born! Would God I had no soul to be saved, and I'd just go and drown care in drink, and let the Queen and the Pope fight it out their own way! And the poor old man sank into a chair, and covered his face with his hands, and then leaped up again.

'Bless my heart! Excuse me, Sir Richard—to sit down and leave you standing. 'Shife, sir, sorrow is making a hawbuck of me. Sit down, my dear sir! my worshipful sir! or rather come with me into my room, and hear a poor wretched man's story, for I swear before God the men are fled; and my poor boy Eustace is not home either, and the groom tells me that his fivel of a cousin has broken his jaw for him, and his mother is all but mad this hour past Good lack! good lack!'

'Ho nearly innrilled his angel of a cousin, sir!' said Sir Richard severely.

'What, sir! They never told me.'

'He had stabbed his cousin Frank three times, sir, before Anyas, who is as noble a lad as walks God's earth, struck him down. And in defence of what, forsooth, did he play the ruffian and the swashbuckler, but to bring home to your house this letter, sir, which you shall hear at your leisure, the moment I have taken order about your priests.' And walking out of the house he went round and called to Cary to come to him.

'The birds are flown, Will,' whispered he. 'There is but one chance for us, and that is Marsland Mouth. If they are trying to take boat there, you may be yet in time. If they are gone inland we can do nothing till we raise the hue and cry to-morrow.'

And Will galloped off over the downs towards Marsland, while Sir Richard ceremoniously walked in again, and professed himself ready and happy to have the honour of an audience in Mr. Leigh's private chamber. And as we know pretty well already what was to be discussed therein, we had better go over to Marsland Mouth, and, if possible, arrive there before Will Cary, seeing that he arrived hot and swearing, half an hour too late.

Note—I have shrunk somewhat from giving these and other sketches (true and accurate as I believe them to be) of Ireland during Elizabeth's reign, when the tyranny and lawlessness of the feudal chiefs had reduced the island to such a state of weakness and barbarism, that it was absolutely necessary for England either to crush the Norman Irish nobility, and organise some sort of law and order, or to leave Ireland an easy prey to the Spaniards, or any other nation which should go to war with us. The work was done—clumsily rather than cruelly; but wrongs were inflicted, and avenged by fresh wrongs, and those by fresh again. May the memory of them perish for ever! It has been reserved for this age, and for the liberal policy of this age, to see the last ebullitions of Celtic excitability die out harmless and ashamed of itself, and to find that the Irishman, when he is brought as a soldier under the regenerative influence of law, discipline, self-respect, and loyalty, can prove himself a worthy rival of the more stern Norse-Saxon warrior. God grant that the military brotherhood between Irish and English, which is the special glory of

the present war, may be the germ of a brotherhood industrial, political, and hereafter, perhaps, religious also, and that not merely the corpses of heroes, but the ferils and wrongs which have parted them for centuries, may lie buried, once and for ever, in the noble graves of Alma and Inkerman.

CHAPTER VI

THE COOMBS OF THE FAR WEST

'Far, far from hence

The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
Among the green Illyrian hills, and there
The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,
And by the sea and in the brakes
The grass is cool, the sea-side air
Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
More virginal and sweet than ours'

MATTHEW ARNOULT

AND even such are those delightful glens, which cut the high table-land of the confines of Devon and Cornwall,* and opening each through its gorge of down and rock, towards the boundless Western Ocean. Each is like the other, and each is like no other English scenery. Each has its upright walls, inland of rich oak-wood nearer the sea of dark green firs, then of smooth turf, then of weird black cliffs which range out right and left far into the deep sea, in castles, spires, and wings of jagged ironstone. Each has its narrow strip of fertile meadow, its crystal trout stream winding across and across from one hill-foot to the other, its gray stone mill, with the water sparkling and humming round the dripping wheel; its dark rock pools above the tide mark, where the salmon trout gather in from their Atlantic wanderings, after each autumn flood; its ridge of blown sand, bright with golden trefoil and crimson lady's fingers, its gray bank of polished pebbles, down which the stream rattles toward the sea below. Each has its black field of jagged shark's-tooth rock which paves the cove from side to side, streaked with here and there a pink line of shell sand, and laced with white foam from the eternal surge, stretching in parallel lines out to the westward, in strata set upright on edge, or tilted towards each other at strange angles by primeval earthquakes;—such is the 'Mouth'—as those coves are called; and such the jaw of teeth which they display, one rasp of which would grind abroad the timbers of the stoutest ship. To landward, all richness, softness, and peace. To seaward, a waste and howling wilderness of rock and roller, barren to the fisherman, and hopeless to the shipwrecked mariner.

In only one of these 'Mouths' is a landing for boats, made possible by a long sea-wall of rock, which protects it from the rollers of the Atlantic; and that mouth is Marsland, the abode of the White Witch, Lucy Passmore; whither, as Sir Richard Grenville rightly judged, the Jesuits were gone. But before the Jesuits came, two other persons were standing on that lonely beach, under the bright October moon, namely, Rose Salferno and the White Witch herself, for Rose, fevered with curiosity and superstition, and

allured by the very wildness and possible danger of the spell, had kept her appointment; and, a few minutes before midnight, stood on the gray shingle beach with her counsellor.

'You be safe enough here to-night, Miss. My old man is snoring sound abed, and there's no other soul over sets foot here o' nights, except it be the mermaids now and then. Goodness, Father, where's our boat? It ought to be up here on the pebbles.'

Rose pointed to a strip of sand some forty yards nearer the sea, where the boat lay.

'Oh, the lazy old villain! he's been round the rocks after pollock this evening, and never taken the trouble to hale the boat up. I'll tounce him for it when I get home. I only hope he's made her fast where she is, that's all! He's more plagne to me than ever my money will be. Oh deary me!'

And the goodwife hustled down toward the boat, with Rose behind her.

'Iss, 'tis fast, sure enough, and the odds aboard too! Well, I never! Oh, the lazy thief, to leave they here to be stole! I'll just sit in the boat, dear, and watch him, while you go down to the say, for you must be all alone to yourself, you know, or you'll see nothing. There's the looking-glass; now go, and dip your head three times, and mind you don't look to land or sea before you've said the words, and looked upon the glass. Now, be quick, it's just upon midnight.'

And she coiled herself up in the boat, while Rose went faltering down the strip of sand, some twenty yards farther, and there slipping off her clothes, stood shivering and trembling for a moment before she entered the sea.

She was between two walls of rock that on her left hand, some twenty feet high, hid her in deepest shade; that on her right, though much lower, took the whole blaze of the mid-night moon. Great festoons of live and purple seaweed hung from it, shading dark cracks and crevices, its haunts for all the goblins of the sea. On her left hand, the peaks of the rock frowned down ghastly black, on her right hand, far aloft, the downs slept bright and cold.

The breeze had died away, not even a roller broke the perfect stillness of the cove. The gulls were all asleep upon the ledges. Over all was a true autumn silence; a silence which may be heard. She stood awed, and listened in hope of a sound which might tell her that any living thing beside herself existed.

There was a faint bleat, as of a new-born lamb, high above her head, she started and looked up. Then a wail from the cliffs, as of a child in pain, answered by another from the opposite rocks. They were but the passing snipe, and the otter calling to her brood; but to her they were mysterious, supernatural goblins, come to answer to her call. Nevertheless, they only quickened her expectations; and the witch had told her not to fear them. If she performed the rite duly, nothing would harm her: but she could hear the beating of her own heart, as she stepped, mirror in hand, into the cold water,

waded hastily, as far as she dare, and then stopped aghast.

A ring of flame was round her waist; every limb was bathed in lambent light; all the multitudinous life of the autumn sea, stirred by her approach, had flashed suddenly into glory—

'And around her the lamps of the sea nymphs,
Myriad fiery globes, swam heaving and panting, and
rainbows,
Crimson and azure and emerald, were broken in star-
showers, lighting
Far through the wine-dark depths of the crystal, the
gardens of Nerone,
Coral and sea fan and tangle, the bloom and the palms
of the ocean.'

She could see every shell which crawled on the white sand at her feet, every rock-fish which layed in and out of the seaweed, and stared at her with its broad bright eyes, while the great palmato seaweeds which waved along the coves, half-seen in the glimmering water, seemed to beckon her down with long brown hands to a grave amid their chilly bowers. She turned to flee but she had gone too far now to retreat, hastily dipping her head three times, she hurried out to the sea-margin, and looking through her dripping locks at the magic mirror, pronounced the incantation—

'A maiden pure, here I stand,
Neither on sea, nor yet on land,
Angels watch me on either hand.
If you be landman, come down the strand,
If you be sailor, come up, be said;
If you be angel, come from the sky,
Look in my glass, and pass me by,
Look in my glass, and go from the shore,
Leave me, but love me for evermore.'

The incantation was hardly finished, her eyes were straining into the mirror, where, as may be supposed, nothing appeared but the sparkle of the drops from her own tresses, when she heard rattling down the pebbles the hasty feet of men and horses.

She darted into a cavern of the high rock, and hastily dressed herself the steps held on right to the boat. Peeping out, half-dead with terror, she saw there four men, two of whom had just leaped from their horses, and turning them adrift, began to help the other two in running the boat down.

Whereon, out of the stern sheets, arose, like an angry ghost, the portly figure of Lucy L'assmore, and shrieked in shrillest treble—

'Eh, ye villains, ye rogues, what do ye want staling poor folks' boats by night like this?'

The whole party recoiled in terror, and one turned to run up the beach, shouting at the top of his voice, 'Tis a marmaiden—a marmaiden asleep in Willy L'assmore's boat!'

'I wish it were any such good luck,' she could hear Will say; 'tis my wife, oh dear!' and he cowered down, expecting the hearty cuff which he received duly, as the White Witch, leaping out of the boat, dared any man to touch it, and thundered to her husband to go home to bed.

The wily damo, as Rose well guessed, was keeping up this delay chiefly to gain time for her pupil: but she had also more solid reasons

for making the fight as hard as possible, for she, as well as Rose, had already discerned in the ungainly figure of one of the party the same suspicious Welsh gentleman, on whose calling she had divined long ago; and she was so loyal a subject as to hold in extreme horror her husband's meddling with such 'Popish skulkers' (as she called the whole party roundly to their face)—unless on consideration of a very handsome sum of money. In vain Parsons threatened, Campian entreated, Mr Leigh's groom swore, and her husband danced round in an agony of mingled fear and covetousness.

'No,' she cried, 'as I am an honest woman and loyal! This is why you left the boat down to the shoore, you old traitor, you, is it? To help off such infamous trade as this out of the hands of her Majesty's quorum and rotulorum! Eh? Stand back, cowards! Will you strike a woman?'

This last speech (as usual) was merely indicative of her intention to strike the men for getting out one of the oars, she swung it round and round fiercely, and at last caught Father Parsons such a crack across the shins, that he retreated with a howl!

'Lucy, Lucy!' shrieked her husband, in shrillest Devon falsetto, 'be you mazed! Be you mazed, lass? They promised me two gold nobles before I'd lend them the boat!'

'Tu?' shrieked the matron, with a tone of ineffable scorn. 'And do you call yourself a man?'

'Tu noldes! tu noldes!' shrieked he again, hopping about at oar's length.

'Tu! And would you sell your soul under ten?'

'Oh, if that is it,' cried poor Campian, 'give her ten, give her ten, brother Pars—Morgans, I mean, and take care of your shins, "Olla Cenero," you know—O virago! "Furcus quid terrena possit!" Certainly she is some Lamma, some Gorgon, some—'

'Take that, for your Lamma and Gorgon to an honest woman!' and in a moment poor Campian's thin legs were cut from under him, while the virago, mounting on his trunk astride, like that more luminous one on Hudibras, cried, 'Ten nobles, or I'll keep you here till morning!' And the ten nobles were paid into her hand.

And now the boat, its dragon guardian being pushed, was run down to the sea, and close past the nook where poor little Rose was squeezing herself into the farthest and darkest corner, among wet seaweed and rough barnacles, holding her breath as they approached.

They passed her, and the boat's keel was already in the water; Lucy had followed them close, for reasons of her own, and perceiving close to the water's edge a dark cavern, cunningly surmised that it contained Rose, and planted her ample person right across its mouth, while she grumbled at her husband, the strangers, and above all at Mr. Leigh's groom, to whom she prophesied pretty plainly Launceston gaol and

the gallows, while the wretched serving-man, who would as soon have dared to leap off Welcombe Cliff, as to return railing for railing to the White With, in vain entreated her mercy, and tried, by all possible dodging, to keep one of the party between himself and her, lest her redoubted eye should 'overlook' him once more to his ruin.

But the night's adventures were not ended yet, for just as the boat was launched, a faint halloo was heard upon the beach, and a minute after, a horseman plunged down the pebbles, and along the sand, and pulling his horse up on its haunches close to the terrified group, dropped, rather than leaped, from the saddle.

The serving-man, though he dared not tackle a witch, knew well enough how to deal with a swordsman, and drawing, sprang upon the newcomer and then recoiled—

'God forgive me, it's Mr Enstace! Oh, dear sir, I took you for one of Sir Richard's men! Oh sir, you're hurt!'

A scratch, a scratch! almost mourned Enstace. 'Help me into the boat, Jack Gentlemen, I must with you!'

'Not with me, surely, my dear son, vagabonds upon the face of the earth!' said kind-hearted Campian.

'With you, for ever! All is over here. Whither God and the cause had!—and he staggered toward the boat.

As he passed Rose, she saw his ghastly bleeding face, half bound up with a handkerchief, which could not conceal the convulsions of rage, shame, and despair, which twisted it from all its usual beauty. His eyes glared wildly round—and once, right into the cavern. They met hers, so full, and keen, and dreadful, that forgetting she was utterly invisible, the terrified girl was on the point of shrieking aloud.

'He has overlooked me!' said she, shuddering to herself, as she recollected his threat of yesterday.

'Who has wounded you?' asked Campian.

'My cousin—Amias—and taken the letter!'

'The Devil take him, then!' cried Parsons, stamping up and down upon the sand in fury.

'Ay, curse him—you may! I dare not! He saved me—sent me here!—and with a groan he made an effort to enter the boat.

'Oh, my dear young gentleman,' cried Lucy Passmore, her woman's heart bursting out at the sight of pain, 'you must not go forth with a grudge wound like to that. Do let me just bind him up—do ye now!' and she advanced.

Enstace thrust her back.

'No! better bear it! I deserve it—devils! I deserve it! On board, or we shall all be lost—William Cary is close behind me!'

And at that news the boat was thrust into the sea, faster than ever it went before, and only in time, for it was but just round the rocks, and out of sight, when the rattle of Cary's horsehoofs was heard above.

'That rascal of Mr. Leigh's will catch it now, the Popish villain!' said Lucy Passmore aloud.

"You lie still there, dear life, and settle your sperrits, you'm so safe as ever was rabbit to burrow. I'll see what happens, if I die for it!" And so saying, she squeezed herself up through a cleft to a higher ledge, from whence she could see what passed in the valley.

"There mun is! in the meadow, trying to catch the horses! There comes Mr Cary! Goodness, Father, how a rid'th! he's over wall already! Ron, Jack! ren then! A'll got to the river! No, a want! Goodness, Father! There's Mr Cary cotched mun! A'e down, a's down!"

"Is he dead?" asked Rose, shuddering.

"Iss, fegs, dead as mts! and Mr Cary off his horse, standing overthwart mun! No, a baint! A's up now. Suppose he was hit w' the flat. Whatever is Mr Cary tu! Telling w' mun, a bit. Oh dear, dear, dear!"

"Has he killed him?" cried poor Rose.

"No, fegs, no! kecking munn, kecking munn, so hard as ever was futeball! Goodness, Father, who did ever! If a haven't kecked mun right into river, and got on mun's horse and rool away!"

And so saying, down she came again.

"And now then, my dear life, us be better to goo hoom and get you sommat warm. You'm mortal cold, I rackon, by now. I was cruel fear'd for ye. but I kept mun off clever, didn't I, now?"

"I wish—I wish I had not seen Mr Leigh's face!"

"Iss, dreadful, weren't it, poor young son! a sad night for his poor mother!"

"Lucy, I can't get his face out of my mind. I'm sure he overlooked me."

"Oh then! who ever heard the like o' that? When young gentlemen do overlook young ladies, tain't thinketho' away, I knoo. Never you think on it."

"But I can't help thinking of it," said Rose. "Stop. Shall we go home yet? Where's that servant?"

"Never mind, he waitt see us, here under the hull. I'd much sooner to know where my old man was. I've a sort of a forecasting in my inwards, like, as I always has when nought's gwain to happen, as though I shuld'n't zoe mun again, like, I have, Miss. Well—he was a bedient old son, after all, he was. Goodness, Father! and all this while us have forgot the very thing us come about! Who did you see?"

"Only that face," said Rose, shuddering.

"Not in the glass, maid! Say then, not in glass!"

"Would to heaven it had been! Lucy, what if he were the man I was fated to—"

"He's! Why, he's a praste, a Popish praste, that can't marry if he would, poor wretch!"

"He is none, and I have cause enough to know it!" And, for want of a better confidante, Rose poured into the willing ears of her companion the whole story of yesterday's meeting.

"He's a pretty wooer!" said Lucy at last contemptuously. "Be a brave maid, then, be a

brave maid, and never terrify yourself with his unlooky face. It's because there was none here worthy of ye, that ye seed none in glass. Maybe he's to be a foreigner, from over seas, and that's why his sperrit was so long a coming. A duke, or a prince to the least, I'll warrant, he'll be, that carries off the Rose of Bideford."

But in spite of all the good dame's flattery, Rose could not wipe that fierce face away from her eyeballs. She reached home safely, and crept to bed undiscovered; and when the next morning, as was to be expected, found her laid up with something very like a fever, from excitement, terror, and cold, the phantom grew stronger and stronger before her, and it required all her woman's tact and self-restraint to avoid betraying by her exclamations what had happened on that fantastic night. After a fortnight's weakness, however, she recovered and went back to Bideford; but ere she arrived there, Amyas was far across the seas on his way to Milford Haven, as shall be told in the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRUE AND TRAGICAL HISTORY OF MR. JOHN OXENHAM OF PYMOUTH

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The surrow follow'd free,
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea."

The Ancient Mariner

It was too late and too dark last night to see the old house at Stow. We will look round us, then, this bright October day, while Sir Richard and Amyas, about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, are pacing up and down the terraced garden to the south. Amyas has slept till luncheon, till an hour ago; but Sir Richard, in spite of the bustle of last night, was up and in the valley by six o'clock, recreating the valiant souls of himself and two terrier dogs by the chase of sundry badgers.

Old Stow House stands, or rather stood, some four miles beyond the Cornish border, on the northern slope of the largest and loveliest of those coombes of which I spoke in the last chapter. Eighty years after Sir Richard's time there arose there a huge Palladian pile, bedizened with every monstrosity of bad taste, which was built, so the story runs, by Charles the Second, for Sir Richard's great-grandson, the heir of that famous Sir Bevil who defeated the Parliamentary troops at Stratton, and died soon after, fighting valiantly at Lansdowne over Bath. But, like most other things which owed their existence to the Stuarts, it rose only to fall again. An old man who had seen, as a boy, the foundation of the new house laid, lived to see it pulled down again, and the very bricks and timber sold upon the spot; and since then the stables have become a farmhouse, the tennis-court a sheep-cote, the great quadrangle a rick-

yard; and civilisation, spreading wave on wave so fast elsewhere, has surged back from that lonely corner of the land—let us hope, only for a while.

But I am not writing of that great new Stow House, of the past glories whereof quaint pictures still hang in the neighbouring houses; nor of that famed Sir Bevil, most beautiful and gallant of his generation; on whom, with his grandfather Sir Richard, old Prince has his pompous epigram—

'Where next shall famous Grenvil's ashes stand?
Thy grandsire fills the sea, and thou the land.'

I have to deal with a simpler age, and a sterner generation; and with the old house, which had stood there, in part at least, from gray and mythic ages, when the first Sir Richard, son of Hamon Dentatus, Lord of Carboyle, the grandson of Duke Robert, son of Rou, settled at Bideford, after slaying the Prince of South-Galis and the Lord of Glamorgan, and gave to the Cistercian monks of Neath all his conquests in South Wales. It was a huge rambling building, half castle, half dwelling-house, such as may be seen still (almost an unique specimen) in Compton Castle near Torquay, the dwelling-place of Humphrey Gilbert, Walter Raleigh's half-brother, and Richard Grenville's bosom friend, of whom more hereafter. On three sides, to the north, west, and south, the lofty walls of the old ballium still stood, with their machicolated turrets, loopholes, and dark downward crannies for dropping stones and fire on the besiegers, the relics of a more unsettled age; but the southern court of the ballium had become a flower-garden, with quaint terraces, statues, knots of flowers, clipped yews and hollies, and all the pedantries of the topiarian art. And toward the east, where the vista of the valley opened, the old walls were gone, and the frowning Norman keep, ruined in the Wars of the Roses, had been replaced by the rich and stately architecture of the Tudors. Altogether, the house, like the time, was in a transitionary state, and represented faithfully enough the passage of the old middle age into the new life which had just burst into blossom throughout Europe, never, let us pray, to see its autumn or its winter.

From the house, on three sides, the hill sloped steeply down, and the garden where Sir Richard and Amyas were walking gave a truly English prospect. At one turn they could catch, over the western walls, a glimpse of the blue ocean flecked with passing sails; and at the next, spread far below them, range on range of fertile park, stately avenue, yellow autumn woodland, and purple heather moors, lapping over and over each other up the valley to the old British earthwork, which stood black and furze-grown on its conical peak; and standing out against the sky on the highest bank of hill which closed the valley to the east, the lofty tower of Kilkhampton church, rich with the monuments and offerings of five centuries of Grenvilles. A yellow eastern haze hung soft over park, and wood, and moor; the red cattle lowed to each other as they stood

brushing away the flies in the rivulet far below; the colts in the horse-park close on their right whinnied as they played together, and their sires from the Queen's Park, on the opposite hill, answered them in fuller though fainter voices. A rutting stag made the still woodland rattle with his hoarse thunder, and a rival far up the valley gave back a trumpet note of defiance, and was himself defied from heathery brows which quivered far away above, half seen through the veil of eastern mist. And close at home, upon the terrace before the house, amid romping spaniels, and golden haired children, sat Lady Grenville herself, the beautiful St. Leger of Annerly, the central jewel of all that glorious place, and looked down at her noble children, and then up at her more noble husband, and round at that broad paradise of the West, till life seemed too full of happiness, and heaven of light.

And all the while up and down paced Amyas and Sir Richard, talking long, earnestly, and slow, for they both knew that the turning-point of the boy's life was come.

'Yes,' said Sir Richard, after Amyas in his blunt simple way had told him the whole story about Rose Salterne and his brother,— 'yes, sweet lad, thou hast chosen the better part, thou and thy brother also, and it shall not be taken from you. Only be strong, lad, and trust in God that He will make a man of you.'

'I do trust,' said Amyas.

'Thank God,' said Sir Richard, 'that you have yourself taken from my heart that which was my great anxiety for you, from the day that your good father, who sleeps in peace, committed you to my hands. For all best things, Amyas, become, when misused, the very worst; and the love of woman, because it is able to lift man's soul to the heavens, is also able to drag him down to hell. But you have learnt better, Amyas; and know, with our old German forefathers, that, as Tacitus saith, "*Sera juvenum Venus, ideoque inexhausta pubertas.*" And not only that, Amyas; but trust me, that in the fashion of the French and Italians, to be hanging ever at some woman's apron string, so that no boy shall count himself a man unless he can "*vaghezzare le donne,*" whether maids or wives, alas! matters little; that fashion, I say, is little less hurtful to the soul than open sin, for by it are bred vanity and expense, envy and heart-burning, yes, hatred and murder often, and even if that be escaped, yet the rich treasure of a manly worship, which should be kept for one alone, is squandered and parted upon many, and the bride at last comes in for nothing but the very last leavings and *caput mortuum* of her bridegroom's heart, and becomes a mere ornament for his table, and the means whereby he may obtain a progeny. May God who has saved me from that death in life, save you also!' And as he spoke, he looked down toward his wife upon the terrace below, and she, as if guessing instinctively that he was talking of

her, looked up with so sweet a smile, that Sir Richard's stern face melted into a very glory of spiritual sunshine.

Amyas looked at them both and sighed, and then turning the conversation suddenly—

'And I may go to Ireland to-morrow?'

'You shall sail in the *Mary* for Milford Haven, with these letters to Winter. If the wind serves, you may bid the master drop down the river to-night, and be off, for we must lose no time.'

'Winter?' said Amyas. 'He is no friend of mine, since he left Drake and us so cowardly at the Straits of Magellan.'

'Duty must not wait for private quarrels, even though they be just ones, lad, but he will not be your general. When you come to the Marshal, or the Lord Deputy, give either of them this letter, and they will set you work,—and hard work too, I warrant.'

'I want nothing better.'

'Right, lad; the best reward for having wrought well already, is to have more to do, and ho that has been faithful over a few things, must find his account in being made ruler over many things. That is the true and heroic rest, which only is worthy of gentlemen and sons of God. As for those who, either in this world or the world to come, look for idleness, and hope that God shall feed them with pleasant things, as it were with a spoon, Amyas, I count them cowards and base, even though they call themselves saints and elect.'

'I wish you could persuade my poor cousin of that.'

'He has yet to learn what losing his life to save it means, Amyas. Bad men have taught him (and I fear these Anabaptists and Puritans at home teach little else) that it is the one great business of every one to save his own soul after he dies; every one for himself, and that that, and not divine self-sacrifice, is the one thing needful, and the better part which Mary chose.'

'I think men are inclined enough already to be selfish, without being taught that.'

'Right, lad. For me, if I could hang up such a teacher on high as an enemy of mankind, and a corrupter of youth, I would do it gladly. Is there not cowardice and self-seeking enough about the hearts of us fallen sons of Adam, that these false prophets, with their barks of heaven and their terrors of hell, must exalt our dirtiest vices into heavenly virtues and the means of bliss? Farewell to chivalry and to desperate valour, farewell to patriotism and loyalty, farewell to England and to the manhood of England, if once it shall become the fashion of our preachers to bid every man, as the Jesuits do, take care first of what they call the safety of his soul. Every man will be afraid to die at his post, because he will be afraid that he is not fit to die. Amyas, do thou do thy duty like a man, to thy country, thy queen, and thy God; and count thy life a worthless thing, as did the holy men of old. Do thy work, lad;

and leave thy soul to the care of Him who is just and merciful in this, that He rewards every man according to his work. Is there respect of persons with God? Now come in, and take the letters, and to horse. And if I hear of thee dead there at Smerwick fort, with all thy wounds in front, I shall weep for thy mother, lad, but I shall have never a sigh for thee.'

If any one shall be startled at hearing a fine gentleman and a warrior like Sir Richard quote Scripture, and think Scripture also, they must be referred to the writings of the time, which they may read not without profit to themselves, if they discover therefrom how it was possible then for men of the world to be thoroughly ingrained with the Gospel, and yet to be free from any taint of superstitious faith, or false devoutness. The religion of those days was such as no soldier need have been ashamed of confessing. At least, Sir Richard died as he lived, without a shudder, and without a wince; and these were his last words, fifteen years after that, as he lay shot through and through, a captive among Popish Spaniards, priests, cruelest, confession, extreme unction, and all other means and appliances for delivering men out of the hands of a God of love—

'Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought, fighting for his country, queen, religion, and honour. My soul willingly departing from this body, leaving behind the lasting fame of having behaved as every valiant soldier is in his duty bound to do.'

Those were the last words of Richard Grenville. The pulpits of those days had taught them to him.

But to return. That day's events were not over yet. For, when they went down into the house, the first person whom they met was the old steward, in search of his master.

'There is a manner of roog, Sir Richard, a masterless man, at the door, a very forward fellow, and must needs speak with you.'

'A masterless man? He had better not to speak to me, unless he is in love with gaul and gillions.'

'Well, your worship,' said the steward, 'I expect that, as what he does want, for he swears he will not leave the gate till he has seen you.'

'Seen me? Halldane! he shall see me, here and at Launceston too, if he likes. Bring him in.'

'Fegs, Sir Richard, we are half afraid, with your good leave—'

'Hallo, Tony,' cried Amyas, 'who was ever afraid yet with Sir Richard's good leave?'

'What, has the fellow a tail or horns?'

'Massey no, but I be afraid of treason for your honour, for the fellow is punked all over in heathen patterns, and as brown as a filbert, and a tall roog, a very strong roog, sir, and a foreigner too, and a mighty staff with him. I expect him to be a manner of Jesuit, or wild Irish, sir, and indeed the grooms have no stomach to handle him, nor the dogs neither,

or he had been under the pump before now, for they that saw him coming up the hill swear that he had fire coming out of his mouth.

'Fire out of his mouth!' said Sir Richard. 'The men are drunk.'

'Punked all over! He must be a sailor,' said Amyas, 'let me out and see the fellow, and if he needs putting forth—'

'Why, I dare say he is not so big but what he will go into thy pocket. So go, lad, while I finish my writing.'

Amyas went out, and at the back door, leaning on his staff, stood a tall, raw-boned, ragged man, 'punked all over,' as the steward had said.

'Hillo, lad!' quoth Amyas. 'Before we come to talk, thou wilt please to lay down that lily-mouth cloak of thine.' And he pointed to the emigel, which among West-country mariners usually bore that name.

'I'll warrant,' said the old steward, 'that where he found his cloak he found a purse not far off.'

'But not hose or doublet, so the magical virtue of his staff has not helped him much. But put down thy staff, man, and speak like a Christian, if thou be one.'

'I am a Christian, though I look like a heathen, and no rogue, though a masterless man, alas! But I want nothing, deserving nothing, and only ask to speak with Sir Richard, before I go on my way.'

There was something stately and yet humble about the man's tone and manner which attracted Amyas, and he asked more gently where he was going and whence he came.

'From Padstow Port, sir, to Clovelly town, to see my old mother, if indeed she be yet alive, which God knoweth.'

'Clovelly man! why didn't thee say thee was Clovelly man?' asked all the grooms at once, to whom a West-countryman was of course a brother. The old steward asked—

'What's thy mother's name, then?'

'Susan Leigh.'

'What, that lived under the apeliway?' asked a groom.

'Lived?' said the man.

'Yes, sure; her died three days since, so we heard, poor soul!'

The man stood quite silent and unmoved for a minute or two; and then said quietly to himself, in Spanish, 'That which is, is best.'

'You speak Spanish?' asked Amyas, more and more interested.

'I had need to do so, young sir, I have been five years in the Spanish Main, and only set foot on shore two days ago, and if you will let me have speech of Sir Richard, I will tell him that at which both the ears of him that heareth it shall tingle, and if not, I can but go on to Mr. Cary of Clovelly, if he be yet alive, and there disburthen my soul; but I would sooner have spoken with one that is a mariner like to myself.'

'And you shall,' said Amyas. 'Steward, we

will leave this man in, for all his rage, he is a man of wit.' And he led him in.

'I only hope he be'n't one of those Popish murderers,' said the old steward, keeping at a safe distance from him as they entered the hall.

'Popish, old master? There's little fear of my being that. Look here!' And drawing back his rage, he showed a ghastly scar, which encircled his wrist and wound round and up his forearm.

'I got that on the rack,' said he quietly, 'in the Inquisition at Lima.'

'O Father! Father! why didn't you tell us that you were a poor Christian?' asked the penitent steward.

'Because I have had nought but my deserts, and but a taste of them either, as the Lord knoweth who delivered me, and I wasn't going to make myself a beggar and a clown on their account.'

'By heaven, you are a brave fellow!' said Amyas. 'Come along straight to Sir Richard's room.'

So in they went, where Sir Richard sat in his library among books, despatches, state-papers, and warrants, for though he was not yet, as in after times (after the fashion of those days) admiral, general, member of parliament, privy councillor, justice of the peace, and so forth, all at once, yet there were few great men with whom he did not correspond, or great matters with which he was not cognisant.

'Hillo, Amyas, have you bound the wild man already, and brought him in to swear allegiance?'

But before Amyas could answer the man looked earnestly on him—'Amyas?' said he, 'is that your name, sir?'

'Amyas Leigh is my name, at your service, good fellow.'

'Of Burrough by Bideford?'

'Why then? What do you know of me?'

'O sir, sir! young brains and happy ones have short memories, but old and sad brains too long ones often.' 'Do you mind one that was with Mr. Oxenham, sir? A swearing reprobate he was, God forgive him, and hath forgiven him too, for His dear Son's sake—one, sir, that gave you a horn, a toy with a chart on it?'

'Soul alive!' cried Amyas, catching him by the hand, 'and are you he? The horn? why, I have it still, and will keep it to my dying day, too. But where is Mr. Oxenham?'

'Yes, my good fellow, where is Mr. Oxenham?' asked Sir Richard, rising. 'You are somewhat over-hasty in welcoming your old acquaintance, Amyas, before we have heard from him whether he can give honest account of himself and of his captain. For there's more than one way by which sailors may come home without their captains, as poor Mr. Barkor of Bristol found to his cost. God grant that there may have been no such traitorous dealing here.'

'Sir Richard Grenville, if I had been a guilty man to my noble captain, as I have to God, I had not come here this day to you, from whom

'villainy has never found favour, nor ever will; for I know your conditions well, sir, and trust in the Lord, that if you will be pleased to hear me, you shall know mine.'

'Thou art a well-spoken knave. We shall

'My dear sir,' said Amyas in a whisper, 'I will warrant this man guiltless.'

'I verily believe him to be, but this is too serious a matter to be left on guess. If he will be sworn—'

Whereon the man, humbly enough, said, that if it would please Sir Richard, he would rather not be sworn.

'But it does not please me, rascal! Did I not warn thee, Amyas!'

'Sir,' said the man proudly, 'God forbid that my word should not be as good as my oath but it is against my conscience to be sworn.'

'What have we here? some fantastical Anabaptist, who is wiser than his teachers.'

'My conscience, sir—'

'The devil take it and thee! I never heard a man yet begin to prate of his conscience, but I knew that he was about to do something more than ordinarily cruel or false.'

'Sir,' said the man, coolly enough, 'do you sit here to judge me according to law, and yet contrary to the law swear profane oaths, for which a fine is provided!'

Amyas expected an explosion, but Sir Richard pulled a shilling out and put it on the table. 'There—my fine is paid, sirrah, to the poor of Kilkhampton but hearken thou all the same! If thou wilt not speak on oath, thou shalt speak on compulsion, for to Launceston gaol thou goest, there to answer for Mr Oxenham's death, on suspicion whereof, and of mutiny causing it, I will attach thee and every soul of his crew that comes home. We have lost too many gallant captains of late by treachery of their crews, and he that will not clear himself on oath, must be held for guilty, and self-condemned.'

'My good fellow,' said Amyas, who could not give up his belief in the man's honesty, 'why, for such fantastical scruples, peril not only your life, but your honour, and Mr Oxenham's also! For if you be examined by question, you may be forced by torment to say that which is not true.'

'Little fear of that, young sir!' answered he with a grim smile, 'I have had too much of the rack already, and the strappado too, to care much what man can do unto me. I would heartily that I thought it lawful to be sworn: but not so thinking, I can but submit to the cruelty of man, though I did expect more merciful things, as a most miserable and wrecked mariner, at the hands of one who hath himself seen God's ways in the sea, and His wonders in the great deep.' Sir Richard Grenville, if you will hear my story, may God avenge on my head all my sins from my youth up until now, and cut me off from the blood of Christ, and, if it were possible, from the number of His elect,

if I tell you one whit more or less than truth; and if not, I commend myself into the hands of God.'

Sir Richard smiled. 'Well, thou art a brave ass, and valiant, though an ass manifest. Dost thou not see, fellow, how thou hast sworn a ten-times bigger oath than ever I should have asked of thee! But this is the way with your Anabaptists, who, by their very hatred of forms and ceremonies, show of how much account they think them, and then bind themselves out of their own fantastical self-will with far heavier burdens than ever the lawful authorities have laid on them for the sake of the commonweal. But what do they care for the commonweal, as long as they can save, as they fancy, each man his own dirty soul for himself? However, thou art sworn now with a vengeance, go on with thy tale: and first, who art thou, and whence?'

'Well, sir,' said the man, quite unmoved by this last explosion, 'my name is Salvation Yeo, born in Clovelly Street, in the year 1528, where my father exercised the mystery of a barber surgeon, and a preacher of the people since called Anabaptists, for which I return humble thanks to God.'

Sir Richard.—Fie! thou naughty knave; return thanks that thy father was an ass!

Yeo.—Nay, but because he was a barber surgeon, for I myself learnt a touch of that trade, and thereby saved my life, as I will tell presently. And I do think that a good mariner ought to have all knowledge of carnal and worldly cunning, even to tailoring and shoe-making, that he may be able to turn his hand to whatsoever may hap.

Sir Richard.—Well spoken, fellow but let us have thy text without thy comments. Forwards!

Yeo.—Well, sir. I was bred to the sea from my youth, and was with Captain Hawkins in his three voyages, which he made to Guinea for negro slaves, and thence to the West Indies.

Sir Richard.—Thou thrice thou wentest to a bad end; though Captain Hawkins be my good friend; and the last time to a bad end thou camest.

Yeo.—No denying that last, your worship but as for the former, I doubt—about the unlawfulness I mean, being the negroes are of the children of Ham, who are cursed and reprobate, as Scripture declares, and their blackness testifies, being Satan's own livery, among whom therefore there can be none of the elect, wherefore the elect are not required to treat them as brethren.

Sir Richard.—What a plague of a pragmatical sea-lawyer have we here! And I don't not, thou hypocrite, that though thou wilt call the negroes' black skin Satan's livery, when it serves thy turn to steal them, thou wilt find out sables to be Heaven's livery every Sunday, and up with a godly howl unless a parson shall preach in a black gown Geneva fashion. Out upon thee! Go on with thy tale, lest thou finish thy sermon at Launceston after all.

Yeo.—The Lord's people were always a reviled people and a persecuted people: but I will go forward, sir, for Heaven forbid but that I should declare what God has done for me. For till lately, from my youth up, I was given over to all wretchedness and unclean living, and was by nature a child of the devil, and to every good work reprobate, even as others.

Sir Richard.—Hark to his 'even as others'! Thou now-whelped Pharisee, canst not confess thine own villainies without making out others as bad as thyself, and so thyself no worse than others? I only hope that thou hast shown none of thy devil's doings to Mr. Oxenham.

Yeo.—On the word of a Christian man, sir, as I said before, I kept true faith with him, and would have been a better friend to him, sir, what is more, than ever he was to himself.

Sir Richard.—Alas! that might easily be.

Yeo.—I think, sir, and will make good against any man, that Mr Oxenham was a noble and valiant gentleman, true of his word, stout of his sword, skilful by sea and land, and worthy to have been Lord High Admiral of England (saving your worship's presence), but that through two great sins, wrath and avarice, he was cut away miserably or ever his soul was brought to the knowledge of the truth. Ah, sir, he was a captain worth sailing under! And Yeo heaved a deep sigh.

Sir Richard.—Steady, steady, good fellow! If thou wouldst quit preaching, thou art no fool after all. But tell us the story without more bush-beating.

So at last Yeo settled himself to his tale.—

'Well, sirs, I went, as Mr Leigh knows, to Nombre de Dios, with Mr Drake and Mr Oxenham, in 1572, where what we saw and did, your worship, I suppose, knows as well as I, and there was, as you've heard maybe, a covenant between Mr Oxenham and Mr Drake to sail the South-seas together, which they made, your worship, in my hearing, under the tree over Panama. For when Mr Drake came down from the tree, after seeing the sea afar off, Mr Oxenham and I went up and saw it too, and when we came down, Drake says, "John! I have made a vow to God that I will sail that water, if I live and God gives me grace," which he had done, sir, upon his bended knees, like a gully man as he always was, and would I had taken after him! and Mr O says, "I am with you, Drake, to live or die, and I think I know some one there already, so we shall not be quite among strangers," and laughed withal. Well, sirs, that voyage, as you know, never came off, because Captain Drake was fighting in Ireland, so Mr. Oxenham, who must be up and doing, sailed for himself, and I who loved him, God knows, like a brother (saving the difference in our ranks), helped him to get the crew together, and went as his gunner. That was in 1575, as you know, he had a 140-ton ship, sir, and seventy men out of Plymouth and Povey and Dartmouth, and many of them old hands of Drake's beside a dozen or so from Bideford

that I picked up when I saw young Master here.'

'Thank God that you did not pick me up too.'

'Amen, amen!' said Yeo, clasping his hands on his breast. 'Those seventy men, sir,—seventy gallant men, sir, with every one of them an immortal soul within him,—where are they now?' Gone, like the spray! And he swept his hands abroad with a wild and solemn gesture. 'And their blood is upon my head!'

Both Sir Richard and Aniyas began to suspect that the man's brain was not altogether sound.

'God forbid, my man,' said the knight kindly.

'Thirteen men I persuaded to join in Bideford town, beside William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade. And what if it be said to me at the day of judgment, "Salvation Yeo, where are those fourteen whom thou dost tempt to their deaths by covetousness and lust of gold?" Not that I was alone in my sin, if the truth must be told. For all the way off Mr Oxenham was making loud speech, after his pleasant way, that he would make all their fortunes, and take them to such a Paradise, that they should have no lust to come home again. And I—God knows why—for every one boast of his would make two, even to lying and empty fables, and anything to keep up the men's hearts. For I had really persuaded myself that we should all find treasures beyond Solomon his temple, and Mr. Oxenham would surely show us how to conquer some golden city or discover some island all made of precious stones. And one day, as the Captain and I were talking after our fashion, I said, "And you shall be our king, Captain." To which he, "If I be, I shall not be long without a queen, and that no Indian one either." And after that he often jested about the Spanish ladies, saying that none could show us the way to their hearts better than he. Which speeches I took no count of then, sirs, but after I minded them, whither I would or not. Well, sirs, we came to the shore of New Spain, near to the old place—that's Nombre de Dios, and there Mr Oxenham went ashore into the woods with a boat's crew, to find the negroes who helped us three years before. Those are the cunning, gentle, negro slaves who have fled from those devil's masters, their Spanish masters, and live wild, like the beasts that perish, men of great stature, sirs, and fierce as wolves in the onslaught, but poor jabbings, amazed fellows if they be but a bit dismayed, and have many Indian women with them, who take to these negroes a deal better than to their own kin, which breeds war enough, as you may guess.

'Well, sirs, after three days the Captain comes back, looking heavy enough, and says, "We played our trick once too often, when we played it once. There is no chance of stopping another negro (that is, a mule-train, sirs) now. The Cimaroons say that since our last visit they never move without plenty of soldiers, two hundred shot at least. Therefore," he said, "my gallants,

"we must either return empty-handed from this, the very market and treasury of the whole Indies, or do such a deed as men never did before, which I shall like all the better for that very reason." And we, asking his meaning, "Why," he said, "if Drake will not sail the South Seas, we will;" adding profanely that Drake was like Moses, who beheld the promised land afar, but he was Joshua, who would enter into it, and smite the inhabitants thereof. And, for our confirmation, showed me and the rest the superscription of a letter and said, "How I came by this is none of your business, but I have had it in my bosom ever since I left Plymouth, and I tell you now, what I forbore to tell you at first, that the South Seas have been my mask all along! such news have I herein of plate ships, and gold-ships, and what not, which will come up from Quito and Lima this very month, all which, with the pearls of the Gulf of Panama, and other wealth unspeakable will be ours, if we have but true English hearts within us."

"At which, gentles, we were like madmen for lust of that gold, and cheerfully undertook a toil incredible; for first we run our ship aground in a great wood which grew in the very sea itself, and then took out her masts, and covered her in boughs, with her four cast pieces of great ordnance (of which more hereafter), and leaving no man in her, started for the South Seas across the neck of Panama, with two small pieces of ordnance and our culverins, and good store of victuals, and with us six of those negroes for a guide, and so twelve leagues to a river which runs into the South Sea."

"And there, having cut wood, we made a pinnace (and work enough we had at it) of five-and-forty foot in the keel, and in her down the stream, and to the Isle of Pearls in the Gulf of Panama."

"Into the South Sea? Impossible!" said Sir Richard. "Have a care what you say, my man, for there is that about you which would make me sorry to find you out a liar."

"Impossible or not, liar or none, we went there, sir."

"Question him, Amyas, lest he turn out to have been beforehand with you."

The man looked inquiringly at Amyas, who said—

"Well, my man, of the Gulf of Panama I cannot ask you, for I never was inside it, but what other parts of the coast do you know?"

"Every inch, sir, from Cabo San Francisco to Lima; more is my sorrow, for I was a galley-slave there for two years and more."

"You know Lima?"

"I was there three times, worshipful gentlemen, and the last was February come two years, and there I helped lade a great plate ship, the *Cacafuogo*, they called her."

Amyas started. Sir Richard nodded to him gently to be silent, and then—

"And what became of her, my lad?"

"God knows, who knows all, and the devil who freighted her. I broke prison six weeks

afterwards, and never heard but that she got safe into Panama."

"You never heard, then, that she was taken?"

"Taken, your worships? Who should take her?"

"Why should not a good English ship take her as well as another?" said Amyas.

"Lord love you, sir; yes faith, if they had but been there. Many's the time that I thought to myself, as we went alongside, "Oh, if Captain Drake was but here, well to windward, and our old crew of the *Dragon*!" Ask your pardon, gentles, but how is Captain Drake, if I may make so bold?"

Neither could hold out longer.

"Fellow, fellow!" cried Sir Richard, springing up, "either thou art the cunningest liar that ever earned a halter, or thou hast done the like of which never man adventured. Dost thou not know that Captain Drake took that *Cacafuogo* and all her freight, in February come two years?"

"Captain Drake! God forgive me, sir; but—Captain Drake in the South Seas! He saw them, sir, from the tree-top over Panama, when I was with him, and I too, but sailed them, sir?—sailed them?"

"Yes, and round the world too," said Amyas, "and I with him, and took that very *Cacafuogo* off Cape San Francisco, as she came up to Panama."

One glance at the man's face was enough to prove his sincerity. The great stern Anabaptist, who had not winced at the news of his mother's death, dropt right on his knees on the floor, and burst into violent sobs.

"Glory to God! Glory to God! O Lord, I thank thee! Captain Drake in the South Seas! The blood of thy innocents avenged, O Lord! The spoiler spoiled, and the proud robbed, and all they whose hands were mighty have found nothing! Glory, glory! Oh, tell me, sir, did she fight?"

"We gave her three pieces of ordnance only, and struck down her mainmast, and then boarded sword in hand, but never had need to strike a blow, and before we left her, one of her own boys had changed her name, and re-christened her the *Cucuplatu*."

"Glory, glory! Cowards they are, as I told them. I told them they never could stand the Devou mastiffs, and well they flogged me for saying it, but they could not stop my mouth. Oh sir, tell me, did you get the ship that came up after her?"

"What was that?"

"A long race-ship, sir, from Guayaquil, with an old gentleman on board,—Don Francisco de Xarante was his name, and by token, he had a gold falcon hanging to a chain round his neck, and a green stone in the breast of it. I saw it as we rowed him aboard. Oh tell me, sir, tell me for the love of God, did you take that ship?"

"We did take that ship, and the jewel too, and her Majesty has it at this very hour."

"Then, tell me, sir," said he slowly, as if he

dreaded an answer; 'tell me, sir, and oh try and mind—was there a little maid aboard with the old gentleman!'

'A little maid! Let me think. No; I saw none.'

The man settled his features again sadly.

'I thought not. I never saw her come aboard. Still I hoped, like; I hoped. Alackaday! God help me, Salvation Yeo!'

What have you to do with this little maid, then, good fellow! asked Grenville.

'Ah, sir, before I tell you that, I must go back and finish the story of Mr Oxenham, if you will believe me enough to hear it.'

'I do believe thee, good fellow, and honour thee too.'

Then, sir, I can speak with a free tongue. Where was I?

'Where was he, Arayas!'

'At the Isle of Pearls.'

'And yet, O gentles, tell me first, how Captain Drake came into the South Seas.—over the neck, as we did!'

'Through the Straits, good fellow, like any Spaniard. but go on with thy story, and thou shalt have Mr. Leigh's after.'

'Through the Straits! Oh glory! But I'll tell my tale. Well, sirs both—To the Island of Pearls we came, we and some of the negroes. We found many huts, and Indians fishing for pearls, and also a fair house, with porches, but no Spaniard therein, save one man; at which Mr Oxenham was like a man transported, and fell on that Spaniard, crying, "Perro, where is your mistress! Where is the bark from Lima!" To which he boldly enough, "What was his mistress to the Englishman!" But Mr. O threatened to twine a cord round his head till his eyes burst out, and the Spaniard, being terrified, said that the ship from Lima was expected in a fortnight's time. So for ten days we lay quiet, letting neither negro nor Spaniard leave the island, and took good store of pearls, feeding sumptuously on wild cattle and hogs until the tenth day, when there came by a small bark; her w^e took, and found her from Quito, and on board 60,000 pesos of gold and other store. With which if we had been content, gentlemen, all had gone well. And some were willing to go back at once, having both treasure and pearls in plenty; but Mr O., he waxed right mad, and swore to slay any one who made that motion again, assuring us that the Lima ship of which he had news was far greater and richer, and would make princes of us all; which bark came in sight on the sixteenth day, and was taken without shot or slaughter. The taking of which bark, I verily believe, was the ruin of every mother's son of us.'

And being asked why, he answered, 'First, because of the discontent which was bred thereby, for on board was found no gold, but only 100,000 pesos of silver.'

St. Richard Grenville.—Thou greedy fellow; and was not that enough to stay your stomachs!

Yeo answered that he would to God it had been; and that, moreover, the weight of that

silver was afterwards a hindrance to them, and a fresh cause of discontent, as he would afterwards declare. 'So that it had been well for us, sirs, if we had left it behind, as Mr. Drake left his three years before, and carried away the gold only. In which I do see the evident hand of God, and His just punishment for our greediness of gain; who caused Mr Oxenham, by whom we had hoped to attain great wealth, to be a snare to us, and a cause of utter ruin.'

'Do you think, then,' said Sir Richard, 'that Mr Oxenham deceived you wilfully!'

'I will never believe that, sir: Mr. Oxenham had his private reasons for waiting for that ship, for the sake of one on board, whose face would that he had never seen, though he saw it then, as I fear, not for the first time by many a one.' And so was silent.

'Come,' said both his hearers, 'you have brought us thus far, and you must go on.'

'Gentlemen, I have concealed this matter from all men, both on my voyage home and since; and I hope you will be secret in the matter, for the honour of my noble Captain, and the comfort of his friends who are alive. For I think it shame to publish harm of a gallant gentleman, and of an ancient and worshipful family, and to me a true and kind Captain, when what is done cannot be undone, and least said soonest mended. Neither now would I have spoken of it, but that I was inwardly moved to it for the sake of that young gentleman there (looking at Arayas), that he might be warned in time of God's wrath against the crying sin of adultery, and flee youthful lusts, which war against the soul.'

'Thou hast done wisely enough, then,' said Sir Richard, 'and look to it if I do not reward thee: but the young gentleman here, thank God, needs no such warnings, having got them already both by precept and example, where thou and poor Oxenham might have had them also.'

'You mean Captain Drake, your worship!'

'I do, sirrah. If all men were as clean livers as he, the world would be spared one half the tears that are shed in it.'

'Amen, sir. At least there would have been many a tear spared to us and ours. For—as all must out—in that bark of Lima he took a young lady, as fair as the sunshine, sir, and seemingly about two or three-and-twenty years of age, having with her a tall young lad of sixteen, and a little girl, a marvellously pretty child, of about a six or seven. And the lady herself was of an excellent beauty, like a whale's tooth for whiteness, so that all the crew wondered at her, and could not be satisfied with looking upon her. And, gentlemen, this was stranger that the lady seemed in no wise afraid or mournful, and bid her little girl fear nought, as did also Mr. Oxenham: but the lad kept every sour countenance, and the more when he saw the lady and Mr. Oxenham speaking together apart.

'Well, sir, after this good luck, we were

intended to have gone straight back to the river whence we came, and so home to England with all speed. But Mr Oxenham persuaded us to return to the island, and get a few more pearls. To which foolishness (which after caused the mishap) I verily believe he was moved by the instigation of the devil and of that lady. For as we were about to go ashore, I, going down into the cabin of the prize, saw Mr Oxenham and that lady making great cheer of each other with "My life," and "My king," and "light of my eyes," and such toys, and being bidden by Mr. Oxenham to fetch out the lady's mauls, and take them ashore, heard how the two laughed together about the old ape of Panama (which ape, or devil rather, I saw afterwards to my cost), and also how she said that she had been dead for five years, and now that Mr Oxenham was come, she was alive again, and so forth.

Mr Oxenham had taken the little maid ashore, kissing her and playing with her, and saying to the lady, "What is yours is mine, and what is mine is yours." And she asking whether the lad should come ashore, he answered, "He is neither yours nor mine, let the spawn of Beelzebub stay on shore." After which I, coming on deck again, stumbled over that very lad, upon the hatchway ladder, who bore so black and despicable a face, that I verily believe he had overheard their speech, and so thrust him upon deck, and going below again, told Mr Oxenham what I thought, and said that it were better to put a dagger into him at once, professing to be ready so to do. For which previous sin, seeing that it was committed in my unregenerate days, I hope I have obtained the grace of forgiveness, as I have that of hearty repentance. But the lady cried out, "Though he be none of us, he, I have sin enough already on my soul," and so laid her hand on Mr Oxenham's mouth, outroating pitifully. And Mr Oxenham answered, laughing, when she would let him, "What care we? let the young monkey go and howl to the old one," and so went ashore with the lady to that house, whence for three days he never came forth, and would have remained longer, but that the men, finding but few pearls, and being wearied with the watching and warling so many Spaniards and negroes, came clamouring to him, and swore that they would return or leave him there with the lady. So all went on board the pinnace again, every one in ill-humour with the Captain, and how with them.

Well, sir, we came back to the mouth of the river, and there began our troubles, for the negroes, as soon as we were on shore, called on Mr Oxenham to fulfil the bargain he had made with them. And now it came out (what few of us knew till then) that he had agreed with the Cimaroons that they should have all the prisoners which were taken, save the gold. And he, though loth, was about to give up the Spaniards to them, near forty in all, supposing that they intended to use them as slaves: but

as we all stood talking, one of the Spaniards, understanding what was forward, threw himself on his knees before Mr. Oxenham, and shrieking like a madman, entreated not to be given up into the hands of "those devils," said he, "who never take a Spanish prisoner, but they roast him alive, and then eat his heart among them." We asked the negroes if this was possible? To which some answered, What was that to us? But others said boldly, that it was true enough, and that revenge made the best sauce, and nothing was so sweet as Spanish blood, and one, pointing to the lady, said such foul and devilish things as I should be ashamed either for me to speak, or you to hear. At this we were like men amazed for very horror, and Mr Oxenham said, "You intimate signals, if you had taken these fellows for slaves, it had been far enough, for you were once slaves to them, and I doubt not cruelly used enough. But as for this abomination," says he, "God do so to me, and more also, if I let one of them come into your murderous hands." So there was a great quarrel; but Mr Oxenham stoutly bade put the prisoners on board the ships again, and so let the prizes go, taking with him only the treasure, and the lady and the little maid. And so the lad went on to Panama, God's wrath having gone out against us.

Well, sir, the Cimaroons after that went away from us, swearing revenge (for which we cared little enough), and we rowed up the river to a place where three streams met, and then up the least of the three, some four days' journey, till it grew all shoal and swift, and there we hauled the pinnace upon the sands, and Mr Oxenham asked the men whether they were willing to carry the gold and silver over the mountains to the North Sea. Some of them at first were loth to do so, and I and others advised that we should leave the plate behind, and take the gold only, for it would have cost us three or four journeys at the least. But Mr Oxenham promised every man 100 pesos of silver over and above his wages, which made them content enough, and we were all to start the morrow morning. But, sir, that night, as God had ordained, came a mishap by some rash speeches of Mr. Oxenham's, which threw all abroad again, for when we had carried the treasure about half a league inland, and hidden it away in a house which we made of boughs, Mr O. being always full of that his fair lady, spoke to me and William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade, and a few more, saying, "That we had no need to return to England, seeing that we were already in the very garden of Eden, and wanted for nothing, but could live without labour or toil; and that it was better, when we got over to the North Sea, to go and seek out some fair island, and there dwell in joy and pleasure till our lives' end. And we two," he said, "will be king and queen, and you, whom I can trust, my officers; and for servants we will have the Indians, who, I warrant, will be more fain to serve honest and merry masters

like us than these Spanish devils," and much more of the like; which words I liked well,—my mind, alas! being given altogether to carnal pleasure and vanity,—as did William Penberthy, my good comrade, on whom I trust God has had mercy. But the rest, sirs, took the matter all across, and began murmuring against the Captain, saying that poor honest mariners like them had always the labour and the pain, while he took his delight with his lady, and that they would have at least one merry night before they were slain by the Cimaroons, or eaten by panthers and lagartos, and so got out of the pinnace two great skins of Canary wine, which were taken in the same prize, and sat themselves down to drink. Moreover, there were in the pinnace a great sight of hens, which came from the same prize, by which Mr. O set great store, keeping them for the lady and the little maid, and falling upon these, the men began to blaspheme, saying, "What a plague had the Captain to fill the boat with duty live lumber for that girl's sake! They had a better right to a good supper than ever she had, and might fast awhile to cool her hot blood," and so cooked and ate those hens, plucking them on board the pinnace, and letting the feathers fall into the stream. But when William Penberthy, my good comrade, saw the feathers floating away down, he asked them if they were mad, to lay a trail by which the Spaniards would surely track them out, if they came after them, as without doubt they would. But they laughed him to scorn, and said that no Spanish cur dared follow on the heels of true English mastiffs as they were, and other boastful speeches, and at last, being heated with wine, began afresh to murmur at the Captain. And one speaking of his counsel about the island, the rest altogether took it amiss and out of the way, and some sprang up crying treason, and others that he meant to defraud them of the plate which he had promised, and others that he meant to desert them in a strange land, and so forth, till Mr. O, hearing the hubbub, came out to them from the house, when they reviled him foully, swearing that he meant to cheat them. And one Edward Stiles, a Wapping man, mad with drink, dared to say that he was a fool for not giving up the prisoners to the negroes, and what was it to him if the lady roasted? the negroes should have her yet, and drawing his sword, ran upon the Captain for which I was about to strike him through the body, but the Captain, not caring to waste steel on such a rascal, with his fist caught him such a buffet behind the ear, that he fell down stark dead, and all the rest stood amazed. Then Mr. Oxenham called out, "All honest men who know me, and can trust me, stand by your lawful Captain against these ruffians." Whereon, sirs, I, and Penberthy, my good comrade, and four Plymouth men, who had sailed with Mr. O in Mr. Drake's ship, and knew his trusty and valiant conditions, came over to him, and swore before God to stand by him and the lady. Then

said Mr. O. to the rest, "Will you carry this treasure, knaves, or will you not? Give me an answer here." And they refused unless he would, before they started, give each man his share. So Mr. O. waxed very mad, and swore that he would never be served by men who did not trust him, and so went in again, and that night was spent in great disquiet, I and those five others keeping watch about the house of boughs till the rest fell asleep, in their drink. And next morning when the wine was gone out of them, Mr. O. asked them whether they would go to the hills with him, and find those negroes, and persuade them after all to carry the treasure. To which they agreed after awhile, thinking that so they should save themselves labour, and went off with Mr. Oxenham, leaving us six who had stood by him to watch the lady and the treasure, after he had taken an oath of us that we would deal justly and obediently by him and by her, which God knows, gentlemen, we did. So he parted with much weeping and wailing of the lady, and was gone seven days; and all that time we kept that lady faithfully and honestly, bringing her the best we could find, and serving her upon our bedded knees, both for her admirable beauty, and for her excellent conditions, for she was certainly of some noble kin, and courteous, and without fear, as if she had been a very princess. But she kept always within the house, which the little maid (God bless her!) did not, but soon learned to play with us and we with her, so that we made great cheer of her, gentlemen, sailor fashion—for you know we must always have our mignons aboard to pet and amuse us—maybe a monkey, or a little dog, or a singing bird, ay, or mice and spiders, if we have nothing better to play withal. And she was wonderful sharp, sirs, was the little maid, and picked up her English from us fast, calling us jolly mariners, which I doubt but she has forgotten by now, but I hope in God it be not so; and therewith the good fellow began wiping his eyes.

'Well, sirs, on the seventh day we six were down by the pinnace clearing her out, and the little maid with us gathering of flowers, and William Penberthy fishing on the bank, about a hundred yards below, when on a sudden he leaps up and runs toward us, crying, "Here come our hens' feathers back again with a vengeance!" and so bade catch up the little maid, and run for the house, for the Spaniards were upon us.

'Which was too true, for before we could win the house, there were full eighty shot at our heels, but could not overtake us; nevertheless, some of them stopping, fixed their calivers and let fly, killing one of the Plymouth men. The rest of us escaped to the house, and catching up the lady, fled forth, not knowing whither we went, while the Spaniards, finding the house and treasure, pursued us no farther.

'For all that day and the next we wandered in great misery, the lady weeping continually, and calling for Mr. Oxenham most piteously, and the little maid likewise, till with much ado

we found the track of our comrades, and went up that as best we might: but at nightfall, by good hap, we met the whole crew coming back, and with them 200 negroes or more, with bows and arrows. At which sight was great joy and embracing, and it was a strange thing, sirs, to see the lady, for before that she was altogether desperate and yet she was now a very lioness, as soon as she had got her love again; and prayed him earnestly not to care for that gold, but to go forward to the North Sea, vowing to him in my hearing that she cared no more for poverty than she had cared for her good name, and then—they being a little apart from the rest—pointed round to the green forest, and said in Spanish—which I suppose they knew not that I understood,—“See, all round us is Paradise. Were it not enough for you and me to stay here for ever, and let them take the gold or leave it as they will?”

“To which Mr Oxenham—“Those who lived in Paradise had not sinned as we have, and would never have grown old or sick, as we shall.”

“And she—“If we do that, there are poisons enough in these woods, by which we may die in each other’s arms, as would Heaven we had died seven years ago!”

“But he—“No, no, my life. It stands upon my honour both to fulfil my bond with these men, whom I have brought hither, and to take home to England at least something of my prize as a proof of my own valour.”

“Then she smiling—“Am I not prize enough, and proof enough?” But he would not be so tempted, and turning to us offered us the half of that treasure, if we would go back with him, and rescue it from the Spaniards. At which the lady wept and wailed much, but I took upon myself to comfort her, though I was but a simple mariner, telling her that it stood upon Mr Oxenham’s honour; and that in England nothing was esteemed so foul as cowardice, or breaking word and troth betwixt man and man, and that better was it for him to die seven times by the Spaniards, than to face at home the scorn of all who sailed the seas. So, after much ado, back they went again; I and Penberthy, and the three Plymouth men which escaped from the pinnacle, keeping the lady as before.

“Well, sirs, we waited five days, having made houses of boughs as before, without hearing aught, and on the sixth we saw coming afar off Mr Oxenham, and with him fifteen or twenty men who seemed very weary and wounded, and when we looked for the rest to be behind them, behold there were no more; at which, sirs, as you may well think, our hearts sank within us.

“And Mr Q, coming nearer, cried out afar off, “All is lost!” and so walked into the camp without a word, and sat himself down at the foot of a great tree with his head between his hands, speaking neither to the lady nor to any one, till she very pitifully kneeling before him,

cursing herself for the cause of all his mischief, and praying him to avenge himself upon that her tender body, won him hardly to look once upon her, after which (as is the way of vain and unstable men) all between them was as before.

“But the men were full of curses against the negroes, for their cowardice and treachery, yea, and against high Heaven itself, which had put the most part of their ammunition into the Spaniards’ hands; and told me, and I believe truly, how they forced the enemy awaiting them in a little copse of great trees, well fortified with barricades of boughs, and having with them our two falcons, which they had taken out of the pinnacle. And how Mr Oxenham divided both the English and the negroes into two bands, that one might attack the enemy in front, and the other in the rear, and so set upon them with great fury, and would have utterly driven them out, but that the negroes, who had come on with much howling, like very wild beasts, being suddenly scared with the shot and noise of the ordnance, turned and fled, leaving the Englishmen alone, in which evil strait Mr O. fought like a very Guy of Warwick, and I verily believe every man of them likewise, for there was none of them who had not his shrewd scratch to show. And indeed Mr Oxenham’s party had once gotten within the barricades, but the Spaniards being sheltered by the tree trunks (and especially by one mighty tree, which stood as I remembered it, and remember it now, borne up two fathoms high upon its own roots, as it were upon arches and pillars), shot at them with such advantage, that they had several slain, and seven more taken alive, only among the roots of that tree. So seeing that they could prevail nothing, having little but their pikes and swords, they were fain to give back, though Mr Oxenham swore he would not stir a foot, and making at the Spanish Captain was borne down with pikes, and hardly pulled away by some, who at last reminding him of his lady, persuaded him to come away with the rest. Whereon the other party fled also, but what had become of them they knew not, for they took another way. And so they miserably drew off, having lost in men eleven killed and seven taken alive, besides five of the rasal negroes who were killed before they had time to run; and there was an end of the matter.”

“But the next day, gentlemen, in came some

¹ In the documents from which I have drawn this veracious history, a note is appended to this part of Yeo’s story, which seems to me to smack sufficiently of the old Elizabethan seaman, to be inserted at length.

“All so far, and most after, agreeth with Lopes Vaz his tale, taken from his pocket by my Lord Cumberland’s mariners at the river Plate, in the year 1598. But note here his vainglory and falsehood, or else fear of the Spaniard.

“First, lest it should be seen how great an advantage the Spaniards had, he maketh no mention of the English calivers, nor those two pieces of ordnance which were in the pinnacle.

“Second, he saith nothing of the flight of the Cima-rooms, though it was evidently to be gathered from that

five-and-twenty more, being the wreck of the other party, and with them a few negroes; and these proved themselves no honest men than they were brave, for there being great misery among us English, and every one of us straggling where he could to get food, every day one or more who went out never came back, and that caused a suspicion that the negroes had betrayed them to the Spaniards, or may be, slain and eaten them. So these fellows being upbraided with that altogether left us, telling us boldly, that if they had eaten our fellows, we owed them a debt instead of the Spanish prisoners, and we, in great terror and hunger, went forward and over the mountains till we came to a little river which ran northward, which seemed to lead into the Northern Sea, and there Mr. O—who, sir, I will say, after his first rage was over, belied himself all through like a valiant and skilful commander—bade us cut down trees and make canoes, to go down to the sea, which we began to do with great labour and little profit, hewing down trees with our swords, and burning them out with fire, which, after much labour, we kindled, but as we were a-burning out of the first tree, and cutting down of another, a great party of negroes came upon us, and with much friendly show bade us flee for our lives, for the Spaniards were upon us in great force. And so we were up and away again, hardly able to drag our legs after which he himself saith, that of less than seventy English were slain eleven, and of the negroes but five. And wife of the English seven were taken alive, yet of the negroes none. And why, but because the rawals ran?

Thirdly, it is a thing incredible, and out of experience, that eleven English should be slain and seven taken, with less only of two Spaniards killed.

Search now, and see (for I will not speak of mine own small deluge), in all those memorable voyages, which the worthy and learned Mr. Hakluyt hath so painfully collected, and which ere to my old age next only to my Bible, whether in all the fights which we have endured with the Spaniards, their loss, even in victory, hath not far exceeded ours. For we are both sinner of body and flower of spirit, being even to the poorest of us (thanks to the care of our illustrious princes), the best fed men of Europe, the most trained to feats of strength and use of weapons, and put our trust also not in any Virgin or saints, dead rags and bones, paluted idols which have no breath in their mouths, or St. Bartholomew medals and such devil's remembrancers—but in the only true God and our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom whosoever trusteth, one of them shall chase a thousand. So I hold, having had good experience, and say, if they have done it once, let them do it again and kill their eleven to our two, with any weapon they will, save paper bullets blown out of Fame's lying trumpet. Yet I have no quarrel with the poor Portugal, for I doubt not but friend Lopez has had looking over his shoulder as he wrote mine mighty black velvet Iva with a name as long as that Don Bernadino Delgadillo de Avellaneda who set forth lately his vainglorious libel of lies concerning the last and fatal voyage of my dear friends Sir F. Drake and Sir John Hawkins, who rest in peace, having finished their labours as would God I rested. To whose shameless and unspeakable lying my good friend Mr. Henry Savile of this county did most pitifully and wittily reply, stripping the ass out of his lion's skin; and Sir Thomas Bankerville, general of the fleet, by my advice, sent him a cartel of defiance, offering to meet him with choice of weapons, in any indifferent kingdom of equal distance from this realm; which challenge he hath prudently put in his pipe, or rather rolled it up for one of his Spanish cigarros, and smoked it, and I doubt not, found it foul in the mouth.

us for hunger and weariness, and the broiling heat. And some were taken (God help them!) and some fled with the negroes, of whom what became God alone knoweth, but eight or ten held on with the Captain, among whom was I, and fled downward toward the sea for one day, but afterwards finding by the noise in the woods that the Spaniards were on the track of us, we turned up again toward the inland, and coming to a cliff, climbed up over it, drawing up the lady and the little maid with cords of liana (which hang from those trees as honeysuckle does here, but exceeding stout and long, even to fifty fathoms), and so breaking the track, hoped to be out of the way of the enemy.

By which, nevertheless, we only increased our misery. For two fell from that cliff, as men asleep for very weariness, and miserably broke their bones, and others, whether by the great toil, or sunstrokes, or eating of strange berries, fell sick of fevers and fevers, where was no drop of water, but rock of pumice stone as bare as the back of my hand, and full, moreover, of great cracks, black and without bottom, over which we had not strength to lift the sick, but were fain to leave them there aloft, in the sunshine, like Dives in his torments, crying aloud for a drop of water to cool their tongues, and every man a great stinking vulture or two sitting by him, like an ugly black fiend out of the pit, waiting till the poor soul should depart out of the corpse—but nothing could avail, and for the dear life we must down again and into the woods, or be burned up alive upon these rocks.

So getting down the slope on the farther side, we came into the woods once more, and there wandered for many days, I know not how many, our shoes being gone, and our clothes all rent off us with brakes and briars. And yet how the lady endured all was a marvel to see, for she went barefoot many days, and for clothes was fain to wrap herself in Mr. Oxenham's cloak, while the little maid went all but naked but ever she looked still on Mr. Oxenham, and seemed to take no care as long as he was by, comforting and cheering us all with pleasant words, yea, and once sitting down under a great fig-tree, sang us all to sleep with very sweet music, yet, waking about midnight, I saw her sitting still upright, weeping very bitterly, on whom, sir, God have mercy; for she was a fair and a brave jewel.

And so, to make few words of a sad matter, at last there were none left but Mr. Oxenham and the lady and the little maid, together with me and William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade. And Mr. Oxenham always led the lady, and Penberthy and I carried the little maid. And for food we had fruits, such as we could find, and water we got from the leaves of certain lilies which grew on the bark of trees, which I found by seeing the monkeys drink at them; and the little maid called them monkey-cups, and asked for them continually, making me climb for them. And so we wandered on, and upward into very high mountains, always

fearing lest the Spaniards should track us with dogs, which made the lady leap up often in her sleep, crying that the bloodhounds were upon her. And it befell upon a day, that we came into a great wood of ferns (which grew not on the ground like ours, but on stems as big as a pinnacle's mast, and the back of them was like a fine meshed net, very strange to see), where was very pleasant shade, cool and green, and there, gentlemen, we sat down on a bank of moss, like folk desperate and foredone, and every one looked the other in the face for a long while. After which I took off the bark of those ferns, for I must needs be doing something to drive away thought, and began to plait shippers for the little maid.

"And as I was plaiting, Mr Oxenham said, 'What hinders us from dying like men, every man falling on his own sword?' To which I answered that I dare not, for a wise woman had prophesied of me, sirs, that I should die at sea, and yet neither by water or battle, wherefore I did not think right to meddle with the Lord's purposes. And William Penberthy said, 'That he would sell his life, and that dear, but never give it away.' But the lady said, 'Ah, how gladly would I die! but then la pœnirre garse,' which is in French 'the poor maid,' meaning the little one. Then Mr Oxenham fell into a very great weeping, a weakness I never saw him in before or since, and with many tears besought me never to desert that little maid, whatever might befall, which I promised, swearing to it like a heathen, but would, if I had been able, have kept it like a Christian. But on a sudden there was a great cry in the wood, and coming through the trees on all sides Spanish arquebusiers, a hundred strong at least, and negroes with them, who bade us stand or they would shoot. William Penberthy leapt up, crying, 'Treason!' and running upon the nearest negro ran him through, and then another, and then falling on the Spaniards, fought magnificently till he was borne down with pikes, and so died. But I, seeing nothing better to do, sat still and finished my plaiting. And so we were all taken, and I and Mr Oxenham bound with cords, but the soldiers made a litter for the lady and child, by commandment of Señor Diego de Trees, their commander, a very courteous gentleman.

'Well, sirs, we were brought down to the place where the house of boughs had been by the river-side, where we went over in boats, and found waiting for us certain Spanish gentlemen, and among others one old and ill-favoured man, gray-bearded and bent, in a suit of black velvet, who seemed to be a great man among them. And if you will believe me, Mr Leigh, that was none other than the old man with the gold falcon at his breast, Don Francisco Xararte by name, whom you found aboard of the Lama ship. And had you known as much of him as I do, or as Mr Oxenham did either, you had cut him up for shark's bait, or ever you let the cur ashore again.

'Well, sirs, as soon as the lady came to shore, that old man ran upon her sword in hand, and would have slain her, but some there held him back. On which he turned to, and reviled with every foul and spiteful word which he could think of, so that some there bade him be silent for shame, and Mr Oxenham said, 'It is worthy of you, Don Francisco, thus to trumpet abroad your own disgrace. Did I not tell you years ago that you were a cur, and are you not proving my words for me?'

'He answered, 'English dog, would to Heaven I had never seen you!'

'And Mr Oxenham, 'Spanish ape, would to Heaven that I had sent my dagger through your horning-ribs when you passed me behind St Idegoude's church, eight years last Easter-eve.' At which the old man turned pale, and then began again to upbraid the lady, vowing that he would have her burnt alive, and other devilish words, to which she answered at last—

'Would that you had burnt me alive on my wedding morning, and spared me eight years of misery!' And he—

'Miser! Hear the witch, Señors! Oh, have I not pampered her, heaped with jewels, clothes, coaches, what not? The saints alone know what I have spent on her. What more would she have of me?'

'To which she answered only but this one word, 'Fool!' but in so terrible a voice, though low, that they who were about to laugh at the old pantaloon, were more inclined to weep for her.

'Fool!' she said again, after a while, 'I will waste no words upon you. I would have driven a dagger to your heart months ago, but that I was loth to set you free so soon from your gout and your rheumatism. Selfish and stupid, know when you bought my body from my parents, you did not buy my soul! Farewell, my love, my life! and farewell, Señors! May you be more merciful to your daughters than my parents were to me!' And so, catching a dagger from the girdle of one of the soldiers, smote herself to the heart, and fell dead before them all.

'At which Mr Oxenham smiled, and said, 'That was worthy of us both. If you will unbind my hands, Señors, I shall be most happy to copy so fair a schoolmistress.'

'But Don Diego shook his head, and said,

'It were well for you, valiant Señor, were I at liberty to do so, but on questioning those of your sailors, whom I have already taken, I cannot hear that you have any letters of licence, either from the Queen of England, or any other potentate. I am compelled, therefore, to ask you, whether this is so, for it is a matter of life and death.'

'To which Mr Oxenham answered merrily, 'That so it was: but that he was not aware that any potentate's licence was required to permit a gentleman's meeting his lady love, and that as for the gold which they had taken, if they had never allowed that fresh and fair

young May to be forced into marrying that old January, he should never have meddled with their gold, so that was rather their fault than his." And added, that if he was to be hanged, as he supposed, the only favour which he asked for was a long drop and no priests. And all the while, gentlemen, he still kept his eyes fixed on the lady's corpse, till he was led away with me, while all that stood by, God reward them for it, lamented openly the tragical end of those two sinful lovers.

'And now, sirs, what befell me after that matters little; for I never saw Captain Oxenham again, nor ever shall in this life.'

'He was hanged, then?'

'So I heard for certain the next year, and with him the gallies and sundry more but some were given away for slaves to the Spaniards, and may be alive now, unless, like me, they have fallen into the cruel clutches of the Inquisition. For the Inquisition now, gentlemen, claims the bodies and souls of all heretics all over the world (as the devils told me with their own lips, when I pleaded that I was no Spanish subject), and none that it catches, whether peaceable merchants, or shipwrecked mariners, but must turn or burn.'

'But how did you get into the Inquisition?'

'Why, sir, after we were taken, we set forth to go down the river again; and the old Don took the little maid with him in one boat (and bitterly she screeched at parting from us, and from the poor dead corpse), and Mr Oxenham with Don Diego de Trece in another, and I in a third. And from the Spaniards I learnt that we were to be taken down to Lima, to the Viceroy, but that the old man lived hard, by Panama, and was going straight back to Panama forthwith with the little maid. But they said, "It will be well for her if she ever gets there, for the old man swears she is none of his, and would have left her behind him in the woods, now, if Don Diego had not shamed him out of it." And when I heard that, seeing that there was nothing but death before me, I made up my mind to escape; and the very first night, sir, by God's help, I did it, and went southward away into the forest, avoiding the tracks of the Cumaroons, till I came to an Indian town. And there, gentlemen, I got more mercy from heathens than ever I had from Christians; for when they found that I was no Spaniard, they fed me and gave me a house, and a wife (and a good wife she was to me), and painted me all over in patterns, as you see; and because I had some knowledge of surgery and blood-letting, and my fleams in my pocket, which were worth to me a fortune, I rose to great honour among them, though they taught me more of samples than ever I taught them of surgery. So I lived with them merrily enough, being a very heathen like them, or indeed worse, for they worshipped their Xemes, but I nothing. And in time my wife bore me a child; in looking at whose sweet face, gentlemen, I forgot Mr. Oxenham and his little maid, and my oath, ay, and my native

land also. Wherefore it was taken from me, else had I lived and died as the beasts which perish, for one night, after we were all lain down, came a noise outside the town, and I starting up saw armed men and calivers shining in the moonlight, and heard one read in Spanish, with a loud voice, some fool's sermon, after their custom when they hunt the poor Indians, how God had given to St. Peter the dominion of the whole earth, and St. Peter again the Indies to the Catholic king, wherefore, if they would all be baptized and serve the Spaniard, they should have some monkey's allowance or other of mere kicke than pence, and if not, then have at them with fire and sword, but I dare say your worships know that devilish trick of theirs better than I.'

'I know it, man. Go on.'

'Well—no sooner were the words spoken than, without waiting to hear what the poor innocents within would answer (though that mattered little, for they understood not one word of it), what do the villains but let fly right into the town, with their calivers, and then rush in, sword in hand, killing pell-mell all they met, one of which shots, gentlemen, passing through the doorway, and close by me, struck my poor wife to the heart, that she never spoke word more. I, catching up the babe from her breast, tried to run. but when I saw the town full of them, and their dogs with them in leashes, which was yet worse, I knew all was lost, and sat down again by the corpse with the babe on my knees, waiting the end, like one stunned, and in a dream, for now I thought God from whom I had fled had surely found me out, as He did Jonah, and the punishment of all my sins was come. Well, gentlemen, they dragged me out, and all the young men and women, and chained us together by the neck, and one, catching the pretty babe out of my arms, calls for water and a priest (for they had their shavelings with them), and no sooner was it christened than, catching the babe by the heels, he dashed out its brains,—oh! gentlemen, gentlemen!—against the ground, as if it had been a kitten, and so did they to several more innocents that night, after they had christened them, saying it was best for them to go to heaven while they were still sure thereof, and so marched us all for slaves, leaving the old folk and the wounded to die at leisure. But when morning came, and they knew by my skin that I was no Indian, and by my speech that I was no Spaniard, they began threatening me with torments, till I confessed that I was an Englishman, and one of Oxenham's crew. At that says the leader, "Then you shall to Lima, to hang by the side of your Captain the pirate," by which I first knew that my poor Captain was certainly gone, but alas for me! the priest steps in and claims me for his booty, calling me Lutheran, heretic, and enemy of God; and so, to make short a sad story, to the Inquisition at Carthagena I went, where what I suffered, gentlemen, were as disgusting for

you to hear, as nmanly for me to complain of, but so it was, that being twice racked, and having endured the water-torment as best I could, I was put to the scarpines, whereof I am, as you see, somewhat lame of one leg to this day. At which I could abide no more, and so, wretch that I am! denied my God, in hope to save my life; which indeed I did, but little it profited me, for though I had turned to their superstition, I must have two hundred stripes in the public place, and then go to the galleys for seven years. And there, gentlemen, oftentimes I thought that it had been better for me to have been burned at once and for all: but you know as well as I what a floating hell of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, stripes and toil, is every one of those accursed craft. In which hell, nevertheless, gentlemen, I found the road to heaven,—I had almost said heaven itself. For it fell out, by God's mercy, that my next comrade was an Englishman like myself, a young man of Bristol, who, as he told me, had been some manner of factor on board poor Captain Barker's ship, and had been a preacher among the Anabaptists here in England. And, oh! Sir Richard Grenville, if that man had done for you what he did for me, you would never say a word against those who serve the same Lord, because they don't altogether hold with you. For from time to time, sir, seeing me altogether despairing and furious, like a wild beast in a pit, he set before me in secret earnestly the sweet promises of God in Christ,—who says, "Come to me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will refresh you; and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow,"—till all that past sinful life of mine looked like a dream when one awaketh, and I forgot all my bodily miseries in the misery of my soul, so did I loathe and hate myself for my rebellion against that loving God who had chosen me before the foundation of the world, and come to seek and save me when I was lost, and falling into very despair at the burden of my heinous sins, knew no peace until I gained sweet assurance that my Lord had hanged my burden upon His cross, and washed my sinful soul in His most sinless blood, Amen!

And Sir Richard Grenville said Amen also.

"But, gentlemen, if that sweet youth won a soul to Christ, he paid as dearly for it as ever did saint of God. For after a three or four months, when I had been all that while in sweet converse with him, and I may say in heaven in the midst of hell, there came one night to the barranco at Lima, where we were kept when on shore, three black devils of the Holy Office, and carried him off without a word, only saying to me, "Look that your turn come not next, for we hear that you have had much talk with the villain." And at these words I was so struck cold with terror that I swooned right away, and verily, if they had taken me there and then, I should have denied my God again, for my faith was but young and weak: but instead, they left me aboard the galley for

a few months more (that was a whole voyage to Panama and back), in daily dread lest I should find myself in their cruel claws again—and then nothing for me, but to burn as a relapsed heretic. But when we came back to Lima, the officers came on board again, and said to me, "That heretic has confessed nought against you, so we will leave you for this time: but because you have been seen talking with him so much, and the Holy Office suspects your conversion to be but a rotten one, you are adjudged to the galleys for the rest of your life in perpetual servitude."

"But what became of him?" asked Amyas.

"He was burned, sir, a day or two before we got to Lima, and five others with him at the same stake, of whom two were Englishmen; old comrades of mine, as I guess."

"Ah!" said Amyas, "we heard of that when we were off Lima; and they said, too, that there were six more lying still in prison, to be burnt in a few days. If we had had our fleet with us (as we should have had if it had not been for John Winton) we would have gone in and rescued them all, poor wretches, and sacked the town to boot: but what could we do with one ship?"

"Would to God you had, sir; for the story was true enough; and among them, I heard, were two young ladies of quality and their confessor, who came to their ends for reproving out of Scripture the filthy and loathsome living of these parts, which, as I saw well enough and too well, is liker to Sodom than to a Christian town; but God will avenge His saints, and their sins. Amen."

"Amen," said Sir Richard: "but on with thy tale, for it is as strange as ever man heard."

"Well, gentlemen, when I heard that I must end my days in that galley, I was for awhile like a madman: but in a day or two there came over me, I know not how, a full assurance of salvation, both for this life and the life to come, such as I had never had before; and it was revealed to me (I speak the truth, gentlemen, before Heaven) that now I had been tried to the uttermost, and that my deliverance was at hand."

"And all the way up to Panama (that was after we had laden the *Cacafuego*) I cast in my mind how to escape, and found no way: but just as I was beginning to lose heart again, a door was opened by the Lord's own hand, for (I know not why) we were marched across from Panama to Numbre, which had never happened before, and there put all together into a great barranco close by the quay-side, shackled, as is the fashion, to one long bar that ran the whole length of the house. And the very first night that we were there, I, looking out of the window, spied, lying close aboard of the quay, a good-sized caravel well armed and just loading for sea; and the land breeze blew off very strong, so that the sailors were laying out a fresh warp to hold her to the shore. And it came into my mind, that if we were aboard of her, we should

be at sea in five minutes; and looking at the quay, I saw all the soldiers who had guarded us scattered about drinking and gambling, and some going into taverns to refresh themselves after their journey. That was just at sundown; and half an hour after, in comes the gaoler to take a last look at us for the night, and his keys at his girdle. Whereon, sirs (whether by madness, or whether by the spirit which gave Samson strength to rend the lion), I rose against him as he passed me, without forethought or treachery of any kind, chained though I was, caught him by the head, and threw him there and then against the wall, that he never spoke word after; and then with his keys freed myself and every soul in that room, and bade them follow me, vowing to kill any man who disobeyed my commands. They followed, as men astounded and leaping out of night into day, and death into life, and so onward that caravel and out of the harbour (the Lord only knows how, who blinded the eyes of the idolaters), with no more hurt than a few chance-shot from the soldiers on the quay. But my tale has been over-long already, gentlemen—

'Go on till midnight, my good fellow, if you will.'

'Well, sirs, they chose me for Captain, and a certain Genoese for lieutenant, and away to go I would fain have gone ashore after all, and back to Panama to hear news of the little maid. But that would have been but a fool's errand. Some wanted to turn pirates; but I, and the Genoese too, who was a prudent man, though an evil one, persuaded them to run for England and get employment in the Netherland wars, assuring them that there would be no safety in the Spanish Main, when once our escape got wind. And the more part being of one mind, for England we sailed, watering at the Barbadoes because it was desolate, and so eastward toward the Canaries. In which voyage what we endured (being taken by long calms), by scurvy, calentures, hunger, and thirst, no tongue can tell. Many a time were we glad to lay out sheets at night to catch the dew, and suck them in the morning, and he that had a noggin of rain-water out of the scuppers was as much sought to as if he had been Adelantado of all the Indies, till of a hundred and forty poor wretches a hundred and ten were dead, blaspheming God and man, and above all me and the Genoese, for taking the Europe voyage, as, if I had not sinned enough of my own already. And last of all, when we thought ourselves safe, we were wrecked by south-westers on the coast of Brittany, near to Cape Race, from which but nine souls of us came ashore with their lives, and so to Brest, where I found a Frenchman who carried me to Falmouth, and so ends my tale, in which if I have said one word more or less than truth, I can wish myself no worse, than to have it all to undergo a second time.'

And his voice, as he finished, sank from very weariness of soul; while Sir Richard sat opposite

him in silence, his elbows on the table, his cheeks on his doubled fists, looking him through and through with kindling eyes. No one spoke for several minutes, and then—

'Amyas, you have heard this story. You believe it?'

'Every word, sir, or I should not have the heart of a Christian man.'

'So do I, Anthony.'

The butler entered.

'Take this man to the buttery, clothe him comfortably, and feed him with the best; and bid the knaves treat him as if he were their own father.'

But Yeo lingered.

'If I might be so bold as to ask your worship a favour!—'

'Anything in reason, my brave fellow.'

'If your worship could put me in the way of another adventure to the Indies?'

'Another! Most not had enough of the Spaniards already?'

'Never enough, sir, while one of the idolatrous tyrants is left unchanged,' said he, with a right bitter smile. 'But it's not for that only, sir, but my little maid—Oh, sir, my little maid, that I swore to Mr Oxenham to look to, and never saw her from that day to this! I must find her, sir, or I shall go mad, I believe. Not a night but she comes and calls to me in my dreams, the poor darling; and not a morning but when I wake there is my oath lying on my soul, like a great black cloud, and I no nearer the keeping of it. I told that poor young minister of it when we were in the galleys together, and he said oaths were oaths, and keep it I must, and keep it I will, sir, if you'll but help me.'

'Have patience, man. God will take as good care of thy little maid as ever thou wilt.'

'I know it, sir. I know it, but faith's weak, sir, and oh! if she were bred up a Papist and an idolater, wouldn't her blood be on my head then, sir? Sooner than that, sooner than that, I'd be in the Inquisition again to-morrow, I would!'

'My good fellow, there are no adventures to the Indies forward now, but if you want to fight Spaniards, here is a gentleman will show you the way. Amyas, take him with you to Ireland. If he has learnt half the lessons God has set him to learn, he ought to stand you in good stead.'

Yeo looked eagerly at the young man.

'Will you have me, sir? There's few matters I can't turn my hand to, and may be you'll be going to the Indies again, some day, eh? and take me with you? I'd serve your turn well, though I say it, either for gunner or for pilot. I know every stone and tree from Nombre to Panama, and all the ports of both the seas. You'll never be content, I'll warrant, till you've had another turn along the gold coasts, will you now?'

Amyas laughed and nodded; and the bargain was concluded.

'So out went Yeo to eat, and Amyas having received his despatches, got ready for his journey home.

'Go the short way over the moors, lad, and send back Cary's grey when you can. You must not lose an hour, but be ready to sail the moment the wind goes about.'

'So they started, but as Amyas was getting into the saddle, he saw that there was some stir among the servants, who seemed to keep carefully out of Yeo's way, whispering and nodding mysteriously, and just as his foot was in the stirrup, Anthony, the old butler, plucked him back.

'Dear father alive, Mr Amyas!' whispered he 'and you ben't going by the moor road all alone with that chap?'

'Why not, then? I'm too big for him to eat, I reckon.'

'Oh, Mr Amyas! he's not right, I tell you, not company for a Christian—to go forth with creatures as has flames of fire in their inwards, 'tis temptation of Providence, indeed, then, 'tis.'

'Tale of a tab'

'Tale of a Christian, sir. There was two boys pig-nudging, seed him at it down the lull, beside a maiden that was taken mazed (and no wonder, poor soul!) and lying in screeching asterisks now down to the mill—you ask as you go by—and saw the flames come out of the mouth of mun, and the smoke out of mun's nose like a vire drake, and the roaring of mun like the roaring of ten thousand bulls. Oh, sir! and to go with ho after dark over snoor! 'Tis the devil's devices, sir, against you, because you'm going against his servants the Pope of Room and the Spaniard, and you'll be fixy-led, sure as life, and locked into a box, you will, and see mun vanish away to fire and brimstone, like a jack-o'-lantern. Oh, have a care, then, have a care!'

And the old man wrung his hands, while Amyas, bursting with laughter, rode off down the park, with the unconscious Yeo at his stirrup, chatting away about the Indies, and delighting Amyas more and more by his shrewdness, high spirit, and rough eloquence.

They had gone ten miles or more, the day began to draw in, and the western wind to sweep more cold and cheerless every moment, when Amyas, knowing that there was not an inn hard by around for many a mile ahead, took a pull at a certain bottle which Lady Grenville had put into his holster, and then offered Yeo a pull also.

He declined; he had meat and drink too about him, Heaven be praised!

'Meat and drink! Fall to, then, man, and don't stand on manners.'

Whereon Yeo, seeing an old decayed willow by a brook, went to it, and took therefrom some touchwood, to which he set a light with his knife and a stone, while Amyas watched a little puzzled and startled, as Yeo's fiery reputation came into his mind. Was he really a Sals-

mander-Sprite, and going to warm his inside by a meal of burning tinder? But now Yeo, in his solemn methodical way, pulled out of his bosom a brown leaf, and began rolling a piece of it up neatly to the size of his little finger; and then, putting the one end into his mouth and the other on the tinder, sucked at it till it was a-light, and drinking down the smoke, began puffing it out again at his nostrils with a grunt of deepest satisfaction, and resumed his dog-trot by Amyas's side, as if he had been a walking chimney.

On which Amyas burst into a loud laugh, and cried—

'Why, no wonder they said you breathed, fire! Is not that the Indians' tobacco?'

'Yes, verily, Heaven be praised! but did you never see it before?'

'Never, though we heard talk of it along the coast, but we took it for one more Spanish lie. Humph—well, live and learn!'

'Ah sir, no lie, but a blessed truth, as I can tell, who have ere now gone in the strength of this weed three days and nights without eating; and therefore, sir, the Indians always carry it with them on their war-parties and no wonder; for when all things were made none was made better than this, to be a lone man's companion, a bachelor's friend, a hungry man's food, a sad man's cordial, a wakeful man's sleep, and a chilly man's fire, sir, while for stanching of wounds, purging of rheum, and settling of the stomach, there's no herb like unto it under the canopy of heaven.'

The truth of which enlogium Amyas tested in after years, as shall be fully set forth in due place and time. But 'Mark in the meanwhile,' says one of the voracious chroniclers from whom I draw these facts, writing seemingly in the jolly days of good Queen Anne, and 'not having' (as he says) 'before his eyes the fear of that misanthropic Solomon James I or of any other lying Stuart,' 'that not to South Devon, but to North, not to Sir Walter Raleigh, but to Sir Amyas Leigh; not to the banks of Dart, but to the banks of Torridge, does Europe owe the day-spring of the latter age, that age of smoke which shall endure and thrive, when the age of brass shall have vanished like those of iron and of gold, for whereas Mr Lane is said to have brought home that divine weed (as Spenser well names it) from Virginia, in the year 1584, it is hereby indisputable that full four years earlier, by the bridge of Putford in the Torridge moors (which all true smokers shall hereafter visit as a hallowed spot and point of pilgrimage), first twinkled that fiery beacon and beneficent lodestar of Bidefordian commerce, to spread hereafter from port to port and peak to peak, like the watch-fires which proclaimed the coming of the Armada or the fall of Troy, even to the shores of the Bosphorus, the peaks of the Caucasus, and the farthest isles of the Malayan sea; while Bideford, metropolis of tobacco, saw her Pool choked with Virginian traders, and the pavement of her Bridgeland Street groaning

beneath the savoury bales of roll Trinidado, leaf, and pudding, and her grave burghers, bolstered and blocked out of their own houses by the scarce less savoury stock-fish casks which filled cellar, parlour, and attic, were fain to sit outside the door, a silver pipe in every strong right hand, and each left hand chinking cheerfully the doublelocks deep lodged in the anrisferous caverns of their trunkhoses, while in those fairy-rings of fragrant mist, which circled round their contemplative brows, fitted most pleasant visits of Wiltshire farmers jogging into Sherbornio fair, their heaviest shillings in their pockets, to buy (unless old Aubrey lies) the lotus-loaf of Torridge for its weight in silver, and draw from thence, after the example of the Cæcques of Llanes, supplies of inspiration much needed, then as now, in those Gothamite regions. And yet did these improve, as Englishmen, upon the method of those heathen savages, for the latter (so Salvation Yeo reported as a truth, and Dampier's surgeon Mr Waser after him), when they will deliberate of war or policy, sit round in the hut of the chief, where being placed, enter to them a small boy with a cigarro of the lightness of a rolling pin, and puff the smoke thereof into the face of each warrior, from the eldest to the youngest, while they, putting their hand funnel-wise round their mouths, draw into the sinuities of the brain that more than Delphic vapour of prophecy, which boy presently falls down in a swoon, and being dragged out by the heels and laid by to sober, enter another to pull at the sacred cigarro, till he is dragged out likewise, and so on till the tobacco is finished, and the seed of wisdom has sprouted in every soul into the tree of meditation, bearing the flowers of eloquence, and in due time the fruit of valiant action. With which quaint fact (for fact it is, in spite of the bonibast) I end the present chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE NOBLE BROTHERHOOD OF THE ROSE WAS FOUNDED

'It is virtue yes virtue, gentlemen, that maketh gentle man, that maketh the poor rich, the base born noble, the subject a sovereign, the deformed beautiful, the sick whole, the weak strong, the most miserable most happy. There are two principal and peculiar gifts in the nature of man, knowledge and reason, the one commandeth, and the other obeyeth: these things neither the whirling wheel of fortune can change, neither the deceitful ravillings of worldlings separate, neither sickness abate, neither a. o. abolish. — LILLY'S *Euphues*, 1. 81

It now falls to my lot to write of the foundation of that most chivalrous brotherhood of the Rose, which after a few years made itself not only famous in its native county of Devon, but formidable, as will be related hereafter, both in Ireland and in the Netherlands, in the Spanish Main and the heart of South America. And if

this chapter shall seem to any Quixotic and fantastical, let them recollect that the generation who spoke and acted thus in matters of love and honour were, nevertheless, practised and valiant soldiers, and prudent and crafty politicians, that he who wrote the *Arcadia* was at the same time, in spite of his youth, one of the subtlest diplomatists of Europe, that the poet of the *Fuery Quene* was also the author of *The State of Ireland*, and if they shall quote against me with a sneer Lilly's *Euphues* itself, I shall only answer by asking—Have they ever read it? For if they have done so, I pity them if they have not found it, in spite of occasional tediousness and pedantry, as brave, righteous, and pious a book as man need look into and wish for no better proof of the nobleness and virtue of the Elizabethan age, than the fact that *Euphues* and the *Arcadia* were the two popular romances of the day. It may have suited the purposes of Sir Walter Scott, in his cleverly-drawn Sir Pierce Shastoll, to ridicule the *Euphuists*, and that *affectation comitatus* of the travelled English of which Laquet complains, but over and above the anachronism of the whole character (for, to give but one instance, the *Euphuist* knight talks of Sidney's quarrel with Lord Oxford at least ten years before it happened), we do deny that Lilly's book could, if read by any man of common sense, produce such a covecomb, whose spiritual ancestors would rather have been Gabriel Harvey and Lord Oxford,—if indeed the former has not maligned the latter, and ill-tempered Tom Nash maligned the malinger in his turn.

But, indeed, there is a double anachronism in Sir Pierce, for he does not even belong to the days of Sidney, but to those worse times which began in the latter years of Elizabeth, and after breaking her mighty heart, had full licence to bear their crop of fools' heads in the profligate days of James. Of them, perhaps, hereafter. And in the meanwhile, let those who have not read *Euphues* believe that, if they could train a son after the fashion of his *Euphuism*, to the great saving of their own money and his virtue, all fathers, even in these money-making days, would rise up and call them blessed. Let us rather open our eyes, and see in these old Elizabeth gallants our own ancestors, showing forth with the luxuriant wildness of youth all the virtues which still go to the making of a true Englishman. Let us not only see in their commercial and military daring, in their political astuteness, in their deep reverence for law, and in their solemn sense of the great calling of the English nation, the antitypes or rather the examples of our own: but let us confess that their chivalry is only another garb of that beautiful tenderness and mercy which is not, as it was then, the twin sister of English valour; and even in their extravagant fondness for Continental ingunners and literature, let us recognise that old Anglo-Norman teachableness and wide-heartedness, which has enabled us to profit by the wisdom and civilisation of all ages and of

all lands, without prejudice to our own distinctive national character.

And so I go to my story, which, if any one dislikes, he has but to turn the leaf till he finds pasturage which suits him better.

Amyas could not sail the next day, or the day after, for the south-wester freshened, and blew three parts of a gale dead into the bay. So having got the *Mary Grenville* down the river into Appledore pool, ready to start with the first shift of wind, he went quietly home, and when his mother started on a jillion behind the old serving-man to ride to Clovelly, where Frank lay wounded, he went in with her as far as Bideford, and there met, coming down the High Street, a procession of horsemen headed by Will Cary, whose clad cap-à-pié in shining armour, sword on thigh, and helmet at saddle-bow, looked as gallant a young gentleman as ever Bideford dames peeped at from door and window. Behind him, upon country ponies, came four of five stout serving-men, carrying his lances and baggage, and their own long-bows, swords, and knickers, and behind all, in a horse-litter, to Mrs. Leigh's great joy, Master Frank himself. He deposed that his wounds were only flesh-wounds, the dagger having turned against his ribs, that he must see the last of his brother, and that with her good leave he would not come home to Burrough, but take up his abode with Cary in the Ship Tavern, close to the Bridge-foot. This he did forthwith, and settling himself on a couch, held his levees there in state, mobbed by all the gossips of the town, not without white fies as to who had brought him into that sorry plight.

But in the meanwhile, he and Amyas concocted a scheme which was put into effect the next day (being market-day), first by the inn-keeper, who began under Amyas's orders a bustle of roasting, boiling, and frying, unparalleled in the annals of the Ship Tavern, and next by Amyas himself, who, going out into the market, invited as many of his old schoolfellows, one by one apart, as Frank had pointed out to him, to a merry supper and a 'rowse' thereon consequent; by which crafty scheme, in came each of Rose Salterne's gentle admirers, and found himself, to his considerable disgust, seated at the same table with six rivals, to none of whom had he spoken for the last six months. However, all were too well bred to let the English dialect run much; and they (though, of course, they knew all) settled their guests, Frank on his couch lying at the head of the table, and Amyas taking the bottom and contrived, by filling all mouths with good things, to save them the pain of speaking to each other till the wine should have loosened their tongues and warmed their hearts. In the meanwhile both Amyas and Frank, ignoring the silence of their guests with the most provoking good-humour, chatted, and joked, and told stories, and made themselves such good company, that Will Cary, who always found merriment infectious, melted into a jest, and then into another, and finding good-humour

far more pleasant than bad, tried to make Mr. Coffin laugh, and only made him bow, and to make Mr. Fortescue laugh, and only made him frown; and unabashed nevertheless, began playing his light artillery upon the waiters, till he drove them out of the room bursting with laughter.

So far so good. And when the cloth was drawn, and sack and sugar became the order of the day, and 'Queen and Bille' had been duly drunk with all the honours, Frank tried a fresh move, and—

'I have a toast, gentlemen—here it is. "The gentlemen of the Irish wars; and may Ireland never be without a St. Leger to stand by a Fortescue, a Fortescue to stand by a St. Leger, and a Chichester to stand by both!"'

Which toast of course involved the drinking the healths of the three representatives of those families, and their returning thanks, and paying a compliment each to the other's house. and so the ice cracked a little further, and young Fortescue proposed the health of 'Amyas Leigh, and all bold mariners;' to which Amyas replied by a few blunt kindly words, 'that he wished to know no better fortune than to sail round the world again with the present company as fellow-adventurers, and so give the Spaniards' another taste of the men of Devon.'

And by this time, the wine going down sweetly, caused the lips of them that were asleep to speak, till the ice broke up altogether, and every man began talking like a rational Englishman to the man who sat next him.

'And now, gentlemen,' said Frank, who saw that it was the fit moment for the grand assault which he had planned all along, 'let me give you a health which none of you, I dare say, will refuse to drink with heart and soul as well as with lips,—the health of one whom beauty and virtue have so ennobled, that in their light the shadow of lowly birth is unseen;—the health of one whom I would proclaim as peerless in loveliness, were it not that every gentleman here has sisters, who might well challenge from her the grins of Venus: and yet what else dare I say, while those same lovely ladies who, if they but use their own mirrors, must needs be far better judges of beauty than I can be, have in my own hearing again and again assigned the palm to her? Surely, if the goddesses decide among themselves the question of the golden apple, Paris himself must vacate the judgment-seat. Gentlemen, your hearts, I doubt not, have already bid you, as my unworthy lips do now, to drink "The Rose of Torridge."'

If the Rose of Torridge herself had walked into the room she could hardly have caused more blank astonishment than Frank's bold speech. Every guest turned red, and pale, and red again, and looked at the other as much as to say, 'What right has any one but I to drink her? Lift your glass, and I will dash it out of your hand;' but Frank, with sweet effrontery, drank, 'The health of the Rose of Torridge, and a double health to that worthy gentleman,

whosoever he may be, whom she is fated to honour with her love!

'Well done, cunning Frank Leigh!' cried blunt Will Cary; 'none of us dare quarrel with you now, however much we may sulk at each other. For there's none of us, I'll warrant, but thinks that she likes him the best of all, and so we are bound to believe that you have drunk our healths all round.'

'And so I have and what better thing can you do, gentlemen, than to drink each other's healths all round likewise and so show yourselves true gentlemen, true Christians, ay, and true lovers? For what is love (let me speak freely to you, gentlemen and guests), what is love, but the very inspiration of that Deity whose name is Love? Be sure that not without reason did the ancients feign Eros to be the eldest of the gods, by whom the jarring elements of chaos were attuned into harmony and order. Now, then, shall lovers make him the father of strife? Shall Psyche wed with Cupid, to bring forth a cockatrice's egg? or the soul be filled with love, the likeness of the immortals, to burn with envy and jealousy, division and distrust? True, the rose has its thorn; but it leaves poison and stings to the nettle. Cupid has his arrow, but he hurls no scorpions. Venus is awful when despoiled, as the daughters of Proetus found; but her handmaids are the Graces, not the Furies. Surely he who loves aright will not only find love lovely, but become himself lovely also. I speak not to reprehend you, gentlemen, for to you (as your piercing wits have already perceived, to judge by your honourable blushes) my discourse tends, but to point you, if you will but permit me, to that rock which I myself have, I know not by what Divine good hap, attained; if, indeed, I have attained it, and am not about to be washed off again by the next tide.'

Frank's rapid and fantastic oratory, utterly unexpected as it was, had as yet left their wits no time to set their tempers on fire, but when, weak from his wounds, he panted for breath, there was a haughty murmur from more than one young gentleman, who took his speech as an impertinent interference with each man's right to make a fool of himself; and Mr Coffin, who had sat quietly bolt upright, and looking at the opposite wall, now rose as quietly, and with a face which tried to look utterly unconcerned, was walking out of the room another minute, and Lady Bath's prophecy about the feast of the Lapithæ might have come true.

But Frank's heart and head never failed him.

'Mr. Coffin!' said he, in a tone which compelled that gentleman to turn round, and so brought him under the power of a face which none could have beheld for five minutes and borne malice, as imploring, tender, earnest was it. 'My dear Mr. Coffin! If my earnestness has made me forget even for a moment the bounds of courtesy, let me entreat you to forgive me. Do not add to my heavy griefs, heavy enough already, the grief of losing a friend.

Only hear me patiently to the end (generously, I know, you will hear me); and then, if you are still incensed, I can but again entreat your forgiveness a second time.'

Mr Coffin, to tell the truth, had at that time never been to Court; and he was therefore somewhat jealous of Frank, and his Court talk, and his Court clothes, and his Court company; and moreover, being the eldest of the guests, and only two years younger than Frank himself, he was a little nettled at being classed in the same category with some who were scarce eighteen. And if Frank had given the least hint which seemed to assume his own superiority, all had been lost; but when, instead thereof, he stood *in forma pauperis*, and threw himself upon Coffin's mercy, the latter, who was a true-hearted man enough, and after all had known Frank over since either of them could walk, had nothing to do but to sit down again and submit, while Frank went on more earnestly than ever.

'Believe me, believe me, Mr Coffin, and gentlemen all, I no more arrogate to myself a superiority over you than does the sailor hurled on shore by the surge fancy himself less than his comrade who is still battling with the foam. For I too, gentlemen,—let me confess it, that by confiding in you I may, perhaps, win you to confide in me,—have loved, ay, and do love, where you love also. Do not start. Is it a matter of wonder that the sun which has dazzled you has dazzled me, that the lodestone which has drawn you has drawn me? Do not frown, either, gentlemen. I have learnt to love you for loving what I love, and to admire you for admiring that which I admire. Will you not try the same lesson—so easy, and, when learnt, so blissful? What breeds more close communion between subjects than allegiance to the same queen? between brothers, than duty to the same father? between the devout, than adoration for the same Deity? And shall not worship for the same beauty be likewise a bond of love between the worshippers? and each lover see in his rival not an enemy, but a fellow-sufferer? You smile and say in your hearts, that though all may worship, but one can enjoy; and that one man's neat must be the poison of the rest. Be it so, though I deny it. Shall we anticipate our own doom, and slay ourselves for fear of dying? Shall we make ourselves unworthy of her from our very eagerness to win her, and show ourselves her faithful knights, by cherishing envy,—most unknighly of all sins? Shall we dream with the Irish or the Spaniard, that we can become more amiable in a lady's eyes by becoming hateful in the eyes of God and of each other? Will she love us the better, if we come to her with hands stained in the blood of him whom she loves better than us? Let us recollect ourselves rather, gentlemen; and be sure that our only chance of winning her, if she be worth winning, is to will what she wills, honour whom she honours, love whom she loves. If there is to be rivalry among us, let it be a rivalry in

'nobleness, an emulation in virtue. Let each try to outstrip the other in loyalty to his Queen, in valour against her foes, in deeds of courtesy and mercy to the afflicted and oppressed; and thus our love will indeed prove its own divine origin, by raising us nearer to those gods whose gift it is. But yet I show you a more excellent way, and that is charity. Why should we not make this common love to her, whom I am unworthy to name, the sacrament of a common love to each other? Why should we not follow the heroic examples of those ancient knights, who having but one grief, one desire, one god-deas, held that one heart was enough to contain that grief, to nourish that desire, to worship that divinity, and so uniting themselves in friendship till they became but one soul in two bodies, lived only for each other in living only for her, vowing as faithful worshippers to abide by her decision, to find their own bliss in hers, and whomsoever she esteemed most worthy of her love, to esteem most worthy also, and count themselves, by that her choice, the bounden servants of him whom their mistress had condescended to advance to the dignity of her master!—as I (not without hope that I shall be outdone in generous strife) do here pronounce to be the faithful friend, and, to my ability, the hearty servant, of him who shall be honoured with the love of the Rose of Torridge.'

He ceased, and there was a pause.

At last young Fortescue spoke.

'I may be paying you a left-handed compliment, sir, but it seems to me that you are so likely, in that case, to become your own faithful friend and hearty servant (even if you have not borne off the boll already while we have been asleep), that the bargain is hardly fair between such a gay Italianist and us country swains.'

'You undervalue yourself and your country, my dear sir. But set your mind at rest. I know no more of that lady's mind than you do nor shall I know. For the sake of my own peace, I have made a vow neither to see her, nor to hear, if possible, tidings of her, till three full years are past. Dixi!'

Mr Coffin rose.

'Gentlemen, I may submit to be outdone by Mr Leigh in eloquence, but not in generosity, if he leaves these parts for three years, I do so also.'

'And go in charity with all mankind,' said Gary. 'Give us your hand, old fellow. If you are a Coffin, you were sawn out of no wishy washy elm-board, but right heart-of-oak. I am going too, as Amyas here can tell, to Ireland away, to cool my hot liver in a bog, like a Jack-hare in March. Come, give us thy neif, and let us part in peace. I was minded to have fought thee this day—'

'I should have been most happy, sir,' said Coffin.

—'But now I am all love and charity to mankind. Can I have the pleasure of begging pardon of the world in general, and thee in particular? Does any one wish to pull my nose; send me an

errand; make me lend him five pounds; ay, make me buy a horse of him, which will be as good as giving him ten? Come along! Join hands all round, and swear eternal friendship, as brothers of the sacred order of the—of what? Frank Leigh! Open thy mouth, Daniel, and christen us!'

'The Rose!' said Frank quietly, seeing that his new love-pluitre was working well, and determined to strike while the iron was hot, and carry the matter too far to carry it back again.

'The Rose!' cried Gary, catching hold of Coffin's hand with his right, and Fortescue's with his left. 'Come, Mr Coffin! Bend, sturdy oak! "Woe to the stiffnecked and stout hearted!" says Scripture.'

And somehow or other, whether it was Frank's chivalrous speech, or Gary's fun, or Amyas's good wine, or the nobleness which lies in every young lad's heart, if their elders will take the trouble to call it out, the whole party came in to terms one by one, shook hands all round, and vowed on the hilt of Amyas's sword to make fools of themselves no more, at least by jealousy, but to stand by each other and by their lady-love, and neither grudge nor grumble, let her dance with, sit with, or marry with whom she would, and in order that the honour of their peerless dame, and the brotherhood which was named after her, might be spread through all lands, and equal that of Angeliator Islands of Brittany, they would each go home, and ask their fathers' leave (easy enough to obtain in those brave times) to go abroad wheresoever there were 'good wars,' to emulate there the courage and the courtesy of Walter Manny and Gonzalo Fernandez, Bayard and Gaston de Foix. Why not? Sulney was the hero of Europe at five and twenty, and why not they?

And Frank watched and listened with one of his quiet smiles (his eyes, as some folks do, smiled even when his lips were still) and only said, 'Gentlemen, be sure that you will never repent this day.'

'Repent?' said Gary. 'I feel already as angelical as thou lookest, Saint Silvertongue. What was it that sneezed?—the cat?'

'The lion, rather, by the roar of it,' said Amyas, making a dash at the arras behind him. 'Why, here is a doorway here' and—

And rushing under the arras, through an open door behind, he returned, dragging out by the head Mr John Brimblecombe.

Who was Mr. John Brimblecombe?

If you have forgotten him, you have done pretty nearly what every one else in the room had done. But you recollect a certain fat lad, son of the schoolmaster, whom Sir Richard punished for talebearing three years before, by sending him, not to Coventry, but to Oxford. That was the man. He was now one-and-twenty, and a bachelor of Oxford, where he had learnt such things as were taught in those days, with more or less success; and he was now hanging about Bideford once more, intending to return after Christmas and read divinity, that he

might become a parson, and a shepherd of souls in his native land.

Jack was in person exceedingly like a pig: but not like every pig: not in the least like the Devon pigs of those days, which, I am sorry to say, were no more shapely than the true Irish greyhound who pays Pat's 'rint' for him, or than the lanky monsters who wallow in German rivulets, while the village swineherd, beneath a shady lime, forgets his floss in the melody of a Jew's harp—strange mud-coloured creatures, four feet high and four inches thick, which look as if they had passed their lives, as a collar of Oxford brown is said to do, between two tight boards. Such were then the pigs of Devon. Not to be compared with the true wild descendant of Noah's stock, high-withered, furry, grizzled, game-flavoured little rooklers, whereof many a sownder still grunted about Swinley down and Branton woods, Clovelly glens and Buradon moor. Not like these, nor like the tame abomination of those barbarous times, was Jack: but prophetic in face, figure, and complexion, of Fisher Hobbs and the triumphs of science. A Fisher Hobbs' pig of twelve stone, on his hind-legs—that was what he was, and nothing else, and if you do not know, reader, what a Fisher Hobbs is, you know nothing about pigs, and deserve no bacon for breakfast. But such was Jack. The same plump mulberry complexion, garnished with a few scattered black bristles, the same sleek skin, looking always as if it was upon the point of bursting, the same little toddling legs, the same dapper bend in the small of the back, the same cracked squawk, the same low upright forehead, and tiny eyes, the same round self-satisfied jowl, the same charming sensitive little cooked nose, always on the look-out for a savoury smell,—and yet while watching for the best, contented with the worst, a pig of self-helpful and serene spirit, as Jack was, and therefore, like him, fattening fast while other pigs' ribs are staring through their skins.

Such was Jack; and lucky it was for him that such he was, for it was little that he got to fat him at Oxford, in days when a servant meant really a servant-student, and wistfully that day did his eyes, led by his nose, survey at the end of the Ship Inn passage the preparations for Amyas's supper. The innkeeper was a friend of his, for, in the first place, they had lived within three doors of each other all their lives; and next, Jack was quite pleasant company enough, beside being a learned man and an Oxford scholar, to be asked in now and then to the innkeeper's private parlour, when there were no gentlemen there, to crack his little jokes and tell his little story, and the leavings of the guests' sack, and sometimes help the host to eat the leavings of their supper. And it was, perhaps, with some such hope that Jack trotted off round the corner to the Ship that very afternoon; for that faithful little nose of his, as it sniffed out of a back window of the school, had given him warning of Sabeian gales, and scents of Paradise,

from the inn kitchen below; so he went round, and asked for his pot of small ale (his only luxury), and stood at the bar to drink it, and looked inward with his little twinkling right eye and sniffed inward with his little curling right nostril, and beheld, in the kitchen beyond, salad in stacks and faggots: salad of lettuce, salad of cress and endive, salad of boiled coleworts, salad of pickled coleworts, salad of angelica, salad of scurvy-wort, and seven salads more; for potatoes were not as yet, and salads were during eight months of the year the only vegetable. And on the dresser, and before the fire, whole hecatombs of fragrant victims, which needed neither frankincense nor myrrh, Clovelly herrings and Torrington salmon, Exmoor mutton and Stow venison, stubble geese and woodcocks, curlew and snipe, hams of Hampshire, chutneys of Taunton, and botargos of Cadiz, such as Pantagruel himself might have devoured. And Jack eyed them, as a ragged boy eyes the cakes in a pastrycook's window, and thought of the scraps from the commoner's dinner, which were his wages for cleaning out the hall; and meditated deeply on the unequal distribution of human bliss.

'Ah, Mr Brimblecombe!' said the host, busting out with knife and apron to cool himself in the passage. 'Here are doings! Nine gentlemen to supper!'

'Nine! Are they going to eat all that?'

'Well, I can't say—that Mr Amyas is as good as three to his trencher; but still there's crumbs, Mr Brimblecombe, crumbs, and Waste not want not is my doctrine, so you and I may have a somewhat to stay our stomachs, about an eight o'clock.'

'Eight!' said Jack, looking wistfully at the clock. 'It's but four now. Well, it's kind of you, and perhaps I'll look in.'

'Just you stop in now, and look to this venison. There's a breast! you may lay your two fingers into the say there, and not get to the bottom of the fat. That's Sir Richard's sending. He's all for them Leighs, and no wonder, they're brave lads, surely; and there's a sa l'Je-o-inutton! I rode twenty miles for mutton yesterday, I did, over beyond Barnstaple, and five year old, Mr John, it is, if ever five years was, and not a tooth to mutton's head, for I looked to that, and smelt all the way home like any apple, and if it don't ate so soft as ever was scald cream, never you call me Thomas Burnian.'

'Humph!' said Jack. 'And that's their dinner. Well, some are born with a silver spoon in their mouth.'

'Some be born with roast beef in their mouths, and plum-pudding in their pocket to take away the taste o' mutton; and that's better than empty spines, eh?'

'For them that get it,' said Jack. 'But for them that don't—' and with a sigh he returned to his small ale, and then lingered in and out of the inn, watching the dinner as it went into the best room, where the guests were assembled.

And as he lounged there, Amyas went in, and saw him, and held out his hand, and said—
 'Hillo, Jack! How goes the world! How you've grown!' and passed on;—what had Jack Brimblecombe to do with Rose Salterne!

So Jack lingered on, hovering around the fragrant smell like a fly round a honey-pot, till he found himself invisibly attracted, and as it were, led by the nose out of the passage into the adjoining room, and to that side of the room where there was a door, and once there he could not help hearing what passed inside; till Rose Salterne's name fell on his ear. So, as it was ordained, he was taken in the fact. And now behold him brought in red-hand to judgment, not without a kick or two from the wrathful foot of Amyas Leigh. Whereat there fell on him a storm of abuse, which, for the honour of that gallant company, I shall not give in detail; but which abuse, strange to say, seemed to have no effect on the impenitent and unabashed Jack, who, as soon as he could get his breath, made answer fiercely, amid much puffing and blowing.

'What business have I here! As much as any of you. If you had asked me in, I would have come but as you didn't, I came without asking.'
 'You shameless rascal!' said Cary. 'Come if you were asked, where there was good wine! I'll warrant you for that!'

'Why,' said Amyas, 'no lad ever had a cake at school but he would dog him up one street and down another all day for the crumbs, the trencher-scraping spaniel!'

'Patience, fasters!' said Frank. 'That Jack's is somewhat of a gnathomic and p-rastic soul, or stomach, all Bideford apple-women know; but I suspect more than Deus Voltor has brought him hither.'

'Deus cavedropping, then. We shall have the whole story over the town by to-morrow,' said another; beginning at that thought to feel somewhat ashamed of his late enthusiasm.

'Ah, Mr Frank! You were always the only one that would stand up for me! Deus Venter, quotha! 'Twas Deus Cupid, it was!'

A roar of laughter followed this announcement.

'What!' asked Frank, 'was it Cupid, then, who sneezed approval to our love, Jack, as he did to that of Dido and Æneas!'

But Jack went on desperately.

'I was in the next room, drinking of my beer. I couldn't help that, could I! And then I heard her name, and I couldn't help listening then. Flesh and blood couldn't.'

'Nor fat either!'

'No, nor fat, Mr Cary. Do you suppose fat men haven't souls to be saved as well as thin ones, and hearts to burst, too, as well as stomachs? Fat! Fat can feel, I reckon, as well as lean. Do you suppose there's nought inside here but beer!'

And he laid his hand, as Drayton might have said, on that stout bastion, hornwork, ravelin, or demilune, which formed the outworks to the citadel of his purple ink of man.

'Nought but beer!—Cheese, I suppose!'

'Bread!'

'Beef!'

'Love!' cried Jack. 'Yes, Love!—Ay, you laugh; but my eyes are not so grown up with fat but what I can see what's fair as well as you.'

'Oh Jack, naughty Jack, dost thou heap sin on sin, and luxury on gluttony!'

'Sin! If I sin, you sin: I tell you, and I don't care who knows it, I've loved her these three years as well as e'er a one of you, I have. I've thought o' nothing else, prayed for nothing else, God forgive me! And then you laugh at me, because I'm a poor parson's son, and you fine gentlemen. God made us both, I reckon. You!—you make a deal of giving her up to-day. Why, it's what I've done for these miserable years as ever poor sinners spent; ay, froth the first day I said to myself, "Jack, if you can't have that pearl, you'll have none; and that you can't have, for it's most for your masters: so conquer or die." And I couldn't conquer. I can't help loving her, worshipping her, no more than you, and I will die. but you needn't laugh meanwhile at me that have done as much as you, and will do again.'

'It is the old tale,' said Frank to himself, 'whom will not love transform into a hero!'

And so it was. Jack's squeaking voice was firm and manly, his pig's eyes flashed very fire, his gestures were so free and earnest, that the ungainliness of his figure was forgotten; and when he finished with a violent burst of tears, Frank, forgetting his wounds, sprang up and caught him by the hand.

'John Brimblecombe, forgive me! Gentlemen, if we are gentlemen, we ought to ask his pardon. Has he not shown already more chivalry, more self-denial, and therefore more true love, than any of us? My friends, let the fierceness of affection, which we have used as an excuse for many a sin of our own, excuse his listening to a conversation in which he well deserved to bear a part.'

'Ah,' said Jack, 'you make me one of your brotherhood, and see if I do not dare to suffer as much as any of you! You laugh! Do you fancy none can use a sword unless he has a baker's dozen of quarterings in his arms, or that Oxford scholars know only how to handle a pen!'

'Let us try his metal,' said St. Leger. 'Here's my sword, Jack, draw, Coffin! and have at him.'

'Nonsense!' said Coffin, looking somewhat disgusted at the notion of fighting a man of Jack's rank; but Jack caught at the weapon offered to him.

'Give me a buckler, and have at any of you!'

'Here's a chair bottom,' cried Cary; and Jack, seizing it in his left, flourished his sword so fiercely, and called so loudly to Coffin to come on, that all present found it necessary, unless they wished blood to be spilt, to turn the matter off with a laugh: but Jack would not hear of it.

'Nay: if you will let me be of your brother-

hood, well and good: but if not, one or other I will fight: and that's flat.

'You see, gentlemen,' said Amyas, 'we must admit him or die the death, so we needs must go when Sir Urian drives. Come up, Jack, and take the oaths. You admit him, gentlemen?'

'Let me but be your chaplain,' said Jack, 'and pray for your luck when you're at the wars. If I do stay at home in a country curacy, 'tis not much that you need be jealous of me with her, I reckon,' said Jack, with a pathetic glance at his own stomach.

'Sir!' said Cary: 'but if he be admitted, it must be done according to the solemn forms and ceremonies in such cases provided. Take him into the next room, Amyas, and prepare him for his initiation.'

'What's that?' asked Amyas, puzzled by the word. But judging from the corner of Will's eye that initiation was Latin for a practical joke, he led forth his victim behind the arras again, and waited five minutes while the room was being darkened, till Frank's voice called to him to bring in the neophyte.

'John Brimblecombe,' said Frank in a sepulchral tone, 'you cannot be ignorant, as a scholar and bachelor of Oxford, of that dread Sacrament by which Catiline bound the soul of his fellow-conspirators, in order that both by the daring of the deed he might have proof of their sincerity, and by the horror thereof astrange their souls by adamantine fetters, and Novem-Stygian oaths, to that wherefrom hereafter the weakness of the flesh might shrink. Wherefore, O Jack! we too have determined, following that ancient and classical example, to fill, as he did, a bowl with the life-blood of our most heroic selves, and to pledge each other therein, with vows wherewith the stars shall tremble in their spheres, and Luna, blushing, veil her silver cheeks. Your blood alone is wanted to fill up the goblet. Sit down, John Brimblecombe, and bare your arm.'

'But, Mr. Frank!' said Jack; who was as superstitious as any old wife, and, what with the darkness and the discourse, already in a cold perspiration.

'But me no buts! or depart as recreant, not by the door like a man, but up the chimney like a flittermouse.'

'But, Mr. Frank!'

'Thy vital juice, or the chimney! Choose!' roared Cary in his ear.

'Well, if I must,' said Jack, 'but it's desperate hard that because you can't keep faith without these barbarous oaths, I must take them too, that have kept faith these three years without any.'

At this pathetic appeal Frank nearly melted, but Amyas and Cary had thrust the victim into a chair and all was prepared for the sacrifice.

'Bind his eyes, according to the classic fashion,' said Will.

'Oh no, dear Mr. Cary; I'll shut them tight enough, I warrant. But not with your dagger, dear Mr. William—sure, not with your dagger? I can't afford to lose blood, though I do look

lusty—I can't indeed, sure, a pin would do—I've got one here, to my sleeve, somewhere—Oh!'

'See the fount of generous juice! Flow on, fair stream. How he bleeds!—pints, quarts! Ah, this proves him to be in earnest!'

'A true lover's blood is always at his fingers' ends.'

'He does not grudge it, of course not. Eh, Jack! What matters an odd gallon for her sake!'

'For her sake! Nothing, nothing! Take my life, if you will: but—oh, gentlemen, a surgeon, if you love me! I'm going off—I'm fainting!'

'Drink, then, quick, drink and swear! Pat his back, Cary. Courage, man! it will be over in a minute. Now, Frank!—'

And Frank spoke—

If plighted troth I fail, or secret speech reveal,
May Cocytean ghosts around my pillow squeal,
While Ate's brazen claws distringe my spleen in sunder,
And drag me sleep to Pluto's keep, and brimstone,
Smoke, and thunder!'

'Placetne, domine!'

'Placet!' squeaked Jack, who thought himself at the last gasp, and gulped down full three-quarters of the goblet which Cary held to his lips.

'Ugh—Ah—Puh! Mercy on us! It tastes mighty like wine!'

'A proof, my virtuous brother,' said Frank, 'first, of thy abstemiousness, which has thus forgotten what wine tastes like; and next, of thy pure and heroic affection, by which thy carnal senses being exalted to a higher and supra-lunar sphere, like those Platonic demoni-zomeneoi and enthusiazomeneoi (of whom Jamblichus says that they were insensible to wounds and flame, and much more, therefore, to evil savours), doth make even the most nauseous draught redolent of that celestial fragrance, which proceeding, O Jack! from thine own inward virtue, assimilates by sympathy even outward accidents unto its own harmony and melody, for fragrance is, as has been said well, the song of flowers, and sweetness, the music of apples—Ahem! Go in peace, thou hast conquered!'

'Put him out of the door, Will,' said Amyas, 'or he will swoon on our hands.'

'Give him some sack,' said Frank.

'Not a blessed drop of yours, sir,' said Jack.

'I like good wine as well as any man on earth, and see as little of it, but not a drop of yours, sir, after your frumps and flouts about hanging-on and trencher-scraping. When I first began to love her, I bid good bye to all dirty tricks, for I had some one then for whom to keep myself clean.'

And so Jack was sent home, with a pint of good red Alicante wine in him (more, poor fellow, than he had tasted at once in his life before); while the rest, in high glee with themselves and the rest of the world, relighted the candles, had a right merry evening, and parted, like good

friends and sensible gentlemen of Devon, thinking (all except Frank) Jack Brimblecombe and his vow the merriest jest they had heard for many a day. After which they all departed Amyas and Cary to Winter's squadron; Frank (as soon as he could travel) to the Court again, and with him young Basset, whose father Sir Arthur, being in London, procured for him a page's place in Leicester's household. Fortescue and Chichester went to their brothers in Dublin, St. Leger to his uncle the Marshal of Munster, Coffin joined Champernoun and Norris in the Netherlands, and so the Brotherhood of the Rose was scattered far and wide, and Mistress Salterne was left alone with her looking-glass.

CHAPTER IX

HOW AMYAS KEPT HIS CHRISTMAS DAY

'Take aim, you noble musqueteers,
And shoot ye a round about!
Stand to it, valiant pikemen,
And we shall keep them out.
There's not a man of all of us
A foot will backward flee,
I'll be the foremost man in fight,
Says brave Lord Willoughby!'

Elizabethan Ballad

It was the blessed Christmas afternoon. The light was fading down, the even-song was done, and the good folk of Bideford were trooping home in merry groups, the father with his children, the lover with his sweetheart, to cakes and ale, and flapdragons and mummer's plays, and all the happy sports of Christmas night. One lady only, wrapped close in her black muffler and followed by her maid, walked swiftly, yet sadly, toward the long causeway and bridge which led to Northam town. Sir Richard Grenville and his wife caught her up and stopped her courteously.

'You will come home with us, Mrs Leigh,' said Lady Grenville, 'and spend a pleasant Christmas night!'

Mrs Leigh smiled sweetly, and laying one hand on Lady Grenville's arm, pointed with the other to the westward, and said—

'I cannot well spend a merry Christmas night while that sound is in my ears.'

The whole party around looked in the direction in which she pointed. Above their heads the soft blue sky was fading into gray, and here and there a misty star peeped out; but to the westward, where the downs and woods of Raleigh closed in with those of Abbotsham, the blue was webbed and tufted with delicate white flakes; indescant spots, marking the path by which the sun had sunk, showed all the colours of the dying dolphin; and low on the horizon lay a long band of grassy green. But what was the sound which troubled Mrs Leigh? None of them, with their merry hearts, and ears dulled with the din and bustle of the town, had heard it till that moment; and yet now—listen! It

was dead calm. There was not a breath to stir a blade of grass. And yet the air was full of sound, a low deep roar which hovered over down and wood, salt-marsh and river, like the roll of a thousand wheels, the tramp of endless armies, or—what it was—the thunder of a mighty surge upon the boulders of the pebble-ridge.

'The ridge is noisy to-night,' said Sir Richard. 'There has been wind somewhere.'

'There is wind now, where my boy is, God help him!' said Mrs Leigh, and all knew that she spoke truly. The spirit of the Atlantic storm had sent forward the token of his coming, in the smooth ground-swell which was heard inland, two miles away. To-morrow the pebbles which were now rattling down with each retreating wave, might be leaping to the ridge top, and hurled like round-shot far ashore upon the marsh by the force of the advancing wave, fleeing before the wrath of the western hurricane.

'God help my boy!' said Mrs Leigh again. 'God is as near him by sea as by land,' said good Sir Richard.

'True; but I am alone mother, and one that has no heart just now but to go home and pray.'

And so Mrs Leigh went onward up the lane, and spent all that night in listening between her prayers to the thunder of the surge, till it was drowned, long ere the sun rose, in the thunder of the storm.

And where is Amyas on this same Christmas afternoon?

Amyas is sitting bareheaded in a boat's stern in Smerwick bay, with the spray whistling through his curls, as he shouts cheerfully—

'Pull, and with a will, my merry men all, and never mind shipping a sea. Cannon balls are a cargo that don't spoil by taking salt water.'

His mother's presage has been true enough. Christmas eve has been the last of the still, dark, steaming nights of the early winter; and the western gale has been roaring for the last twelve hours upon the Irish coast.

The short light of the winter day is fading fast. Behind him is a leaping hur of billows lashed into mist by the tempest. Beside him green foam-fringed columns are rushing up the black rocks, and falling again in a thousand cataracts of snow. Before him is the deep and sheltered bay; but it is not far up the bay that he and his can see; for some four miles out at sea begins a sloping roof of thick gray cloud, which stretches over their heads, and up and far away inland, cutting the cliffs off at mid-height, hiding all the Kerry mountains, and darkening the hollows of the distant firths into the blackness of night. And underneath that awful roof of whirling mist the storm is howling inland ever, sweeping before it the great foam-sponges, and the gray salt spray, till all the land is hazy, dim, and dun. Let it howl on! for there is more mist than ever salt spray made, flying before that gale; more thunder than ever, sea-surges wakened echoing among the cliffs of Smerwick bay, along those sand-hills flash in the evening gloom red sparks which never came

from heaven; for that fort, now christened by the invaders the Fort del Oro, where flaunts the hated golden flag of Spain, holds San Josephe and eight hundred of the foe; and but three nights ago, Amyas and Yeo, and the rest of Winter's shrewdest hands, slung four culverins out of the Admiral's main deck, and floated them ashore, and dragged them up to the battery among the sand-hills, and now it shall be seen whether Spanish and Italian condottieri can hold their own on British ground against the men of Devon.

Small blame to Amyas if he was thinking, not of his lonely mother at Burrough Court, but of those quick bright flashes on sand-hill and on fort, where Salvation Yeo was hurling the eighteen-pound shot with deadly aim, and watching with a cool and bitter smile of triumph the flying of the sand, and the crushing of the gabions. Amyas and his party had been on board, at the risk of their lives, for a fresh supply of shot, for Winter's battery was out of ball, and had been firing stones for the last four hours, in default of better missiles. They ran the boat on shore through the surf, where a cove in the shore made landing possible, and almost careless whether she stove or not, scrambled over the sand-hills with each man his brace of shot slung across his shoulder, and Amyas, leaping into the trenches, shouted cheerfully to Salvation Yeo—

'More food for the bull-dogs, Gunner, and pains for the Spaniards' Christmas pudding!'

'Don't speak to a man at his business, Master Amyas. Five mortal times have I missed, but I will have that accursed Polish rag down, as I'm a sinner.'

'Down with it, then, nobody wants you to shoot crooked. Take good iron to it, and not rusty paving-stones.'

'I believe, sir, that the foul hound is there, a turning off my shot aside, I do. I thought I saw him once. But, thank Heaven, here's ball again. Ah, sir, if one could but cast a silver one! Now stand by, men!'

And once again Yeo's eighteen-pounder roared, and away. And, oh glory! the great yellow flag of Spain, which streamed in the gale, lifted clean into the air, flagstaff and all, and then pitched wildly down head-foremost, far to leeward.

A hurrah from the sailors, answered by the soldiers of the opposite camp, shook the very cloud above them; but ere its echoes had died away, a tall officer leapt upon the parapet of the fort, with the fallen flag in his hand, and rearing it as well as he could upon his lance point, held it firmly against the gale, while the fallen flagstaff was raised again within.

In a moment a dozen long-bows were bent at the daring foeman: but Amyas behind shouted—
'Shame, lads! Stop and let the gallant gentlemen have due courtesy!'

So they stopped, while Amyas, springing on the rampart of the battery, took off his hat, and bowed to the flag-holder, who, as soon as relieved

of his charge, returned the bow courteously, and descended.

It was by this time all but dark, and the firing began to slacken on all sides, Salvation and his brother gunners, having covered up their slaughtering tackle with tarpaulings, retired for the night, leaving Amyas, who had volunteered to take the watch till midnight, and the rest of the force having got their scanty supper of huxcut (for provisions were running very short) lay down under arms among the sand-hills, and grumbled themselves to sleep.

He had paced up and down in the gusty darkness for some hour or more, exchanging a passing word now and then with the sentinel, when two men entered the battery, chatting busily together. One was in complete armour, the other wrapped in the plain short cloak of a man of pens and peace; but the talk of both was neither of sieges nor of sallies, catapult, bombard, nor culverin, but simply of English hexameters.

And fancy not, gentle reader, that the two were therein fiddling while Rome was burning; for the commonweal of poetry and letters, in that same critical year 1580, was in far greater danger from those same hexameters than the common woe of Ireland (as Raleigh called it) was from the Spaniards.

Imitating the classic metres, 'versifying,' as it was called in contradistinction to rhyming, was becoming fast the fashion among the more learned. Stonyhurst and others had tried their hands at hexameter translations from the Latin and Greek epics, which seem to have been doggerel enough, and ever and anon some youthful wit broke out in iambs, sapphics, elegiacs, and what not, to the great detriment of the Queen's English and her subjects' ears.

I know not whether Mr William Webbe had yet given to the world any fragments of his precious hints for the 'Reformation of English poetry,' to the tune of his own 'Tityrus, happily thou liest, tumbling under a beech-tree' but the Cambridge Malvolup, Gabriel Harvey, had succeeded in arguing Spenser, Dyer, Sidney, and probably Sidney's sister, and the whole clique of beaux-esprits round them, into following his model of

'What might I call this tree? A laurel? O bonny laurel!
Needs to thy bowes will I bowe this knee, and vail my bonetto.'

after snubbing the first book of that Elvish Queene, which was then in manuscript, as a base declension from the classical to the romantic school.

And now Spenser (perhaps in mere melancholy wilfulness and went of purpose, for he had just been jilted by a fair maid of Kent) was wasting his mighty genius upon doggerel which he fancied antique; and some picaresque publisher (Bitter Tom Nash swears, and with likelihood, that Harvey did it himself) had just given to the world,—'Three proper wittie and familiar Letters, lately past between two University men, touching the Earthquake in April last, and our

English reformed Versifying,' which had set all town writs a-buzzing like a swarm of flies, being none other than a correspondence between Spenser and Harvey, which was to prove to the world for ever the correctness and melody of such lines as,

For like magnificoes, not a beek but glorious in show,
In deeds most frivolous, not a looks but Tuscanish
always.

Let them pass—Alma Mater has seen as bad hexameters emice. But then the matter was serious. There is a story (I know not how true), that Spenser was half bullied into re-writing the *Fairy Queen* in hexameters, had not Raleigh, a true romanticist, 'whose vein for ditty or amorous ode was most lofty, insolent, and passionate,' persuaded him to follow his better genius. The great dramatists had not yet arisen, to form completely that truly English school, of which Spenser, unconsciously of his own vast powers, was laying the foundation. And, indeed, it was not till Daniel, twenty years

finally settled, and the English tongue left to go the road on which Heaven had started it. So that we may excuse Raleigh's answering somewhat waspish to some quotation of Spenser's from the three letters of 'Immerito and G. H.' 'Tut, tut, Colin Clout, much learning has made thee mad. A good old fishwives' ballad jungle is worth all your sapphics, and trimeters and "riff-raff thurlery bouncing." Hey! have I you there, old lad! Do you mind that precious verse!

'But, dear Wat, Homer and Virgil——'

'But, dear Ned, Petrarch and Ovid——'

'But, Wat, what have we that we do not owe to the ancients?'

'Ancients, quotha! Why, the legend of King Arthur, and Chevy Chase too, of which even your fellow-sinner Sidney cannot deny that every time he hears it even from a blind fiddler it stirs his heart like a trumpet-blast. Speak well of the bridge that carries you over, man! Did you find your Redcross Knight in Virgil, or such a dame as Una in old Ovid! No more than you did your Pater and Credo, you renegade baptized heathen, you!'

'Yet, surely, our younger and more barbarous taste must bow before divine antiquity, and imitate afar——'

'As dottrels do fowlers. If Homer was blind, lad, why dost not poke out thine eye? Ay, this hexameter is of an ancient house, truly, Ned Spenser, and so is many a rogue—but he cannot make way on our rough English roads. He goes hopping and twitching in our language like a three-legged terrier over a pebble-bank, tumble and up again, rattle and crash.'

'Nay, hear, now——'

"See ye the blindfolded pretty god that feathered archer,
Of lovers' miseries which maketh his bloody game?"

¹ Strange as it may seem, this distich is Spenser's own, and the other hexameter is not authentic.

True, the accent gapes in places, as I have often confessed to Harvey, but——'

'Harvey be hanged for a pedant, and the whole crew of versifiers, from Lord Dorset (but he, poor man, has been past hanging some time since) to yourself! Why delude you into playing Procrustes as he does with the Queen's English, racking one word till its joints be pulled asunder, and squeezing the next all a-heap as the Inquisitors do heretics in their banca cava! Out upon him and you, and Sidney, and the whole kin. You have not made a verse among you, and never will, which is not as lame a goosing as Harvey's own——'

"Oh thou weathercock, that stands on the top of All
hallows,
Come thy ways down, if thou dar'st for thy crown,
and take the wall on ye."

Hark, now! There is our young giant comforting his soul with a ballad. You will hear rhyme and reason together here, now. He will not mis-call "blind-folded," "blind-fold-ed," I warrant, or make an "of" and a "which" and a "his" carry a whole verse on their wretched little backs.

And as he spoke, Amias, who had been grumbling to himself some Christmas carol, broke out full-mouthed——

'As Joseph was a-walking
He heard an angel sing—
"This night shall be the birthright
Of Christ, our heavenly King"

His birthright shall be neither
In houses nor in hall,
Nor in the place of paradise,
But in the oxen's stall

He neither shall be rocked
In silver nor in gold,
But in the wooden manger
That lieth on the mould

He neither shall be washed
With white wine nor with red,
But with the fair spring water
That on you shall be shed

He neither shall be clothed
In purple nor in pall,
But in the fair white linen
That usen babes all "

As Joseph was a walking
Thus did the angel sing,
And Mary's Son at midnight
Was born to be our King

Then be you glad, good people,
At this time of the year,
And light you up your candles,
For His star it shineth clear

'There, Edmunds Clamcaster,' said Raleigh, 'does not that simple strain go nearer to the heart of him who wrote *The Shepherd's Calendar*, than all artificial and outlandish

"Wote ye why his mother with a veil hath covered his face?"

Why dost not answer, man!'

But Spenser was silent awhile, and then——

'Because I was thinking rather of the rhymers than the rhyme. Good heaven! how that brave lad shames me, singing here the hymns which his mother taught him, before the very muzzles of Spanish guns; instead of bewailing unmanly, as I have done, the love

which he held, I doubt not, as dear as I did even my Rosalind. This is his welcome to the winter's storm; while I, who dream, forsooth, of heavenly inspiration, can but see therein an image of mine own cowardly despair.

"Thou barren ground, whom Winter's wrath has wasted
Art made a mirror to behold my plight."

Put away with frost, icicles, and tears, and sighs—

'And with hexameters and trimeters' too, I hope,' interrupted Raleigh 'and all the trickeries of self-pleasing sorrow.'

'—I will set my heart to higher work, than barking at the hand which chastens me.'

'Wilt put the law into the *Fairy Queen*, then, by my side? He deserves as good a place there, believe me, as ever a Guyon, or even as Lord Grey your Arthegall. Let us hail him Hallo! young chanticleer of Devon! Art not afraid of a chance shot, that thou crowdest so lustily upon thine own mixen?'

'Cocks crow all night long at Christmas, Captain Raleigh, and so do I,' said Amyas's cheerful voice, 'but who's there with you?'

'A penitent pupil of yours—Mr. Secretary Spenser.'

'Pupil of mine?' said Amyas. 'I wish he'd teach me a little of his art, I could fill up my time here with making verses.'

'And who would be your theme, fair sir?' said Spenser.

'No "who" at all. I don't want to make sonnets to blue eyes, nor black either; but if I could put down some of the things I saw in the Spice Islands—'

'Ah,' said Raleigh, 'he would bray you out of Parnassus, Mr. Secretary. Remember, you may write about Fairyland, but he has seen it.'

'And so have others,' said Spenser, 'it is not so far off from any one of us. Wherever is love and loyalty, great purposes, and lofty souls, even though in a hovel or a mine, there is Fairyland.'

'Then Fairyland should be here, friend, for you represent love, and Leigh loyalty, while, as for great purposes and lofty souls, who so fit to stand for them as I, being (unless my enemies and my conscience are liars both) as ambitious and as proud as Lucifer's own self?'

'Ah, Walter, Walter, why wilt always slander thyself thus?'

'Slander! Tut.—I do but give the world a fair challenge, and tell it, "There—you know the worst of me come on and try a fall, for either you or I must down." Slander! Ask Leigh here, who has but known me a fortnight, whether I am not as vain as a peacock, as selfish as a fox, as imperious as a bona roba, and ready to make a cat's paw of him or any man, if there be a chestnut in the fire: and yet the poor fool cannot help loving me, and running of my errands, and taking all my schemes and my dreams for gospel, and verily believes now, I think, that I shall be the man in the moon some day, and he my big dog.'

! *The Shepherd's Calendar*

'Well,' said Amyas, half apologetically, 'if you are the cleverest man in the world what harm in my thinking so?'

'Hearken to him, Edmund! He will know better when he has outgrown this same callow trick of honesty, and learnt of the great goddess Detraction how to show himself wiser than the wise, by pointing out to the world the fool's motley which peeps through the rents in the philosopher's cloak. Go to, lad! slander thy equals, envy thy betters, pray for an eye which sees spots in every sun, and for a vulture's nose to scent carrion in every rose-bed. If thy friend win a battle, show that he has needlessly thrown away his men; if he lose one, hint that he sold it, if he rise to a place, argue favour, if he fall from one, argue divine justice. Believe nothing, hope nothing, but endure all things, even to kicking, if aught may be got thereby, so shalt thou be clothed in purple and fine linen, and sit in kings' palaces and fare sumptuously every day.'

'And wake with Dives in the torment,' said Amyas. 'Thank you for nothing, Captain.'

'Go to, Misanthropos,' said Spenser. 'Thou hast not yet tasted the sweets of this world's comforts, and thou railest at them?'

'The grapes are sour, lad.'

'And will be to the end,' said Amyas, 'if they come off such a devil's tree as that. I really think you are out of your mind, Captain Raleigh, at times.'

'I wish I were, for it is a troublesome, hungry, windy mind as man ever was cursed withal. But come in, lad. We were sent from the Lord Deputy to bid thee to supper. There is a dainty lump of dead horse waiting for thee.'

'Send me some out, then,' said matter-of-fact Amyas. 'And tell his Lordship that, with his good leave, I don't stir from here till morning, if I can keep awake. There is a stir in the fort, and I expect them out on us.'

'Tut, man! their hearts are broken. We know it by their deserters.'

'Seeing's believing.' I never trust runaway rogues. If they are false to their masters, they'll be false to us.'

'Well, go thy ways, old honesty; and Mr. Secretary shall give you a book to yourself in the *Fairy Queen*—"Sir Monoculus or the Legend of Common Sense," eh, Edmund?'

'Monoculus?'

'Ay, Single-eye, my prince of word-coffers, won't that fit!—And give him the Cyclop's head for a device. Heigho! They may laugh that win. I am sick of this Irish work, were it not for the chance of advancement I'd sooner be driving a team of red Devons on Dartmoor; and now I am angry with the dear lad because he is not sick of it too. What a plague business has he to be paddling up and down, contentedly doing his duty, like any city watchman! It is an insult to the mighty aspirations of our nobler hearts,—eh, my would-be Aristotle?'

'Ah, Raleigh! you can afford to confess yourself less than some, for you are greater than

all. Go on and conquer, noble heart! But as for me, I sowed the wind, and I suppose I shall reap the whirlwind.'

'Your harvest seems come already; what a blast that was! Hold on by me, Colin Olent, and I'll hold on by thee. So! Don't tread on that pikeman's stomach, lest he take thee for a marauding Don, and with sudden dagger slit Colin's pipe, and Colin's weasand too.'

And the two stumbled away into the darkness, leaving Amyas to stride up and down as before, puzzling his brains over Raleigh's wild words and Spenser's melancholy, till he came to the conclusion that there was some mysterious connection between cleverness and unhappiness, and thanking his stars that he was neither scholar, courtier, nor poet, said grace over his lump of horseflesh when it arrived, devoured it as if it had been venison, and then returned to his pacing up and down; but this time in silence, for the night was drawing on, and there was no need to tell the Spaniards that any one was awake and watching.

So he began to think about his mother, and how she might be spending her Christmas, and then about Frank, and wondered at what grand Court festival he was assisting, amid bright lights and sweet music and gay ladies, and how he was dressed, and whether he thought of his brother there far away on the dark Atlantic shore, and then he said his prayers and his creed, and then he tried not to think of Rose Salterna, and of course thought about her all the more. So on passed the dull hours, till it might be past eleven o'clock, and all lights were out in the battery and the shipping, and there was no sound of living thing but the monotonous tramp of the two sentinels beside him, and now and then a grunt from the party who slept under arms some twenty yards to the rear.

So he paced to and fro, looking carefully out now and then over the strip of sand-hill which lay between him and the fort, but all was blank and black, and moreover it began to rain furiously.

Suddenly he seemed to hear a rustle among the harsh sand-grass. True, the wind was whistling through it loudly enough, but that sound was not altogether like the wind. Then a soft sliding noise: something had slipped down a bank, and brought the sand down after it. Amyas stopped, crouched down beside a gun, and laid his ear to the rampart, whereby he heard clearly, as he thought, the noise of approaching feet; whether rabbits or Christians, he knew not; but he shrewdly guessed the latter.

Now Amyas was of a sober and business-like turn, at least when he was not in a passion; and thinking within himself that if he made any noise, the enemy (whether four or two-legged) would retire, and all the sport be lost, he did not call to the two sentries, who were at the opposite ends of the battery; neither did he think it worth while to rouse the sleeping com-

pany, lest his ears should have deceived him, and the whole camp turn out to repulse the attack of a buck rabbit. So he crouched lower and lower beside the culverin, and was rewarded in a minute or two by hearing something gently deposited against the mouth of the embrasure, which, by the noise, should be a piece of timber.

'So far, so good,' said he to himself, 'when the scaling ladder is up, the soldier follows, I suppose. I can only humbly thank them for giving my embrasure the preference. There he comes! I hear his feet scuffling.'

He could hear plainly enough some one working himself into the mouth of the embrasure, but the plague was, that it was so dark that he could not see his hand between him and the sky, much less his foe at two yards off. However, he made a pretty fair guess as to the whereabouts, and, rising softly, discharged such a blow downwards as would have split a yule log. A volley of sparks flew up from the hapless Spaniard's armour, and a grunt issued from within it, which proved that, whether he was killed or not, the blow had not improved his respiration.

Amyas felt for his head, seized it, dragged him in over the gun, sprang into the embrasure on his knees, felt for the top of the ladder, found it, hove it clean off and out, with four or five men on it, and then of course tumbled after it ten feet into the sand, roaring like a down bull to her Majesty's liege subjects in general.

Sailor-fashion, he had no armour on but a light morion and a cuirass, so he was not too much encumbered to prevent his springing to his legs instantly, and setting to work, cutting and fining right and left at every sound, for sight there was none.

Battles (as soldiers know, and newspaper editors do not) are usually fought, not as they ought to be fought, but as they can be fought, and while the literary man is laying down the law at his desk as to how many troops should be moved here, and what rivers should be crossed there, and where the cavalry should have been brought up, and when the flank should have been turned, the wretched man who has to do the work finds the matter settled for him by pestilence, want of shoes, empty stomachs, bad roads, heavy rains, hot suns, and a thousand other stern warriors who never show on paper.

So with this skirmish, 'according to Cocker,' it ought to have been a very pretty one; for Hieroniles of Pisa, who planned the sortie, had arranged it all (being a very *sans-appel* in all military science) upon the best Italian precedents, and had brought against this very hapless battery a column of a hundred to attack directly in front, a company of fifty to turn the right flank, and a company of fifty to turn the left flank, with regulations, orders, passwords, countersigns, and what not; so that if every man had had his rights (as seldom happens), Don Gusman Maria Magdalena de Soto, who commanded the sortie, ought to have taken the work out of hand, and annihilated all therein. But alas! here stern

fate interfered. They had chosen a dark night, as was politic; they had waited till the moon was up, lest it should be too dark, as was politic likewise: but, just as they had started, on came a heavy squall of rain, through which seven moons would have given no light, and which washed out the plans of Horacio of Pisa as if they had been written on a schoolboy's slate. The company who were to turn the left flank walked manfully down into the sea, and never found out where they were going till they were knee-deep in water. The company who were to turn the right flank, bewildered by the utter darkness, turned their own flank so often that, tired of falling into rabbit-burrows and filling their mouths with sand, they halted and prayed to all the saints for a compass and lantern, while the centre body, who held straight on by a track-way to within fifty yards of the battery, so miscalculated that short distance, that while they thought the ditch two pikes' length off, they fell into it one over the other, and of six scaling ladders, the only one which could be found was the very one which Amyas threw down again. After which the clouds broke, the wind shifted, and the moon shone out merrily. And so was the deep policy of Hercules of Pisa, on which hung the fate of Ireland and the Papacy, decided by a ten minutes' squall.

But where is Amyas?

In the ditch, aware that the enemy is tumbling into it, but unable to find them, while the company above, finding it much too dark to attempt a counter sortie, have opened a smart fire of musketry and arrows on things in general, whereat the Spaniards are swearing like Spaniards (I need say no more), and the Italians springing like venomous cats, while Amyas, not wishing to be riddled by friendly balls, has got his back against the foot of the rampart, and waits on Providence.

Suddenly the moon clears, and with one more fierce volley, the English sailors, seeing the confusion, leap down from the embrasures, and to it pell-mell. Whether this also was 'according to Cocker,' I know not. But the sailor, then as now, is not susceptible of highly-finished drill.

Amyas is now in his element, and so are the brave fellows at his heels, and there are ten breathless, furious minutes among the sand-hills, and then the trumpets blow a recall, and the sailors drop back again by twos and threes, and are helped up into the embrasures over many a dead and dying foe, while the guns of Fort de Oro open on them, and blaze away for half an hour without reply; and then all is still once more. And in the meanwhile, the sortie against the Deputy's camp has fared no better, and the victory of the night remains with the English.

Twenty minutes after, Winter and the captains who were on shore were drying themselves round a peat-fire on the beach, and talking over the skirmish, when Will Cary asked—

'Where is Leigh? who has seen him? I am sadly afraid he has gone too far, and been slain.'

'Slain? Never less, gentlemen!' replied the

voice of the very person in question, as he stalked out of the darkness into the glare of the fire, and shot down from his shoulders into the midst of the ring, as he might a sack of corn, a huge dark body, which was gradually seen to be a man in rich armour, who being so shot down, lay quietly where he was dropped, with his feet (luckily for him mailed) in the fire.

'I say,' quoth Amyas, 'some of you had better take him up, if he is to be of any use. Unlace his helm, Will Cary.'

'Pull his feet out of the embers; I dare say he would have been glad enough to put us to the scarpines, but that's no reason we should put him to them.'

As has been hinted, there was no love lost between Admiral Winter and Amyas; and Amyas might certainly have reported himself in a more ceremonious manner. So Winter, whom Amyas either had not seen, or had not chosen to see, asked him pretty sharply, 'What the plague has he had to do with bringing dead men into camp?'

'If he's dead, it's not my fault. He was alive enough when I started with him, and I kept him right end uppermost all the way, and what would you have more, sir?'

'Mr. Leigh!' said Winter, 'it behoves you to speak with somewhat more courtesy, if not respect, to captains who are your elders and commanders.'

'Ask your pardon, sir,' said the giant, as he stood in front of the fire with the rain steaming and smoking off his armour, 'but I was bred in a school where getting good service done was more esteemed than making fine speeches.'

'Whatsoever school you were trained in, sir,' said Winter, nettled at the hint about Drake, 'it does not seem to have been one in which you learned to obey orders. Why did you not come in when the recall was sounded?'

'Because,' said Amyas, very coolly, 'in the first place, I did not hear it, and in the next, in my school I was taught when I had once started not to come home empty-handed.'

This was too pointed, and Winter sprang up with an oath—'Do you mean to insult me, sir?'

'I am sorry, sir, that you should take a compliment to Sir Francis Drake as an insult to yourself. I brought in this gentleman because I thought he might give you good information; if he dies meanwhile, the loss will be yours, or rather the Queen's.'

'Help me, then,' said Cary, 'to create a diversion in Amyas's favour, and we will bring him round,' while Raleigh rose, and catching Winter's arm, drew him aside, and began talking earnestly.

'What a murrain have you, Leigh, to quarrel with Winter?' asked Cary.

'I say, my reverend fathers and dear children, do get the Don's talking tackle free again, and leave me and the Admiral to settle it our own way.'

There was more than one captain sitting in the ring: but discipline, and the degree of rank,

were not so severely defined as now; and Amyas, as a 'gentleman adventurer,' was, on land, in a position very difficult to be settled, though at sea he was as liable to be hanged as any other person on board, and on the whole it was found expedient to patch the matter up. So Captain Raleigh returning, said that though Admiral Winter had doubtless taken umbrage at certain words of Mr Leigh's, yet that he had no doubt that Mr Leigh meant nothing thereby but what was consistent with the profession of a soldier and a gentleman, and worthy both of himself and of the Admiral.

From which proposition Amyas found it impossible to dissent, whereon Raleigh went back, and informed Winter that Leigh had freely retracted his words, and fully wiped off any imputation which Mr Winter might conceive to have been put upon him, and so forth. As Winter returned, and Amyas said frankly enough—

'Admiral Winter, I hope, as a loyal soldier, that you will understand thus far, that naught which has passed to-night shall in any way prevent you finding me a forward and obedient servant to all your commands, be they what they may, and a supporter of your authority among the men, and honour against the foe, even with my life. For I should be ashamed if private differences should ever prejudice by a grain the public weal.'

This was a great effort of oratory for Amyas; and he therefore, in order to be safe by following precedent, tried to talk as much as he could like Sir Richard Grenville. Of course Winter could answer nothing to it, in spite of the plain hint of private differences; but that he should not fail to show himself a captain worthy of so valiant and trusty a gentleman, whereon the whole party turned their attention to the captive, who, thanks to Will Cary, was by this time sitting up, standing much in need of a handkerchief, and looking about him, having been overwhelmed, in a confused and doleful manner.

'Take the gentleman to my tent,' said Winter, 'and let the surgeon see to him. Mr Leigh, who is he?—'

'An enemy, but whether Spaniard or Italian I know not, but he seemed somebody among them, I thought the captain of a company. He and I cut at each other twice or thrice at first, and then lost each other; and after that I came on him among the sand-hills, trying to rally his men, and swearing like the mouth of the pit, whereby I guess him a Spaniard. But his men ran, so I brought him in.'

'And how?' asked Raleigh. 'Thou art giving us all the play but the murders and the marriages.'

'Why, I bid him yield, and he would not. Then I bid him run, and he would not. And it was too pitch-dark for fighting; so I took him by the ears, and shook the wind out of him, and so brought him in.'

'Shook the wind out of him!' cried Cary,

amid the roar of laughter which followed. 'Dost know thou hast nearly wrung his neck in two? His visor was full of blood.'

'He should have run or yielded, then,' said Amyas; and getting up, slipped off to find some ale, and then to sleep comfortably in a dry burrow which he scratched out of a sandbank.

The next morning, as Amyas was discussing a scanty breakfast of biscuit (for provisions were running very short in camp), Raleigh came up to him.

'What, eating? That's more than I have done to-day.'

'Sit down, and share, then.'

'Nay, lad, I did not come a-begging. I have set some of my rogues to dig rabbits; but as I live, yeung Colbrand, you may think your stars that you are alive to-day to eat. Poor young Cheek—Sir John Cheek, the grammarian's son—got his quittance last night by a Spanish pike, rushing headlong on, just as you did. But have you seen your prisoner?'

'No; nor shall, while he is in Winter's tent.'

'Why not, then? What quarrel have you against the Admiral, friend Bobaloi? Cannot you let Francis Drake fight his own battles, without thrusting your head in between them?'

'Well, that is good! As if the quarrel was not just as much mine, and every man's in the ship. Why, when he left Drake, he left us all, did he not?'

'And what if he did? Let bygones be bygones is the rule of a Christian, and of a wise man too, Amyas. Here the man is, at least, safe hodie, in favour and in power, and a prudent youth will just hold his tongue, nunciance, and swim with the stream.'

'But that's just what makes me mad; to see this fellow, after deserting us there in unknown seas, win credit and rank at home here for being the first man who ever sailed back through the Straits. What had he to do with sailing back at all! As well make the fox a knight for being the first that ever jumped down a jakes to escape the hounds. The fiercer the flight; the fouler the fear, say I.'

'Amyas! Amyas! thou art a hard hutter, but a soft politician.'

'I am no politician, Captain Raleigh, nor ever wish to be. An honest man's my friend, and a rogue's my foe; and I'll tell both as much, as long as I breathe.'

'And die a poor saint,' said Raleigh, laughing. 'But if Winter invites you to his tent himself, you won't refuse to come?'

'Why, no, considering his years and rank, but he knows too well to do that.'

'He knows too well not to do it,' said Raleigh, laughing as he walked away. And verily in half an hour came an invitation, extracted, of course, from the Admiral by Raleigh's silver tongue, which Amyas could not but obey.

'We all owe you thanks for last night's service, sir,' said Winter, who had for some good reasons changed his tone. 'Your prisoner is found to be a gentleman of birth and experience,

and the leader of the assault last night. He has already told us more than we had hoped, for which also we are beholden to you; and indeed my Lord Grey has been asking for you already.

'I have, young sir,' said a quiet and lofty voice; and Amyas saw lumping from the inner tent the proud and stately figure of the stern Deputy, Lord Grey of Wilton, a brave and wise man, but with a naturally harsh temper, which had been soured still more by the wound which had crippled him, while yet a boy, at the battle of Leith. He owed that limp to Mary Queen of Scots; and he did not forget the debt.

'I have been asking for you; having heard from many, both of your last night's prowess, and of your conduct and courage beyond the promise of your years, displayed in that ever-memorable voyage, which may well be ranked with the deeds of the ancient Argonauts.'

Amyas bowed low; and the Lord Deputy went on, 'You will needs wish to see your prisoner. You will find him such a one as you need not be ashamed to have taken, and as need not be ashamed to have been taken by you. But here he is, and will, I doubt not, answer as much for himself. Know each other better, gentle men both. Last night was an ill one for making acquaintances. Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Solomayor de Soto, know the hidalgo, Amyas Leigh!'

As he spoke, the Spaniard came forward, still in his armour, all save his head, which was bound up in a handkerchief.

He was an exceedingly tall and graceful personage, of that *angra azul* which marked high Visigothic descent, golden-haired and fair-skinned, with hands as small and white as a woman's, his lips were delicate, but thin, and compressed closely at the corners of the mouth, and his pale blue eye had a glassy dulness. In spite of his beauty and his carriage, Amyas shrank from him instinctively; and yet he could not help holding out his hand in return, as the Spaniard holding out his, said languidly, in most sweet and sonorous Spanish—

'I kiss his hands and feet. The Señor speaks, I am told, my native tongue!'

'I have that honour.'

'Then accept in it (for I can better express myself therein than in English, though I am not altogether ignorant of that witty and learned language) the expression of my pleasure at having fallen into the hands of one so renowned in war and travel, and of one also,' he added, glancing at Amyas's giant bulk, 'the vastness of whose strength, beyond that of common mortality, makes it no more shame for me to have been overpowered and carried away by him than if my captor had been a paladin of Charlemagne's.'

Honest Amyas bowed and stammered, a little thrown off his balance by the unexpected assurance and cool flattery of his prisoner; but he said—

'If you are satisfied, illustrious Señor, I am bound to be so. I only trust that in my hurry

and the darkness, I have not hurt you unnecessarily.'

The Don laughed a pretty little hollow laugh. 'No, kind Señor, my head, I trust, will after a few days have become united to my shoulders, and, for the present, your company will make me forget any slight discomfort.'

'Pardon me, Señor, but by this daylight I should have seen that armour before.'

'I doubt it not, Señor, as having been yourself also in the forefront of the battle,' said the Spaniard, with a proud smile.

'If I am right, Señor, you are he who yesterday held up the standard after it was shot down.'

'I do not deny that undeserved honour, and I have to thank the courtesy of you and your countrymen for having permitted me to do so with impunity.'

'Ah, I heard of that brave feat,' said the Lord Deputy. 'You should consider yourself, Mr Leigh, honoured by being enabled to show courtesy to such a warrior.'

How long this interchange of solemn compliments, of which Amyas was getting somewhat weary, would have gone on, I know not, but at that moment Raleigh entered hastily—

'My Lord, they have hung out a white flag, and are calling for a parley!'

The Spaniard turned pale, and felt for his sword, which was gone, and then, with a bitter laugh, murmured to himself—'As I expected.'

'I am very sorry to hear it. Would to Heaven they had simply fought it out!' said Lord Grey, half to himself, and then, 'Go, Captain Raleigh, and answer them that (saving this gentleman's presence) the laws of war forbid a parley with any who are leagued with rebels against their lawful sovereign.'

'But what if they wish to treat for this gentleman's ransom!'

'For their own, more likely,' said the Spaniard, 'but tell them, on my part, Señor, that Don Guzman refuses to be ransomed, and will return to no camp where the commanding officer, unable to infect his captains with his own cowardice, dishonours them against their will.'

'You speak sharply, Señor,' said Winter, after Raleigh had gone out.

'I have reason, Señor Admiral, as you will find, I fear, ere long.'

'We shall have the honour of leaving you here, for the present, sir, as Admiral Winter's guest,' said the Lord Deputy.

'But not my sword, it seems.'

'Pardon me, Señor, but no one has the use of your sword,' said Winter.

'I don't wish to pain you, sir,' said Amyas, 'but I fear that we were both careless enough to leave it behind last night.'

A flash passed over the Spaniard's face, which disclosed terrible depths of fury and hatred beneath that quiet mask, as the summer lightning displays the black abysses of the thunderstorm; but like the summer lightning it passed

almost unseen, and blandly as ever, he answered—

'I can forgive you for such a neglect, most valiant sir, more easily than I can forgive myself. Farewell, sir! One who has lost his sword is no fit company for you.' And as Amyas and the rest departed he plunged into the inner tent, stamping and writhing, gnawing his hands with rage and shame.

As Amyas came out on the battery, Yeo hailed him—

'Master Amyas! Hello, sir! For the love of Heaven tell me!'

'What then?'

'Is his Lordship stanch! Will he do the Lord's work faithfully, root and branch, or will he spare the Amalekites?'

'The latter I think, old hip-and-thigh,' said Amyas, hurrying forward to hear the news from Raleigh, who appeared in sight once more.

'They ask to depart with bag and baggage,' said he, when he came up.

'God do so to me, and more also, if they carry away a straw!' said Lord Grey. 'Make short work of it, sir!'

'I do not know how that will be, my Lord; as I came up a captain shouted to me off the walls that there were mutineers, and, denying that he surrendered, would have pulled down the flag of truce, but the soldiers beat him off.'

'A house divided against itself will not stand long, gentlemen. Tell them that I give no conditions. Let them lay down their arms, and trust in the Bishop of Rome who sent them hither, and may come to save them if he wants them. Gunners, if you see the white flag go down, open your fire instantly. Captain Raleigh, we need your counsel here. Mr Cary, will you be my herald this time?'

'A better Protestant never went on a pleasanter errand, my Lord.'

So Cary went, and then ensued an argument, as to what should be done with the prisoners in case of a surrender.

I cannot tell whether my Lord Grey meant, by offering conditions which the Spaniards would not accept, to force them into fighting the quarrel out, and so save himself the responsibility of deciding on their fate; or whether his mere natural stubbornness, as well as his just indignation, drove him on too far to retract but the council of war which followed was both a sad and a stormy one, and one which he had reason to regret to his dying day. What was to be done with the enemy? They already outnumbered the English, and some fifteen hundred of Desmond's wild Irish hovered in the forests round, ready to side with the winning party, or even to attack the English at the least sign of fluctuation or fear. They could not carry the Spaniards away with them, for they had neither shipping nor food, not even handcuffs enough for them; and as Mackworth told Winter when he proposed it, the only plan was for him to make San Josephe a present of his ships, and swim home himself as he could. To

turn loose in Ireland, as Captain Touch urged, on the other hand, seven hundred such monsters of lawlessness, cruelty, and lust, as Spanish and Italian condottieri were in those days, was as fatal to their own safety as cruel to the wretched Irish. All the captains, without exception, followed on the same side. 'What was to be done, then?' asked Lord Grey impatiently. 'Would they have him murder them all in cold blood?'

And for a while every man, knowing that it must come to that, and yet not daring to say it; till Sir Warham St. Leger, the Marshal of Munster, spoke out stoutly—'Foreigners had been scolding them too long and too truly with waging these Irish wars as if they meant to keep them alive, rather than end them. Mercy and faith to every Irishman who would show mercy and faith, was his motto; but to invaders, no mercy. Ireland was England's vulnerable point, it might be some day her ruin; a terrible example must be made of those who dare to touch the sore. Rather pardon the Spaniards for landing in the Thames than in Ireland!—till Lord Grey became much excited, and turning as a last hope to Raleigh, asked his opinion; but Raleigh's silver tongue was that day not on the side of indulgence. He skilfully recapitulated the arguments of his fellow-captains, improving them as he went on, till each worthy soldier was surprised to find himself so much wiser a man than he had thought, and finished by one of his rapid and passionate perorations upon his favourite theme—the West Indian cruelties of the Spaniards, '... by which great tracts and fair countries are now utterly stripped of inhabitants by heavy bondage and torments unspeakable. O witless islanders!' said he, apostrophising the Irish; 'would to Heaven that you were here to listen to me! What other fate awaits you, if this viper, which you are so ready to take into your bosom, should be warmed to life, but to groan like the Indians, slaves to the Spaniard; but to perish like the Indians, by heavy burdens, cruel chains, plunder and ravishment, scourged, racked, roasted, stabbed, hewn in sunder, cast to feed the dogs, as simple and more righteous peoples have perished ere now by millions! And what else, I say, had been the fate of Ireland had this invasion prospered, which God has now, by our weak hands, confounded and brought to nought! Shall we then answer it, my Lord, either to our conscience, our God, or our Queen, if we shall set loose men (not one of whom, I warrant, but is stained with murder on murder) to go and fill up the cup of their iniquity among these silly sheep? Have not their native wolves, their barbarous chieftains, ahorn, peeled, and slaughtered them enough already, but we must add this pack of foreign wolves to the number of their tormentors, and fit the Desmond with a bodyguard of seven, yea, seven hundred devils worse than himself! Nay, rather let us do violence to our own human nature, and show ourselves in appearance rigorous, that we may

be kind indeed; lest while we presume to be over-merciful to the guilty, we prove ourselves to be over-cruel to the innocent.

'Captain Raleigh, Captain Raleigh,' said Lord Grey, 'the blood of these men be on your head!'

'It ill befits your Lordship,' answered Raleigh, 'to throw on your subordinates the blame of that which your reason approves as necessary.'

'I should have thought, sir, that one so noted for ambition as Captain Raleigh would have been more careful of the favour of that Queen for whose smiles he is said to be so longing a competitor. If you have not yet been of her counsels, sir, I can tell you you are not likely to be. She will be furious when she hears of this cruelty.'

Lord Grey had lost his temper but Raleigh kept his, and answered quietly—

'Her Majesty shall at least not find me among the number of those who prefer her favour to her safety, and abuse to their own profit that over tenderness and mercifulness of heart which is the only blemish (and yet, rather like a mole on a fair cheek, but a new beauty) in her manifold perfections.'

At this juncture Cary returned.

'My Lord,' said he, in some confusion, 'I have proposed your terms, but the captains still entreat for some mitigation, and, to tell you truth, one of them has insisted on accompanying me hither to plead his cause himself.'

'I will not see him, sir. Who is he?'

'His name is Sebastian of Modena, my Lord.'

'Sebastian of Modena? What think you, gentlemen? May we make an exception in favour of so famous a soldier?'

'So villainous a cut-throat,' said Zouch to Raleigh, under his breath.

All, however, were for speaking with so famous a man, and in came, in full armour, a short, bull-necked Italian, evidently of immense strength, of the true Caesar Borgia stamp.

'Will you please to be seated, sir,' said Lord Grey coldly.

'I kiss your hands, most illustrious but I do not sit in an enemy's camp. Ha, my friend Zouch! How has your Signoria fared since we fought side by side at Lepanto? So you too are here, sitting in council on the hanging of me?'

'What is your errand, sir? Time is short,' said the Lord Deputy.

'Corpo di Bacco! It has been long enough all the morning, for my rascals have kept me and my friend the Colonel Hercules (whom you know, doubtless) prisoners in our tents at the pike's point. My Lord Deputy, I have but a few words. I shall thank you to take every soldier in the fort—Italian, Spaniard, and Irish—and hang them up as high as Haman, for a set of mutinous cowards, with the arch-traitor San Josephe at their head.'

'I am obliged to you for your offer, sir, and shall deliberate presently as to whether I shall not accept it.'

'But as for us captains, really your Excellency must consider that we are gentlemen born, and

give us either buona guerra, as the Spaniards say, or a fair chance for life; and so to my business.'

'Stay, sir. Answer this first. Have you or yours any commission to show either from the King of Spain or any other potentate?'

'Never a one but the cause of Heaven and our own swords. And with them, my Lord, we are ready to meet any gentlemen of your camp, man to man, with our swords only, half-way between your leaguer and ours; and I doubt not that your Lordship will see fair play. Will any gentleman accept so civil an offer? There sits a tall youth in that corner who would suit me very well. Will any fit my gallant comrades with half an hour's punto and stoccado?'

There was a silence, all looking at the Lord Deputy, whose eyes were kindling in a very ugly way.

'No answer! Then I must proceed to exhortation. So! Will that be sufficient?'

And walking composedly across the tent, the fearless ruffian quietly stooped down, and smote Amyas Leigh full in the face.

Up sprang Amyas, heedless of all the august assembly, and with a single buffet felled him to the earth.

'Excellent!' said he, rising unabashed. 'I can always trust my instinct. I knew the moment I saw him that he was a cavalier worth letting blood. Now, sir, your sword and harness, and I am at your service outside!'

The solemn and sententious Englishmen were altogether taken aback by the Italian's impudence, but Zouch settled the matter.

'Most noble Captain, will you be pleased to recollect a certain little occurrence at Messina, in the year 1575? For if you do not, I do, and beg to inform this gentleman that you are unworthy of his sword, and had you, unluckily for you, been an Englishman, would have found the fashions of our country so different from your own that you would have been then hanged, sir, and probably may be so still.'

The Italian's sword flashed out in a moment but Lord Grey interfered.

'No fighting here, gentlemen. That may wait; and, what is more, shall wait till—Strike their swords down, Raleigh, Mackworth! Strike their swords down! Colonel Sebastian, you will be pleased to return as you came, in safety, having lost nothing, as (I frankly tell you) you have gained nothing, by your wild bearing here. We shall proceed to deliberate on your fate.'

'I trust, my Lord,' said Amyas, 'that you will spare this braggart's life, at least for a day or two. For in spite of Captain Zouch's warning, I must have to do with him yet, or my cheek will rise up in judgment against me at the last day.'

'Well spoken, lad,' said the Colonel as he swung out. 'So! worth a reprieve, by this sword, to have one more rapier-rattle before the gallows! Then I take back no further answer, my Lord Deputy! Not even our swords, our

'virgin blades, Signor, the soldier's cherished bride! Shall we go forth weeping widowers, and leave to strange embrace the lovely steel!'

'None, sir, by heaven!' said he, waxing wroth. 'Do you come hither, pirates as you are, to dictate terms upon a foreign soil! Is it not enough to have set up here the Spanish flag, and claimed the land of Ireland as the Pope's gift to the Spaniard, violated the laws of nations, and the solemn treaties of princes, under colour of a mad superstition!'

'Superstition, my Lord! Nothing less. Believe a philosopher who has not said a *pater* or an *ave* for seven years past at least. *Quod tango credo*, is my motto, and though I am bound to say, under pain of the Inquisition, that the most holy Father the Pope has given this land of Ireland to his most Catholic Majesty the King of Spain, Queen Elizabeth having forfeited her title to it by heresy,—why, my Lord, I believe it as little as you do. I believe that Ireland would have been mine, if I had won it, I believe religiously that it is not mine, now I have lost it. What is, is, and a fig for priests, to-day to thee, to-morrow to me. *Aldio*,—and out he swung.

'There goes a most gallant rascal,' said the Lord Deputy.

'And a most rascally gallant,' said Zouch. 'The murder of his own page, of which I gave him a remembrancer, is among the least of his sins.'

'And now, Captain Raleigh,' said Lord Grey, 'as you have been so earnest in preaching this butchery, I have a right to ask none but you to practise it.'

Raleigh bit his lip, and replied by the 'quip courteous'—

'I am at least a man, my Lord, who thinks it shame to allow others to do that which I dare not do myself.'

Lord Grey might probably have returned 'the countercheck quarrelsome,' had not Mackworth risen—

'And I, my Lord, being in that matter at least one of Captain Raleigh's kidney, will just go with him to see that he takes no harm by being bold enough to carry out an ugly business, and serving these rascals as their countrymen served Mr Oxenham.'

'I bid you good morning, then, gentlemen, though I cannot bid you *God speed*,' said Lord Grey, and sitting down again, covered his face with his hands, and, to the astonishment of all bystanders, burst, say the chroniclers, into tears.

Amyas followed Raleigh out. The latter was pale, but determined, and very wroth against the Deputy.

'Does the man take me for a hangman,' said he, 'that he speaks to me thus! But such is the way of the great. If you neglect your duty, they haul you over the coals; if you do it, you must do it on your own responsibility. Farewell, Amyas; you will not shrink from me as a butcher when I return!'

'God forbid! But how will you do it!'

'March one company in, and drive them forth, and let the other cut them down as they come out.—Pah!'

It was done. Right or wrong, it was done. The shrieks and curses had died away, and the Fort del Oro was a red shambles, which the soldiers were trying to cover from the sight of heaven and earth, by dragging the bodies into the ditch, and covering them with the ruins of the rampart; while the Irish, who had beheld from the woods that awful warning, fled trembling into the deepest recesses of the forest. It was done, and it never needed to be done again. The hunt was severe, but it was sufficient. Many years passed before a Spaniard set foot again in Ireland.

The Spanish and Italian officers were spared, and Amyas had Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto duly adjudged to him, as his prize by right of war. He was, of course, ready enough to fight Sebastian of Modena; but Lord Grey forbade the duel, blood enough had been shed already. The next question was, where to bestow Don Guzman till his ransom should arrive, and as Amyas could not well deliver the gallant Don into the safe custody of Mrs Leigh at Burrough, and still less into that of Frank at Court, he was fain to write to Sir Richard Grenville, and ask his advice, and in the meanwhile keep the Spaniard with him upon parole, which he frankly gave,—saying that as for running away, he had nowhere to run to, and as for joining the Irish he had no mind to turn pig, and Amyas found him, as shall be hereafter told, pleasant company enough. But one morning Raleigh entered—

'I have done you a good turn, Leigh, if you think it one. I have talked St Leger into making you my lieutenant, and giving you the custody of a right pleasant hermitage—some castle Shackatory or other in the midst of a big bog, where time will run swift and smooth with you, between hunting wild Irish, snaring snipes, and drinking yourself drunk with usquebaugh over a turf fire.'

'I'll go,' quoth Amyas, 'anything for work.' So he went and took possession of his lieutenantcy and his black robber tower, and there passed the rest of the winter, fighting or hunting all day, and chatting and reading all the evening, with Señor Don Guzman, who, like a good soldier of fortune, made himself thoroughly at home, and a general favourite with the soldiers.

At first, indeed, his Spanish pride and stateliness, and Amyas's English taciturnity, kept the two apart somewhat; but they soon began, if not to trust, at least to like each other; and Don Guzman told Amyas, bit by bit, who he was, of what an ancient house, and of what a poor one; and laughed over the very small chance of his ransom being raised, and the certainty that, at least, it could not come for a couple of years, seeing that the only De Soto who had a penny to spare was a fat old dean at

St. Yago de Leon, in the Caraccas, at which place Don Guzman had been born. This of course led to much talk about the West Indies, and the Don was as much interested to find that Amyas had been one of Drake's world-famous crew, as Amyas was to find that his captive was the grandson of none other than that most terrible of man-hunters, Don Ferdinando de Soto, the conqueror of Florida, of whom Amyas had read many a time in *Las Casas*, 'as the captain of tyrants, the notorious and most experienced amongst them that have done the most hurts, mischiefs, and destructions in many realms.' And often enough his blood boiled, and he had much ado to recollect that the speaker was his guest, as Don Guzman chatted away about his grandfather's hunts, of innocent women and children, murders of caciques and burnings alive of guides, '*pour encourager les autres*,' without, seemingly, the least feeling that the victims were human beings or subjects for human pity, anything, in short, but heathen dogs, enemies of God, servants of the devil, to be used by the Christian when he needed, and when not needed killed down as cumberers of the ground. But Don Guzman was a most finished gentleman nevertheless, and told many a good story of the Indies, and told it well; and over and above his stories, he had among his baggage two books,—the one Antonio Galvano's *Discoveries of the World*, a mine of winter evening amusement to Amyas, and the other, a manuscript book, which, perhaps, it had been well for Amyas had he never seen. For it was now other than a sort of rough journal which Don Guzman had kept as a lad, when he went down with the Adelantado Gonzales Ximenes to do *casada*, from Peru to the River of Amazons, to look for the golden country of El Dorado, and the city of Manoa, which stands in the midst of the White Lake, and equals or surpasses in glory even the palace of the Inca Huaynacapac, 'all the vessels of whose house and kitchen are of gold and silver, and in his wardrobe statues of gold which swined giants, and figures in proportion and likeness of all the beasts, birds, trees, and herbs of the earth, and the fishes of the water, and ropes, budgets, chests, and troughs of gold, yea, and a garden of pleasure in an island near Puna, where they went to recreate themselves when they would take the air of the sea, which had all kind of garden herbs, flowers, and trees of gold and silver of an invention and magnificence till then never seen.'

Now the greater part of this treasure (and be it remembered that these wonders were hardly exaggerated, and that there were many men alive then who had beheld them, as they had worse things, 'with their corporal and mortal eyes') was hidden by the Indians when Pizarro conquered Peru and slew Atahualpa, son of Huaynacapac; at whose death, it was said, one of the Inca's younger brothers fled out of Peru, and taking with him a great army, vanquished all that tract which lieth between the great

river of Amazons and Baraquan, otherwise called Maranon and Orenoque.

There he sits to this day, beside the golden lake, in the golden city, which is in breadth a three days' journey, covered, he and his court, with gold dust from head to foot, waiting for the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy which was written in the temple of Caxamarca, where his ancestors worshipped of old, that heroes shall come out of the West, and lead him back across the forests to the kingdom of Peru, and restore him to the glory of his forefathers.

Golden phantom! so possible, so profitable, to imaginations which were yet reeling before the actual and veritable prodiges of Peru, Mexico, and the East Indies. Golden phantom! which has cost already the lives of thousands, and shall yet cost more, from Diego de Ordaz, and Juan Cortes, and many another, who went forth on the quest by the Andes, and by the Orinoco, and by the Amazons, Antonio Sedeno, with his ghastly caravan of manacled Indians, 'on whose dead carcasses the tigers being fleshed, assaulted the Spaniards'; Augustino Delgado, who 'came to a cacique, who entertained him with all kindness and gave him beside much gold and slaves, three nymphs very beautiful, which bare the names of three provinces, Guanba, Gotoguanu, and Maiarare. To requite which manifold courtesies, he carried off, not only all the gold, but all the Indians he could seize, and took them in irons to Cubagua, and sold them for slaves, after which Delgado was shot in the eye by an Indian, of which hurt he died,' Pedro d'Orsua, who found the cinnamon forests of Loxas, 'whom his men murdered, and afterwards beheaded Lady Aues his wife, who forsook not her lord in all his travels unto death,' and many another who has vanished with valiant courages at his back into the green gulfs of the primeval forests never to emerge again. Golden phantom! man devouring, whose maw is never satiate with souls of heroes, fatal to Spain, more fatal still to England upon that shameful day, when the last of Elizabeth's heroes shall lay down his head upon the block, nominally for having believed what all around him believed likewise till they found it expedient to deny it in order to curry favour with the crowned cur who betrayed him, really because he alone dared to make one last protest in behalf of liberty and Protestantism against the incoming night of tyranny and superstition. Little thought Amyas, as he devoured the pages of that manuscript, that he was laying a snare for the life of the man whom, next to Drake and Grenville, he most admired on earth.

But Don Guzman, on the other hand, seemed to have an instinct that that book might be a fatal gift to his captor, for one day ere Amyas had looked into it, he began questioning the Don about El Dorado. Whereon Don Guzman replied with one of those smiles of his, which (as Amyas said afterwards) was so abominably like a sneer, that he had often hard work to keep his hands off the man—

'Ah! You have been eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, Señor! Well, if you have any ambition to follow many another brave captain to the pit, I know no shorter or easier path than is contained in that little book.'

'I have never opened your book,' said Amyas, 'your private manuscripts are no concern of mine. but my man who recovered your baggage read part of it, knowing no better, and now you are at liberty to tell me as little as you like.'

The 'man,' it should be said, was none other than Salvation Yeo, who had attached himself by this time inseparably to Amyas, in quality of bodyguard and, as was common enough in those days, had turned soldier for the nonce, and taken under his patronage two or three rusty bases (swivels) and falconets (four-pounders), which grinned harmlessly enough from the tower top across the cheerful expanse of bog.

Amyas once asked him how he reconciled this Irish sojourn with his vow to find his little maid! Yeo shook his head.

'I can't tell, sir, but there's something that makes me always to think of you when I think of her, and that's often enough, the Lord knows. Whether it is that I can't find the dear without your help; or whether it is your pleasant face puts me in mind of hers, or what, I can't tell, but don't you part me from you, sir, for I'm like Ruth, and where you lodge I lodge, and where you go I go, and where you lie—though I shall die many a year first—there I'll die, I hope and trust, for I can't bear you out of my sight, and that's the truth thereof.'

So Yeo remained with Amyas, while Gary went elsewhere with Sir Warham St Leger, and the two friends met seldom for many months, so that Amyas's only companion was Don Guzman, who, as he grew more familiar, and more careless about what he said and did in his captor's presence, often puzzled and scandalised him by his waywardness. Fits of deep melancholy alternated with bursts of Spanish boastfulness, utterly astonishing to the modest and sober-minded Englishman, who would often have fancied him inspired by usquebaugh, had he not had ocular proof of his extreme abstemiousness.

'Miserable!' said he, one night in one of these fits. 'And have I not a right to be miserable!—Why should I not curse the virgin and all the saints and die? I have not a friend, not a duce on earth, not even a sword—hell and the furies! It was my all the only bequest I ever had from my father, and I lived by it and earned by it. Two years ago I had as pretty a sum of gold as a cavalier could wish—and now!—'

'What is become of it, then? I cannot hear that outlaws plundered you of any.'

'Your men? No, Señor! What fifty men dared not have done, one woman did! a painted, patched, fuscated, periwigged, bolstered, Charybdis, cannibal, Megera, Lamia! Why did I ever go near that cursed Naples, the common sewer of Europe! whose women, I believe,

would be swallowed up by Vesuvius to-morrow, if it were not that Belphegor is afraid of their making the pit itself too hot to hold him. Well, sir, she had all of mine and more; and when all was gone in wine and dice, woodcocks' brains and ortolans' tongues, I met the witch walking with another man. I had a sword and a dagger, I gave him the first (though the dog fought well enough, to give him his due), and her the second, left them lying across each other, and fled for my life—and here I am! after twenty years of fighting, from the Levant to the Orellana—for I began ere I had a hair on my chin—and this is the end!—No, it is not! I'll have that El Dorado yet! the Adelantado made Berroo, when he gave him his daughter, swear that he would hunt, for it, through life and death. We'll see who finds it first, he or I. He's a bungler; Oisua was a bungler—Pooh! Cortes and Pizarro! we'll see whether there are not as good Castilians as they left still. I can do it, Señor. I know a track, a plan; over the Llanos is the road, and I'll be Emperor of Manoa yet—possessor the jewels of all the Incas, and gold, gold! Pizarro was a beggar to what I will be!'

'Conceive, sir,' he broke forth during another of these peacock fits, as Amyas and he were riding along the hillside, 'conceive! with forty chosen cavaliers (what need of more!) I present myself before the golden king, trembling amid his myriad guards at the new miracle of the mailed centaurs of the West, and without dismounting, I approach his throne, lift the crucifix which hangs around my neck, and pressing it to my lips, present it for the adoration of the idolater, and give him his alternative, that which Gayferos and the Cid, my ancestors, offered the Soldan and the Moor—baptism or death! He hesitates, perhaps smiles scornfully upon my little band, I answer him by deeds, as Don Ferdinand, my illustrious grandfather, answered Atahualpa at Peru, in sight of all his court and camp.'

'With your lance-point, as Gayfrow did the Soldan!' asked Amyas, amused.

'No, sir, persuasion first, for the salvation of a soul is at stake. Not with the lance-point, but the spur, sir, thus!—'

And striking his heels into his horse's flanks, he darted off at full speed.

'The Spanish traitor!' shouted Yeo. 'He's going to escape! Shall we shoot, sir? Shall we shoot!'

'For Heaven's sake, no!' said Amyas, looking somewhat blenk, nevertheless, for he much doubted whether the whole was not a ruse on the part of the Spaniard, and he knew how impossible it was for his fifteen stone of flesh to give chase to the Spaniard's twelve. But he was soon reassured, the Spaniard wheeled round towards him, and began to put the rough hackney through all the paces of the manege with a grace and skill which won applause from the beholders.

'Thus!' he shouted, waving his hand to

Amyas, between his curvets and caracoles, 'did my illustrious grandfather exhibit to the Paynim Emperor the prowess of a Castilian cavalier! Thus!—and thus!—and thus, at last, he dashed up to his very feet, as I to yours, and bespattering that unbaptized visage with his Christian bridle-foam, pulled up his charger on his haunches, thus!'

And (as was to be expected from a blown Irish garron on a watery Irish hillside) down went the hapless hackney on his tail, away went his heels a yard in front of him, and ere Don Guzman could 'avoid his selle,' horse and man rolled over into a neighbouring bog-hole.

'After pride comes a fall,' quoth Yeo with unmoved visage as he lugged him out.

'And what would you do with the Emperor at last?' asked Amyas when the Don had been scrubbed somewhat clean with a bunch of rushes. 'Kill him, as your grandfather did Atahualpa?'

'My grandfather,' answered the Spaniard indignantly, 'was one of those who, to their eternal honour, protested to the last against that most cruel and unknighly massacre. He could be terrible to the heathen, but he kept his plighted word, sir, and taught me to keep mine, as you have seen to-day.'

'I have, Señor,' said Amyas. 'You might have given us the ship easily enough just now, and did not. Pardon me, if I have offended you.'

The Spaniard (who, after all, was cross principally with himself and the 'unlucky man's son,' as the old romances have it, which had played him so scurvy a trick) was all smiles again forthwith, and Amyas, as they chatted on, could not help asking him next—

'I wonder why you are so frank about your own intentions to an enemy like me, who will surely forestall you if he can.'

'Sir, a Spaniard needs no concealment, and fears no rivalry. He is the soldier of the Cross, and in it he conquers, like Constantine of old. Not that you English are not very heroes, but you have not, sir, and you cannot have, who have forsworn our Lady and the choir of saints, the same divine protection, the same celestial mission, which enables the Catholic cavalier single handed to chase a thousand Paynims.'

And Don Guzman crossed himself devoutly, and muttered half a dozen Ave Marias in succession, while Amyas rode silently by his side, utterly puzzled at this strange compound of shrewdness with fanaticism, of perfect high-breeding with a boastfulness which in an Englishman would have been the sure mark of vulgarity.

At last came a letter from Sir Richard Grenville, complimenting Amyas on his success and promotion, bearing a long and courtly message to Don Guzman (whom Grenville had known when he was in the Mediterranean, at the battle of Lepanto), and offering to receive him as his own guest at Bideford, till his ransom should arrive; a proposition which the Spaniard (who

of course was getting sufficiently tired of the Irish bogs) could not but gladly accept; and one of Winter's ships, returning to England in the spring of 1581, delivered duly at the quay of Bideford the body of Don Guzman Maria Magdalena. Raleigh, after forming for that summer one of the triumvirate by which Munster was governed after Ormond's departure, at last got his wish and departed for England and the Court, and Amyas was left alone with the snipes and yellow mantles for two more weary years.

CHAPTER X

HOW THE MAYOR OF BIDEFORD BAITED HIS HOOK WITH HIS OWN FLESH

'And therewith he blent, and cried ha!
'As though he had been stricken to the hart'
Robin and Arctur

So it befell to Chaucer's knight in prison, and so it befell also to Don Guzman, and it befell on this wise.

He settled down quietly enough at Bideford on his parole, in better quarters than he had occupied for many a day, and took things as they came, like a true soldier of fortune, till, after he had been with Grenville hardly a month, old Salterne the Mayor came to supper.

Now Don Guzman, however much he might be puzzled at first at our strange English ways of asking burglers and such low-bred folk to eat and drink above the salt, in the company of noble persons, was quite gentleman enough to know that Richard Grenville was gentleman enough to do only what was correct, and according to the customs and propensities. So after shrugging the shoulders of his spirit, he submitted to eat and drink at the same board with a tradesman who sat at a desk, and made up ledgers, and took apprentices, and hearing him talk with Grenville neither unwisely nor in a vulgar fashion, actually before the evening was out condescended to exchange words with him himself. Whereon he found him a very prudent and courteous person, quite aware of the Spaniard's superior rank, and making him feel in every sentence that he was aware thereof, and yet holding his own opinion, and asserting his own rights as a wise elder in a fashion which the Spaniard had only seen before among the merchant princes of Genoa and Venice.

At the end of supper, Salterne asked Grenville to do his humble roof the honour, etc. etc., of supping with him the next evening, and then turning to the Don said quite frankly, that he knew how great a condescension it would be on the part of a nobleman of Spain to sit at the board of a simple merchant; but that if the Spaniard deigned to do him such a favour, he would find that the cheer was fit enough for any rank, whatsoever the company might be; which invitation Don Guzman, being on the whole glad

enough of anything to amuse him, graciously condescended to accept, and gained thereby an excellent supper, and, if he had chosen to drink it, much good wine.

Now Mr Salterne was, of course, as a wise merchant, as ready as any man for an adventure to foreign parts, as was afterwards proved by his great exertions in the settlement of Virginia, and he was, therefore, equally ready to rack the brains of any guest whom he suspected of knowing anything concerning strange lands; and so he thought no shame, first to try to loose his guest's tongue by much good sack, and next to ask him prudent and well-connected questions concerning the Spanish Main, Peru, the Moluccas, China, the Indies, and all parts.

The first of which schemes failed, for the Spaniard was as abstemious as any monk, and drank little but water, the second succeeded not over well, for the Spaniard was as cunning as any fox, and answered little but wind.

In the midst of which tongue-fence in came the Rose of Torridge, looking as beautiful as usual, and hearing what they were upon, added, artlessly enough, for questions to her father's to her Don Guzman could not but answer, and without revealing any very important commercial secrets, gave his host and his host's daughter a very amusing evening.

Now little Eros, though spirits like Frank Leigh's may choose to call him (as, perhaps, he really is to them) the eldest of the gods, and the son of Jove and Venus, yet is reported by other equally good authorities, as Burton has set forth in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, to be after all only the child of idleness and fullness of bread. To which scandalous calumny the thoughts of Don Guzman's heart gave at least a certain colour, for he being idle (as captives needs must be), and also full of bread (for Sir Richard kept a very good table), had already looked round for more amusement's sake after some one with whom to fall in love. Lady Grenville, as nearest, was, I blush to say, thought of first, but the Spaniard was a man of honour, and Sir Richard his host, so he put away from his mind (with a self-denial on which he plumed himself much) the pleasure of a chase equally exciting to his pride and his love of danger. As for the sinfulness of the said chase, he of course thought no more of that than other Southern Europeans did then, or than (I blush again to have to say it) the English did afterwards in the days of the Stuarts. Nevertheless, he had put Lady Grenville out of his mind, and so left room to take Rose Salterne into it, not with any distinct purpose of wronging her; but, as I said before, half to amuse himself, and half, too, because he could not help it. For there was an innocent freshness about the Rose of Torridge, fond as she was of being admired, which was new to him and most attractive. 'The train of the peacock,' as he said to himself, 'and yet the heart of the dove,' made so charming a combination, that if he could have persuaded her to love no one but him, perhaps

he might become fool enough to love no one but her. And at that thought he was seized with a very panic of prudence, and resolved to keep out of her way, and yet the days ran slowly, and Lady Grenville when at home was stupid enough to talk and think about nothing but her husband, and whom she went to Stow, and left the Don alone in one corner of the great house at Bideford, what could he do but lounge down to the butt-gardens to show off his fine black cloak and fine black feather, see the shooting, have a game or two of rackets with the youngsters, a game or two of bowls with the elders, and get himself invited home to supper by Mr Salterne!

And there, of course, he had it all his own way, and ruled the roost (which he was fond enough of doing) right royally, not only on account of his rank, but because he had something to say worth hearing, as a travelled man. For those times were the day-dawn of English commerce; and not a merchant in Bideford, nor in all England, but had his imagination all on fire with projects of discoveries, companies, privileges, patents, and settlements, with gallant rivalry of the brave adventures of Sir Edward Osborne and his new London Company of Turkey Merchants, with the privileges just granted by the Sultan Murad Khan to the English, with the worthy Levant voyages of Roger Bodenham in the great bark *Anchor*, and of John Fox, and Lawrence Aldersey, and John Rule, and with hopes from the vast door for Mediterranean trade, which the crushing of the Venetian power at Famagusta in Cyprus, and the alliance made between Elizabeth and the Great Turk, had just thrown open. So not a word could fall from the Spaniard about the Mediterranean but took root at once in right fertile soil. Besides, Master Edmund Hogan had been on a successful embassy to the Emperor of Morocco, John Hawking and George Fenner had been to Guinea (and with the latter Mr Walter Wren, a Bideford man), and had traded there for musk and civet, gold and grain, and African news was becoming almost as valuable as West Indian. Moreover, but two months before had gone from London Captain Hare in the bark *Minion*, for Brazil, and a company of adventurers with him, with Sheffield hardware, and 'Devonshire and Northern kerseys,' hollands and 'Manchester cottons,' for there was a great opening for English goods by the help of one John Whithall, who had married a Spanish heiress, and had an ingenio and slaves in Santos. (Don't smile, reader, or despise the day of small things, and those who sowed the seed whereof you reap the mighty harvest.) In the meanwhile, Drake had proved not merely the possibility of plundering the American coasts, but of establishing an East Indian trade, Frobisher and Davis, worthy forefathers of our Parrys and Franklins, had begun to bore their way upward through the Northern ice, in search of a passage to China which should avoid the dangers of the Spanish

seas, and Anthony Jenkinson, not the least of English travellers, had, in six-and-twenty years of travel in behalf of the Muscovite Company, penetrated into not merely Russia and the Levant, but Persia and Armenia, Bokhara, Tartary, Siberia, and those waste Arctic shores where, thirty years before, the brave Sir Hugh Willoughby,

'In Arctica caudat,
Perished with all his crew

Everywhere English commerce, under the general auspices of Elizabeth's wise rule, was spreading and taking root, and as Don Guzman talked with his new friends, he soon saw (for he was shrewd enough) that they belonged to a race which must be exterminated if Spain intended to become (as she did intend) the mistress of the world, and that was not enough for Spain to have seized in the Pope's name the whole new world, and claimed the exclusive right to sail the seas of America, not enough to have crushed the Hollanders, not enough to have degraded the Venetians into her bankers, and the Genoese into her mercenaries, not enough to have incorporated into herself, with the kingdom of Portugal, the whole East Indian trade of Portugal, while these three islands remained to assert, with cunning policy and tactics of subtlety, and, if they failed, with sharp shot and cold steel, free seas and free trade for all the nations upon earth. He saw it, and his countrymen saw it too, and therefore the Spanish Armada came out of that hereafter. And Don Guzman knew also, by hard experience, that these same islanders, who sat in Salterne's parlour, talking broad Devon through their noses, were no mere counters of money and hucksters of goods, but men who, though they thoroughly hated fighting, and loved making money instead, could fight, upon occasion, after a very dogged and terrible fashion, as well as the bravest blood in Spain, and who sent out their merchant ships armed up to the teeth, and filled with men who had been trained from childhood to use those arms, and had orders to use them without mercy if either Spaniard, Portugal, or other created being dared to stop their money-making. And one evening he waxed quite mad, when, after having civilly enough hinted that if Englishmen came where they had no right to come, they might find themselves sent back again, he was answered by a volley of—

'We'll see that, sir.'

'Depends on who says "No right".'

'You found right right,' said another, 'when you claimed the Indian seas, we may find right right when we try them.'

'Try them, then, gentlemen, by all means, if it shall so please your worship, and find the sacred flag of Spain as inviolable as ever was the Roman eagle.'

'We have, sir. Did you ever hear of Francis Drake?'

'Or of George Fenner and the Portugals at the Azores, one against seven?'

W H

'Or of John Hawkins, at St. Juan d'Ulloa?'

'You are insolent burghers,' said Don Guzman, and rose to go.

'Sir,' said old Salterne, 'as you say, we are burghers and plain men, and some of us have forgotten ourselves a little, perhaps, we must beg you to forgive our want of manners, and to put it down to the strength of my wine, for insolent we never meant to be, especially to a noble gentleman and a foreigner.'

But the Don would not be pacified, and walked out, calling himself an ass and a blunderer for having demeaned himself to such a company, forgetting that he had brought it on himself.

Salterne (prompted by the great devil Minnion) came up to him next day, and begged pardon again, promising, moreover, that none of those who had been so rude should be henceforth asked to meet him, if he would deign to honour his house once more. And the Don officially was appeased, and went there the very next evening, sneering at him all the while for going.

'I feel that I am, that girl has bewitched me, I believe, but I must, and eat my share of dirt, for her sake.'

So he went, and, cunningly enough, hinted to old Salterne that he had taken such a fancy to him, and felt so bound by his courtesy and hospitality, that he might not object to tell him things which he would not mention to every one, for that the Spaniards were not jealous of single traders, but of any general attempt to deprive them of their hard-earned wealth. That, however, in the meanwhile, there were plenty of opportunities for one man here and there to enrich himself, &c.

Old Salterne, shrewd as he was, had his weak point, and the Spaniard had touched it, and delighted at this opportunity of learning the mysteries of the Spanish monopoly, he often actually set Rose on to draw out the Don, without a fear (so blind does money make men) lest she might be herself drawn in. For, first, he held it as impossible that she would think of marrying a Popish Spaniard as of marrying the man in the moon, and, next as impossible that he would think of marrying a laughier's daughter as of marrying a negress, and trusted that the religion of the one, and the family pride of the other, would keep them as separate as beings of two different species. And as for love without marriage, if such a possibility ever crossed him, the thought was rendered absurd by Rose's part by her virtue, on which the old man (and rightly) would have staked every farthing he had on earth, and on the Don's part, by a certain human fondness for the community of the crooked artery and the parts adjoining, for which (and that not altogether justly, seeing that Don Guzman cared as little for his own life as he did for his neighbour's) Mr. Salterne gave him credit. And so it came to pass, that for weeks and months the merchant's house was the Don's favourite haunt, and he saw the Rose of

Terridge daily, and the Rose of Torridge heard him.

And as for her, poor child, she had never seen such a man. He had, or seemed to have, all the high-bred grace of Frank, and yet he was cast in a manlier mould; he had just enough of his nation's proud self-assertion to make a woman bow before him as before a superior, and yet tar enough to let it very seldom degenerate into that boastfulness of which the Spaniards were then so often and so justly accused. He had marvels to tell by flood and field as many and more than Anyas, and he told them with a grace and an eloquence of which modest, simple, old Anyas possessed nothing. Besides, he was on the spot, and the laughs were not, nor indeed were any of her old lovers, and what could she do but amuse herself with the only person who came to hand?

So thought, in time, more ladies than she. For the country, the north of it at least, was all but bare just then of young gallants, what with the Netherland wars and the Irish wars, and the Spaniard became soon welcome at every house for many a mile round, and made use of his welcome so freely, and received so much unwonted attention from fair young dames, that his head might have been a little turned, and Rose Salterne have then by escaped, had not Sir Richard delicately given him to understand that in spite of the fire and easy manners of English ladies, brothers were just as jealous, and ladies' honours at least as invulnerable, as in the land of demureness. And Diennas, Don Guzman took the hint well enough, and kept on good terms with the country gentlemen as with their daughters, and to tell the truth, the cunning soldier of fortune found his account in being intimate with all the ladies he could in order to prevent old Salterne from finding that he had any peculiar predilection for Mistress Rose.

Nevertheless, Mr. Salterne's parlour being nearest to him, still remained his most common haunt, where, while he discoursed for hours about

'Antea vast and deserts idle,
And of the cannibals that each other eat,
Of Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders.'

to the boundless satisfaction of poor Rose's fancy, he took care to season his discourse with scraps of mercantile information, which kept the old merchant always expectant and hankering for more, and made it worth his while to ask the Spaniard in again, and again.

And his stories, certainly, were worth hearing. He seemed to have been everywhere, and to have seen everything. Born in Peru and sent home to Spain at ten years old, brought up in Italy, a soldier in the Levant, an adventurer to the East Indies, again in America, first in the islands, and then in Mexico. Then back again to Spain, and thence to Rome, and thence to Ireland. Shipwrecked, captive among savages; looking down the craters of volcanoes, hanging about all the courts of Europe, fight-

ing Turks, Indians, lions, elephants, alligators, and what not? At five-and-thirty he had seen enough for three lives, and knew how to make the best of what he had seen.

He had shared, as a lad, in the horrors of the memorable siege of Famagusta, and had escaped, he hardly knew himself how, from the hands of the victorious Turks, and from the certainty (if he escaped being flayed alive or impaled, as most of the captive officers were) of ending his life as a Janissary at the Sultan's court. He had been at the Battle of the Three Kings; had seen Stukely borne down by a hundred lances, unconquered even in death, and had held upon his knee the head of the dying King of Portugal.

And now, as he sat to Rose one evening, what had he left on earth, feet & heart trampled as hard as the pavement? Whom had he to love? Whom loved him? He had nothing for which to live but fame, and even that was denied to him, a prisoner in a foreign land.

'Had he no kindred, then?' asked pitying Rose.

'My two sisters are in a convent, — they had neither money nor beauty; so they are dead to me. My brother is a Jesuit, so he is dead to me. My father fell by the hands of Indians in Mexico, my mother, a penniless widow, is companion, dienna—whatsoever they may choose to call it—carrying fans and lapdogs for some princes or other there in Seville, of no better blood than herself, and I—devil! I have lost even my sword—and so fares the house of De Soto.'

Don Guzman, of course, intended to be pitied, and pitied he was accordingly. And then he would turn the conversation, and begin telling Italian stories, after the Italian fashion, according to his auditory, the pathetic ones when Rose was present, the racy ones when she was absent, so that Rose had wept over the sorrows of Juliet and Desdemona, and over many another moving tale, long before they were ever enacted on an English stage, and the ribs of the Bideford worthies had shaken to many a jest which Cinthio and Bandello's ghosts must come and make for themselves over again if they wish them to be remembered, for I shall lend them no shore toward immortality.

And so on, and so on. What need of more words? Before a year was out, Rose Salterne was far more in love with Don Guzman than he with her, and both suspected each other's mind, though neither hinted at the truth, she from fear, and he, to tell the truth, from sheer Spanish pride of blood. For he soon began to find out that he must compromise that blood by marrying the heretic burgher's daughter, or all his labour would be thrown away.

He had seen with much astonishment, and then practised with much pleasure, that graceful old English fashion of saluting every lady on the cheek at meeting, which (like the old Dutch fashion of asking young ladies out to feasts without their mothers) used to give such cause of brutal calumny and scandal to the

coarse minds of Romish visitors from the Continent, and he had soon, too, flaming with jealous rage, more than one Budeford burgher, redolent of onions, profane in that way the velvet cheek of Rose Salterno.

So, one day, he offered his salute in like wise, but he did it when she was alone, for something within (perhaps a guilty conscience) whispered that it might be hardly politic to make the proffer in her father's presence. However, to his astonishment, he received a prompt though quiet rebuff.

'No, sir; you should know that my cheek is not for you.'

'Why,' said he, stifling his anger, 'it seems free enough to every counter-jumper in the town!'

'Was it love, or simple innocence, which made her answer apologetically?'

'True, Don Guzman, but they are my equals.'

'And I?'

'You are a nobleman, sir, and should recoil at that you are one.'

'Well,' said he, forcing a sneer, 'it is a strange taste to prefer the shopkeeper!'

'Prefer?' said she, forcing a laugh in her turn, 'it is a men's form among us. They are nothing to me, I can tell you.'

'And I, then, less than nothing?'

Rose turned very red, but she had nerve to answer:

'And why should you be anything to me? You have condescended too much, sir, already to us, in giving us many a - many a pleasant evening. You must condescend no further. You wrong yourself, sir, and me too. No, sir, not a step nearer! I will not! A salute between equals means nothing, but between you and me - I vow, sir, if you do not leave me this moment, I will complain to my father.'

'Do so, madam! I care as little for your father's anger, as you for my misery.'

'Crude!' cried Rose, trembling from head to foot.

'I love you, madam,' cried he, throwing himself on her feet. 'I adore you. Never mention differences of rank to me more, for I have forgotten them, forgotten all but love, all but you, madam! My light, my lodestar, my princess, my goddess! You see where my pride is gone, remember I plead as a suppliant a beggar - though one who may be one day a prince, a king! ay, and a prince now, a viceroy, a ruler of pride to all except to you, to you a wretch who grovels at your feet, and cries, "Have mercy on me, on my loneliness, my homeless-ness, my friendlessness." Ah, Rose (madam I should have said, forgive the madness of my passion), you know not the heart which you break. Cold Northerners, you little dream how a Spaniard can love. Love? Worship, rather, as I worship you, madam, as I bless the captivity which brought me the sight of you, and the ruin which first made me rich. Is it possible, Saints and Virgin! do my own tears deceive my eyes, or are there tears, too, in those radiant orbs?'

'Go, sir!' cried poor Rose, recovering herself suddenly, 'and let me never see you more! And, as a last chance for life, she darted out of the room.'

'Your slave obeys you, madam,' and kisses your hands and feet for ever and a day,' said the cunning Spaniard, and drawing himself up, walked solemnly out of the house, while she, poor soul, peeped after him out of her window upstairs, and her heart sank within her as she watched his jaunty and careless air.

How much of that thapsody of his was honest, how much premeditated I cannot tell. Though she, poor child, began to fancy that it was all a set speech, when she found that he had really taken her at her word, and set foot no more within her father's house. So she reproached herself for the cruellest of women, settled, that if he died, she should be his murderess, watched for him to pass at the window, in hopes that he might look up, and then hid herself in terror the moment he appeared round the corner, and so forth, and so forth - one love making is very like another, and has been so, I suppose, since that first blessed marriage in Paradise when Adam and Eve made no love at all, but found it ready-made for them from heaven, and really it is foolish while Rome is learning to spend more pages over the sorrows of poor little Rose Salterno, while the destinies of Europe are hanging on the marriage between Elizabeth and Anjou, and Sir Humphrey Gilbert is stirring heaven and earth and Devonshire, of course, as the most important portion of the sad earth to carry out his dormant patent, which will give to England in due time (we are not jesting now) Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Canada, and the Northern States, and to Humphrey Gilbert himself something better than a new world, namely another world, and a crown of glory therein which never fades away.

CHAPTER XI

HOW EUSTACE LEIGH MET THE POPE'S LEGATE

'Magnificent, rash, intrusive, fast, farewell!'

'Then see to it, too late is some day!'

How!

It is the spring of 1582-3. The gray March skies are curling hard and high above the mountain peaks. The keen March wind is sweeping harsh and dry across a dreary cheer of bog, still cool and yellow with the stains of winter frost. One brown knoll alone breaks the waste, and on it a few leafless wind-chip oaks stretch their moss-grown arms like giant fairy spiders, above a desolate pool which creaks and shivers in the biting breeze, while from beside its brink rises a mournful cry, and sweeps down, faint and fitful, amid the howling of the winds.

Along the brink of the bog, picking their

road among crumbling rocks and green spongy springs, a company of English soldiers are pushing fast, clasp-cap-and-plumet in helmet and quilted jerkin, with armbands on shoulder, and jakes trailing behind them, stern steadfast men, who, two years since, wore working the guns at Smorwick fort, and have since then seen many a bloody fray, and shall see more before they die. Two captains ride before them on shaggy ponies, the taller in armour, stained and rusted with many a storm and fray, the other in brilliant mail cuirass and helmet, gaudy sash and plume, and sword-lilt glittering with gold, a quaint contrast enough to the meagre garrison which carries him and his finery. Beside them, secured by a cord which a pikeman has fastened to his own wrist, trots a bare-legged Irish kerfie, whose only clothing is his ragged yellow mantle, and the unkempt 'ghib' of hair, through which his eyes peer out, right and left, in mingled fear and sullenness. He is the guide of the company, in their hunt after the rebel Ballynaglas, and woe to him if he play them false.

'A pleasant country, truly,' Captain Raleigh, says the dingy officer to the gay one. 'I wonder how, having once escaped front at Whitehill, you have the courage to come back and spoil that gay suit with bog-water and mud.'

'A very pleasant country, my friend Amyas, what you say is just, I say in earnest.'

'Hillo! Our tastes have changed places. I am sick of it already, as you foretold. Would Heaven that I could hear of some adventure Westward-ho! and find these lug bones swinging in a hammock once more. Pray what has made you so suddenly in love with bog and rock, that you come back to tramp them with us? I thought you had spied out the nakedness of the land long ago.'

'Bog and rock? Nakedness of the land? What is needed here but prudence and skill, justice and law? This soil, see, is fat enough, if men were here to till it. These rocks—who knows what minerals they may hold? I hear of gold and jewels found already in divers parts, and Daniel, my brother Humphrey's German assayer, assures me that these rocks are of the very same kind as those which yield the silver in Peru. 'Tis, man! if her gracious Majesty would but bestow on me some few square miles of this same wilderness, in seven years' time I would make it blossom like the rose, by God's good help.'

'Humph! I should be more inclined to stay here, then.'

'So you shall, and be my agent, if you will, to get in my mill-rents and my corn-rents, and my fishery rents, eh? Could you keep accounts, old knight of the bear's-paw?'

'Well enough for such short reckonings as yours would be, on the profit side at least. No, no—I'd sooner carry lime all my days from Canby to Bidosford than pass another twelve-month in the land of Ire, among the children of wrath. There is a curse upon the face of the earth, I believe.'

'There is no curse upon it, save the old one of man's sin—''Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to thee'' But if you root up the thorns and thistles, Amyas, I know no fiend who can prevent your growing wheat instead, and if you till the ground like a man, you plough and harrow away nature's curse, and other fables of the schoolmen beside,' added he, in that daring fashion which afterwards obtained for him (and never did good Christian less deserve it) the imputation of Atheism.

'It is sword and bullet, I think, that are needed here, before plough and harrow, to clear away some of the curse. Until a few more of these Irish lords are gone where the Desmond's are, there is no peace for Ireland.'

'Humph! not so far wrong, I fear. And yet—Irish lords? These very traitors are better English blood than we who hunt them down. When Yeo here slew the Desmond the other day, he no more let out a drop of Irish blood, than if he had slain the Lord Deputy himself.'

'His blood be on his own head,' said Yeo. 'He looked as wild a savage as the worst of them, more shame to him, and the Ancient here had nigh cut off his neth before he told us who he was, and then, your worship, leaving a price upon his head, and like to bleed to death too.'

'Enough, enough, good fellow,' said Raleigh. 'Thou hast done what was given thee to do. Strange, Amyas, is it not? Noble Nunnans sunk into savages—Hibernians upon Hibernians! Is there some inviolable venom in the air?'

'Sympathetic venom, at least, which makes Englishmen traitors. But the Irish themselves are well enough, if their tyrants would let them be. See now, what more faithful hugganman has her Majesty than the Inchiquin, who, they say, is Prince of the Emerald, and should be king of all Ireland, if every man had his right?'

'Don't talk of rights in the land of wrongs, man. But the Inchiquin knows well that the true Irish Esu has no worse enemy than his supplanter, the Norman Jacob. And yet, Amyas, no can these men worse than we might be, if we had been bred up misters over the bodies and souls of men, in some remote land where law and order had never come. Look at this Desmond, brought up a savage among savages, a Pagan among Pagans, a despot among slaves, a thousand rasy maidens dawning it honour to serve his pleasure, a thousand wild ruffians deeming it pety to fulfil his revenge—and let him that is without sin among us cast the first stone.'

'Ay,' went on Raleigh to himself, as the conversation dropped. 'What hadst thou been, Raleigh, hadst thou been that Desmond whose lands thou now denrest? What wilt thou be when thou hast them? Will thy children sink downwards, as these noble barons sank? Will the germs of tyranny and falsehood find soil within thy heart to grow and ripen fruit? What guarantee hast thou for doing better here than those who went before thee? And yet, cannot

I do justice, and love mercy? Can I not establish plantations, build and sow, and make the desert valleys laugh with corn? Shall I not have my Spanner with me, to fill me with all noble thoughts, and raise my soul to his heroic pitch? Is not this true knight-errantry, to redeem to peace and us, and to the glory of that glorious Queen whom God has given to me, a generous soil and a more generous race? Trustful and tender-hearted they are—none more, and if they be fickle and passionate, will not that very softness of temper, which makes them so easily led to evil, make them as easy to be led towards good? Yes—here, away from courts, among a people who should bless me as their benefactor and deliverer—what golden days might be mine! And yet—is this but another angel's mask from that same cunning fiend Ambition's stage? And will my house be indeed the house of God, the foundations of which are loyalty, and its bulwarks righteousness, and not the house of Fame, whose walls are of the soap-bubble, and its floor a sea of glass mingled with fire? I would be good and great—When will the day come when I shall be content to be good, and yet not great, like this same simple Leigh, toiling on by my side to do his duty, with no more thought for the morrow than the birds of God? (Greatness! I have tasted that cup within the last twelve months, so I not know that it is sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly! Greatness! And was not Essex great, and John of Austria great, and Desmond great, whose race, but three short years ago, had stood for ages higher than I shall ever hope to climb—castles, and lands, and slaves by thousands, and five hundred gentlemen of his name, who had vowed to forswear God before they forswore him, and well have they kept their vow! And now, dead in a turf hovel, like a coney in a burrow! Leigh, what noise was that?)

'An Irish howl, I fancied—but it came from off the bog, it may be only a plover's cry.'

'Something not quite right, Sir Captain, to my mind,' said the Ancient. 'They have ugly stories here of jacks and han-shees, and what not of ghosts. There it was again, wailing just like a woman. They say the Banshee cried all night before Desmond was slain.'

'Perhaps, then, this one may be crying for Balthazar, for his turn is likely to come next—not that I believe in such old wives' tales.'

'Shamus, my man,' said Amyas to the guide, 'do you hear that cry in the bog?'

The guide put on the most stolid of faces, and answered in broken English—

'Shamus hear nought. Perhaps—what you call him?—fishing in a pool.'

'An otter, he means, and I believe he is right. Stay, no! Did you not hear it then, Shamus? It was a woman's voice.'

'Shamus is sick in his ears ever since Christmas.'

'Shamus will go after Desmond if he lies,' said Amyas. 'Ancient, we had better send a

few men to see what it is. there may be a poor soul taken by robbers, or perhaps starving to death, as I have seen many a one.'

'And I too, poor wretches, and by no fault of their own or ours either—but if their lords will fall to quarrelling, and then drive each other's cattle, and waste each other's lands, sir, you know—'

'I know,' said Amyas impatiently, 'why dost not take the men, and go?'

'Ory you no rry, noble Captain—but—I fear nothing born of woman.'

'Well, what of that?' said Amyas, with a smile.

'But these pucks, sir. The wild Irish do say that they haunt the pools, and they do no manner of harm, sir, when you are coming up to them, but when you are past, sir, they jump on your back like to apes, sir,—and who can tell that manner of fiend?'

'Why, then, by thine own showing, Ancient, and Raleigh, thou may'st go and see all safely enough, and then if the puck jumps on thee as thou comest back, just run in with him here, and I'll buy him of thee for a noble, or thou may'st keep him in a cage, and make money in London by showing him for a monster.'

'Good heavens forefend, Captain Raleigh! but you talk rashly! But if I must, Captain Leigh—'

"When duty calls
To braver deeds,
How base the slave who flinches!"

'Lo! who'll follow me?'

'Thou askest for volunteers, as if thou wert to lead a forlorn hope. Pull away at the usquebaugh, man, and swallow Dutch courage, since thine English is cooled away. Stay, I'll go myself.'

'And I with you,' said Raleigh. 'As the Queen's true knight-errant, I am bound to be a hundred in no adventure. Who knows but we may find a wicked magician, just going to cut off the head of some saffron-mantled princess,' and he dismounted.

'Oh, sir, sir, to endanger your precious—'

'Pooh,' said Raleigh. 'I wear an amulet, and have a spell of art-magic at my tongue's end, whereby, Sir Ancient, neither can a ghost see me, nor I see them. Come with us, Yeo, the Desmond-slave, and we will shame the devil, or be shamed by him.'

'He may shame me, sir, but he will never frighten me,' quoth Yeo, 'but the bog, Captain.'

'Tut! Devonshire men, and leath trotter born, and not know our way over a peat moor.'

And the three strode away.

They splashed and scrambled for some quarter of a mile to the knoll, while the cry became louder and louder as they neared.

'That's neither ghost nor otter, sir, but a true Irish howl, as Captain Leigh said, and I warrant Master Shamus knew as much long ago,' said Yeo.

And in fact, they could now hear plainly the

'Ochone, O, honore,' of some wild woman, and, scrambling over the boulders of the knoll, in another minute came full upon her.

She was a young girl, sluttish and unkempt, of course, but fair enough, her only covering, as usual, was the ample yellow mantle. There she sat upon a stone, tearing her black dishevelled hair, and every now and then throwing up her head, and bursting into a long mournful cry, 'for all the world,' as Yeo said, 'like a dumb four-footed hound, and not a Christian soul.'

On her knees lay the head of a man of middle age, in the long soutane of a Romish priest. One look at the attitude of his limbs told them that he was dead.

The two passed in awe, and Raleigh's spirit, susceptible of all poetical images, felt keenly that strange scene,—the bleak and bitter sky, the shapeless bog, the stunted trees, the savage girl alone with the corpse in that utter desolation. And as she bent her head over the stiff face, and called wildly to him who heard her not, and then, utterly unmindful of the intruders, sent up again that dreary wail into the dreary air, they felt a sacred horror, which almost made them turn away, and leave her unquestioned, but Yeo, whose nerves were of tougher fibre, asked quietly—

'Shall I go and search the fellow, Captain?'

'Better, I think,' said Amyas.

Raleigh went gently to the girl, and spoke to her in English. She looked up at him, his armour and his plume, with wide and wondering eyes, and then shook her head, and returned to her lamentation.

Raleigh gently laid his hand on her arm, and lifted her up, while Yeo and Amyas bent over the corpse.

It was the body of a large and coarse-featured man, but wasted and shrunken as if by famine to a very skeleton. The hands and legs were cramped up, and the trunk bowed together, as if the man had died of cold or famine. Yeo drew back the clothes from the thin bosom, while the girl screamed and wept, but made no effort to stop him.

'Ask her who it is! Yeo, you know a little Irish,' said Amyas.

'He asked, but the girl made no answer. The stubborn jade won't tell, of course, sir. If she were but a man, I'd make her soon enough.'

'Ask her who killed him!'

'No one, she says; and I believe she says true, for I can find no wound. The man has been starved, says, as I am a sinful man God help him, though he is a priest; and yet he seems full enough down below. What's here? A big pouch, sir, stuffed full of somewhat.'

'Hand it hither.'

The two opened the pouch, papers, papers, but no scrap of fool. Then a parchment. They unrolled it.

'Latin,' said Amyas, 'you must construe, Don Scholar.'

'Is it possible?' said Raleigh, after reading

a moment. 'This is indeed a prize! This is Saunders himself!'

Yeo sprang up from the body as if he had touched an adder. 'Nick Saunders, the Legacy, sir?'

'Nicholas Saunders, the Legate.'

'The villain! why did not he wait for me to have the comfort of killing him? Dog!' and he kicked the corpse with his foot.

'Quiet! quiet! Remember the poor girl,' said Amyas, as she shrieked at the profanation, while Raleigh went on, hail to himself. 'Yes, this is Saunders. Misguided fool, and this is the end! To this thou hast come with thy plotting and thy conspiring, thy lying and thy boasting, consecrated banners and Pope's bulls, Agnus Dei and holy water, the blessing of all saints and angels, and thy Lady of the Immaculate Conception! Thou hast called on the Heavens to judge between thee and us, and here is their answer! What is that in his hand, Amyas? Give it me.' A pastoral epistle to the Earl of Ormond, and all nobles of the realm of Ireland, 'To all who groan beneath the loathsome tyranny of an illegitimate adultress, etc., Nicholas Saunders, by the grace of God, Legate, etc.' 'Bah! and this forsooth was thy last meditation! Incorrigible pedant! *Victrix causa Deus placuit, sed victa Cantua!*'

He ran his eye through various other documents, written in the usual strain—bill of huge promises from the Pope and the King of Spain, frantic and filthy slanders against Elizabeth, Burghley, Leicester, Essex (the elder), Sidney, and every great and good man (never mind of which party) who then upheld the commonweal, homiletic attempts to trify with conscience, by denouncing endless heresies against those who opposed the true faith, insidious ascriptions of martyrdom and sanctity to every rebel and traitor who had been hanged for the last twenty years, wearisome arguments about the bull *In Coena Domini*, Elizabeth's excommunication, the nullity of English law, the sacred duty of rebellion, the right to kill a prince infamously heretical and the like insanities and villainies, which may be read at large in Camden, the *Phoenix Britannicus*, Fox's *Martyrs*, or, surer of all, in the writings of the worthies themselves.

With a gesture of disgust, Raleigh crammed the foul stuff back again into the pouch. Taking it with them, they walked back to the company, and then remounting, marched away once more towards the lands of the Desmond, and the girl was left alone with the dead.

An hour had passed, when another Englishman was standing by the wailing girl, and round him a dozen shockheaded kerns, skene on thigh and javelin in hand, were tossing about their tawny rage, and adding their lamentations to those of the lonely wailer.

The Englishman was Eustace Leigh, a layman still, but still at his old work. By two years of intrigue and labour from one end of Ireland to the other, he had been trying to satisfy his conscience for rejecting 'the higher calling' of the

exhibits, for mad hopes still lurked within that fiery heart. His brow was wrinkled now, his features harshened, the scar upon his face, and the slight distortion which accompanied it, was hidden by a bushy beard from all but himself, and he never forgot it for a day, nor forgot who had given it to him.

He had been with Desmond, wandering in moor and moss for many a month in danger of his life, and now he was on his way to James Fitz-Eustace, Lord Balinglas, to bring him the news of Desmond's death, and with him a remnant of the clan, who were either too stout-hearted, or too desperately stained with crime, to seek peace from the English, and, as their fellows did, his it, it once and freely.

When Eustace stood, looking down on all that was left of the most sacred personage of Ireland; the man who, as he once had hoped, was to regenerate his native land, and bring the proud island of the West once more beneath that gentle yoke, in which united Christendom laboured for the commonweal of the universal Church. There he was, and with him all Eustace's dreams, in the very heart of that country which he had vowed, and believed as he vowed, was ready to rise in arms as one man, even to the baby at the breast (so he had said), in vengeance against the Saxon heretic, and sweep the hated name of Englishman into the deepest abysses of the sea, which would be his conquests, with Spain and the hope to back him, and the wealth of the Jesuits at his command, in the midst of faithful Catholics, valiant soldiers, noblemen who had pledged themselves to die for the cause, serfs who worshipped him as a demigod—started to death in a bog! It was a pretty plain verdict on the reasonableness of his expectations, but not to Eustace Leigh.

It was a failure, of course, but it was an accubut, indeed, to have been expected, in a wicked world whose prince and master, as all knew, was the devil himself, indeed, proof of the righteousness of the cause—for when had the truth been other than persecuted and trampled under foot? It was cause to think of it with eyes purified from the tears of carnal patience, what was it but a glorious martyrdom?

'Blest Saunders!' murmured Eustace Leigh, 'let me do the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like this! Ori pro me, most excellent martyr, while I dig thy grave upon this lonely moor, to wait there for thy translation to one of those stately shrines, which, cemented by the blood of such as thou, shall hereafter rise restored toward heaven, to make this land once more "The Isle of Saints."'

The corpse was buried, a few prayers said hastily; and Eustace Leigh was away again, not now to find Balinglas, for it was more than his life was worth. The girl had told him of the English soldiers who had passed, and he knew that they would reach the girl probably before he did. The game was up, all was lost. So he retraced his steps, as a desperate resource, to the last place where he would be looked for.

and after a month of disguising, hiding, and other expedients, found himself again in his native county of Devon, while Fitz-Eustace Viscount Balinglas had taken ship for Spain, having got little by his famous argument to Ormond in behalf of his joining the Church of Rome, 'Had not thine ancestor, blessed Thomas of Canterbury, died for the Church of Rome, thou hadst never been Earl of Ormond.' The premises were certainly sounder than those of his party were wont to be, for it was to expiate the murder of that turbulent hero that the Ormond lands had been granted by Henry II. but as for the conclusion thereon, it was much on a par with the rest.

And now let us return to Raleigh and Amyas, as they jog along their weary road. They have many things to talk of for it is but three days since they met.

Amyas, as you see, is coming last into Raleigh's old mansion of Ireland. Raleigh, under the inspiration of a possible grant of Desmond's lands, looks on boys and looks things figured by his own hopes and fears, as if by the glory of a rambo. He looked at all things so noble fellow, even thirty years after, when old, worn out, and much, well for him had it been otherwise, and his heart had grown old with his head! Amyas, who knows nothing about Desmond's lands, is puzzled at the change.

'Why, what is this, Raleigh? You are like children sitting in the market-place, and nothing pleases you. You wanted to get to court, and you have got there, and are lord and master. I hear of something very like it, do you—and as soon as Fortune stuffs your mouth full of sweetmeats, do you turn informer on her?'

Raleigh laughed insignificantly, but was silent.

'And how is your friend Mr. Secretary Spencer who was with us at Smerwick?'

'Spencer? He has thriven even as I have, and he has found, as I have, that in making one friend at court you make ten foes, but "Oderint Dum metuant" is no more my motto than his, Leigh. I want to be great—great I am already, they say, if James's favour can swell the frog into an ox, but I want to be liked, loved—I want to see people smile when I enter.'

'So they do, I'll warrant,' said Amyas.

'So do I, venas,' said Raleigh, 'grin because they are hungry, and I may throw them a bone. I'll throw you one now, old lad, or rather a good sirloin of beef, for the sake of your smile. That's honest, at least. I'll warrant whosoever else is not? Have you heard of my brother Humphrey's new project?'

'How should I hear anything in this waste howling wilderness?'

'Kiss hands to the wilderness, then, and come with me to Newfoundland!'

'You to Newfoundland?'

'Yes. I to Newfoundland, unless my little matter here is settled at once. Gloriana don't know it, and shan't till I'm off. She'd send me to the Tower, I think, if she caught me playing

triant I could hardly get leave to come hither, but I must out, and try my fortune I am over ears in debt already, and sick of courts and courtiers. Humphrey must go next spring and take possession of his kingdom beyond seas, or his patent expires, and with him I go, and you, too, my circumnavigating giant.

'And then Raleigh expounded to Amyas the details of the great Newfoundland scheme, which whose will may read in the pages of Hakluyt.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Raleigh's half-brother, held a patent for 'planting' the lands of Newfoundland and 'Meta Incognita' (Labrador). He had attempted a voyage thither with Raleigh in 1578, whereof I never could hear any news, save that he came back again, after a heavy brush with some Spanish ships (in which his best captain, Mr Morgan, was killed), having done nothing, and much impaired his own estate; but now he had collected a large sum. Sir Gilbert Peckham of London, Mr Hayes of South Devon, and various other gentlemen, of whom more hereafter, had advanced their money, and a considerable colony was to be sent out the next year, with miners, assayers, and, what was more, Puritanus Budens, Frank's old friend, who had come to England full of thirst to see the wonders of the New World, and over and above this, as Raleigh told Amyas in strictest secrecy, Adrian Gilbert, Humphrey's brother, was turning every stone at Court for a patent of discovery in the North-West, and this Newfoundland colony, though it was to produce gold, silver, merchandise, and what not, was but a basis of operations, a half-way house from whence to work out the North-West passage to the Indies—that golden dream, as fatal to English valour as the Guiana one to Spanish—and yet hardly, hardly to be regretted, when we remember the seamanship, the science, the chivalry, the heroism, unequalled in the history of the English nation, which it has called forth among those our later Arctic voyagers, who have combined the knight-errantry of the middle age with the practical prudence of the modern, and dared for duty more than Cortez or Pizarro dared for gold.

Amyas, myrde fellow, took all in goodly, he knew enough of the dangers of the Magellan passage to appreciate the boundless value of a road to the East Indies which would (as all supposed then) save half the distance, and be as it were a private possession of the English, safe from Spanish interference, and he listened reverently to Sir Humphrey's quaint proofs, half true, half fantastic, of such a passage, which Raleigh detailed to him—of the *Primum Mobile*, and its diurnal motion from east to west, in obedience to which the sea-current flowed westward ever round the Cape of Good Hope, and being unable to pass through the narrow strait between North America and the Antarctic continent, rushed up the American shore, as the Gulf Stream, and poured north westward between Greenland and Labrador towards Cathay and

India, of that most crafty argument of Sir Humphrey's—how Aristotle in his book *De Mundo*, and Simon Gryncus in his annotations thereon, declare that the world (the Old World) is an island, compassed by that which Homer calls the river Oceanus, *ergo*, the New World is an island also, and there is a North-West passage, and the three brothers (names unknown) who had actually made the voyage, and named what was afterwards called Davis's Strait after themselves of the Indians who were cast ashore in Germany in the reign of Frederick Barbarossa, who, Sir Humphrey had learnedly proved per modum tollentis, could have come only by the North West and above all, of Salvaterra, the Spaniard, who in 1508 had told Sir Henry Sidney (Philip's father), then in Ireland, how he had spoken with a Mexican friar named Ildueta, who had himself come from Mar del Zur (the Pacific) into Germany by that very North-West passage, at which last Amyas shook his head, and said that friars were liars, and seeing believing, 'but if you must needs have an adventure, you mortalible soul you, why not try for the golden city of Manoa?'

'Manoa?' asked Raleigh, who had heard, as most had, dim rumours of the place. 'What do you know of it?'

Whereon Amyas told him all that he had gathered from the Spaniard, and Raleigh, in his turn, believed every word.

'Humphrey!' said he after a long silence. 'To find that golden Empyreo, stir him help and friendship from the Queen of England, defend him against the Spaniards, if we became strong enough, conquer back all Peru from the Popish tyrants, and reconstitute him on the throne of the Incas, with ourselves in his body guard, as the Norman Vikings were to the Clementine Emperors of Byzantium. Hec, Amyas? You would make a gallant chieftain of Vikings. Will do it, lad?'

'We'll try,' said Amyas, 'but we must be quick, for there's one Hero sworn to carry out the quest to the death, and if the Spaniards once get thither, their plan of works will be much more like Pizarro's than like yours, and by the time we come, there will be neither gold nor city left.'

'Nor Indians either, I'll warrant the butchers, but, lad, I am promised to Humphrey, I have a bark fitting out already, and all I have, and more, adventured in her, so Manoa must wait.'

'It will wait well enough, if the Spaniards prosper no better on the Amazon than they have done, but must I come with you? To tell the truth, I am quite short-sick, and to sea I must go. What will my mother say?'

'I'll manage thy mother,' said Raleigh, and so he did, in, to cut a long story short, he went back the month after, and he not only took home letters from Amyas to his mother, but so impressed on that good lady the enormous profits and honours to be derived from *Meta Incognita*, and (which was most true) the advantage to any young man of sailing with such

general as Humphrey Gilbert, most pious and most learned of seamen and of cavaliers, beloved and honoured above all his compeers by Queen Elizabeth, that she consented to Amvas's adventuring in the voyage some two hundred pounds which had come to him as his share of prize-money, after the ever-memorable circumnavigation. For Mrs. Leigh, be it understood, was no longer at Burrough Court. By Frank's persuasion, she had let the old place, moved up to London with her eldest son, and taken for herself a lodging somewhere by Palace Stairs, which looked out upon the silver Thames (for Thames was silver then), with its busy ferries and gliding boats, across to the pleasant fields of Lambeth, and the Archbishops' Palace, and the wooded Surrey hills, and there she spent her peaceful days, close to her Frank and to the Count Elizabeth would have had her re-enter it, offering her a small place in the household - but she declined, saying that she was too old and heart-weary for aught but prayer. So by prayer she lived, under the sheltering shadow of the tall minster, where she went thorn and even to worship, and to entreat for the two in whom her heart was bound up, and Frank shipped in every day if but for five minutes, and brought with him Spenser, or Raleigh, or Dyer, or Budens, or sometimes Sidney's self, and there was talk of high and holy things, of which none could speak better than could she, and each guest went from that hallowed room a humbler and yet a loftier man. So shipped on the peaceful months, and few and far between came Irish letters, for Ireland was then farther from Westminster than is the Black Sea now, but those were days in which wives and mothers had learned (as they have learned once more, sweet souls!) to walk by faith and not by sight for those they love, and Mrs. Leigh was content (though when was she not content?) to hear that Amvas was winning a good report as a brave and prudent officer, sober, just, and faithful, beloved and obeyed alike by English soldiers and Irish kerns.

Those two years, and the one which followed, were the happiest which she had known since her husband's death. But the cloud was fast coming up the horizon, though she saw it not. A little longer, and the sun would be hid for many a wintry day.

Amvas went to Plymouth (with Yeo, of course, at his heels), and there beheld, for the first time, the majestic countenance of the philosopher of Compton Castle. He lodged with Drake, and found him not over-sanguine as to the success of the voyage.

'For learning and manners, Amvas, there's not his equal; and the Queen may well love him, and Devon be proud of him; but book-learning is not business, book-learning didn't get me round the world, book-learning didn't make Captain Hawkins, nor his father neither, the best shipbuilders from Hull to Cadiz, and book-learning, I very much fear, won't plant Newfoundland.'

However, the die was cast, and the little fleet of five sail assembled in Cawsand Bay. Amvas was to go as a gentleman adventurer on board of Raleigh's bark, Raleigh himself, however, at the eleventh hour, had been forbidden by the Queen to leave England. Ere they left, Sir Humphrey Gilbert's picture was painted by some Plymouth artist, to be sent up to Elizabeth in answer to a letter and a gift sent by Raleigh, which, as a specimen of the men and of the time, I here transcribe —

'BROTHER. I have sent you a token from her Majesty, an anchor guided by a lady, as you see. And further, her Highness would me to send you word, that she wisheth you as great good hap and safety to your ship as if she were there in person, desiring you to have care of yourself as of that which she tendereth, and, therefore, for her sake, you must provide for it accordingly. Furthermore, she tendereth that you leave your picture with her. For the rest, I leave till our meeting, or to the report of the bearer, who would needs be the messenger of this good news. So I commit you to the will and protection of God, who send us such life and death as He shall please, or hath appointed.'

'Richmond, this Friday morning,
'Your true Brother,
'W. RALEIGH.'

'Who would not die, sir, for such a woman!' said Sir Humphrey (and he said truly), as he showed that letter to Amvas.

'Who would not? But she bids you rather live for her.'

'I shall do both, young man, and for God too, I trust. We are going in God's cause, we go for the honour of God's Gospel, for the deliverance of poor unbelieve's captive by the devil, for the relief of my distressed countrymen unemployed within this narrow isle, and to God we commit our cause. We fight against the devil himself, and stronger is He that is within us than he that is against us.'

Some say that Raleigh himself came down to Plymouth, accompanied the fleet a day's sail to sea, and would have given her Majesty the ship, and gone with them Westward-ho, but for Sir Humphrey's advice. It is likely enough - but I cannot find evidence for it. At all events, on the 11th June the fleet sailed out, having, says Mr. Hume, 'in number about 260 men, amongst whom we had of every faculty good choice, as shipwrights, masons, carpenters, smiths, and suchlike, requisite for such an action, also mineral men and refiners. Beside, for solace of our people and allurements of the savages, we were provided of musiquo in good variety, not omitting the least toys, as morris-dancers, hobby horses, and May-like concerts, to delight the savage people, whom we intended to win by all fair means possible.' An argument complete.

¹ This letter was a few years since in the possession of Mr. Pomeroy Gilbert, first-major at Dartmouth, a descendant of the Admiral's.

enough, even to that tenderness towards the Indians which is so striking a feature of the Elizabethan seamen (called out in them, perhaps, by horror at the Spanish cruelties, as well as by their more liberal creed), and to the daily service of God on board of every ship, according to the simple old instructions of Captain John Hawkins to one of his little squadrons. Keep good company, beware of fire, serve God daily, and love one another—an armament, in short, complete in all but men. The sailors had been picked up hastily and anywhere, and soon proved themselves a mutinous, and, in the case of the bark *Swallow*, a piratical set. The mechanics were little better. The gentleman-adventurers, puffing up with vain hopes of finding a new Mexico, became soon disappointed and surly at the hard practical reality, while over all was the head of a sage and an enthusiast, a man too unloose to suspect others, and too pure to make allowances for poor dirty human weaknesses. He had got his scheme posted upon paper, well for him, and for his company, if he had asked Francis Drake to translate it for him into fact! As early as the second day, the seeds of failure began to sprout above ground. The men of Raleigh's bark, the *Vice-Admiral*, suddenly found themselves seized, or supposed themselves seized, with a contagious sickness, and at midnight forsook the fleet, and went back to Plymouth, whereto Mr. Hayes can only say, 'The reason I never could understand. Sure I am that Mr. Raleigh spared no cost in setting them forth. And so I leave it unto God!'

But Amyas said more. He told Butler the captain plainly that, if the bark went back, he would not, that he had seen enough of ships deserting their consorts, that it should never be said of him that he had followed Winter's example, and that, too, on a fair easterly wind, and finally that he had seen Doughty hanged for trying to play such a trick, and that he might see others hanged too before he died. Whereon Captain Butler offered to draw and fight, to which Amyas showed no repugnance, whereon the captain, having taken a second look at Amyas's thews and sinews, reconsidered the matter, and offered to put Amyas on board of Sir Humphrey's *Delight*, if he could find a crew to row him.

Amyas looked around.

'Are there any of Sir Francis Drake's men on board?'

'Three, sir,' said Yeo. 'Robert Drew, and two others.'

'*Pelicans!*' roared Amyas, 'you have been round the world, and will you turn back from Westward-ho?'

There was a moment's silence, and then Drew came forward.

'Lower us a boat, captain, and lend us a caliver to make signals with, while I get my kit on deck, I'll after Captain Leigh, if I see him aboard all alone to my own hands.'

'If I ever command a ship, I will not forget you,' said Amyas.

'Nor us either, sir, we hope, for we haven't forgotten you and your honest conditions,' said both the other *Pelicans*, and so away over the side went all the five, and pulled away after the admiral's lantern, firing shots at intervals as signals. Luckily for the five desperadoes, the night was all but calm. They got on board, before the morning, and so away into the boundless West!

CHAPTER XII

HOW BIDEFORD BRIDGE WENT UP AT AVERY HURRY

'Thus a lord sat dooking into yestreen,
And ere they paid the lawing,
They set a combat throu in tweek,
To fight it in the dawing.' *Scotch Ballad*

EVERY one who knows Bideford cannot but know Bideford Bridge, for it is the very omphalos, cynosure, and soul, around which the town, as a body, has organised itself, and as Edinburgh is Edinburgh by virtue of its castle, Rome Rome by virtue of its Capitol, and Egypt Egypt by virtue of its Pyramids, so is Bideford Bideford by virtue of its Bridge. But all do not know the occult powers which have advanced and animated the said wondrous bridge for now five hundred years, and made it the chief wonder, according to Prince and Fuller, of this fair land of Devon, being first an inspired bridge; a soul-saving bridge, an alms-giving bridge, an educational bridge, a sentient bridge, and last, but not least, a dinner-giving bridge. All do not know how, when it began to be built some half-mile higher up, hands invisible carried the stones down stream each night to the present site, until Sir Richard Surry, parson of the parish, going to bed one night in sore perplexity and fear of the evil spirit who refused so busy in his sleepfold, beheld a vision of an angel, who bade him build the bridge where he himself had so kindly transported the materials, for there alone was sure foundation amid the broad sheet of shifting sand. All do not know how Bishop Grandison of Exeter proclaimed throughout his diocese indulgences, benedictions, and 'participation in all spiritual blessings for ever,' to all who would promote the bridging of that dangerous ford, and so, consulting alike the interests of their souls and of their bodies, 'make the best of both worlds.'

All do not know, nor do I, that 'though the foundation of the bridge is laid upon wool, yet it shakes at the slightest step of a horse;' or that, 'though it has twenty-three arches, yet one Wm. Alford (another Milo) carried on his back for a wager four bushels salt-water measure, all the length thereof,' or that the bridge is a veritable esquire, bearing arms of its own (a

¹ The *Raleigh*, the largest ship of the squadron, was of only 200 tons burden, the *Golden Hind*, Hayes' ship, which returned safe, of 40, and the *Syntrial* (whereof more hereafter), of 10 tons. In such cockboats did these old heroes brave the unknown seas.

ship and bridge proper on a plain field), and owning lands and tenements in many parishes, with which the said miraculous bridge has, from time to time, founded charities, built schools, waged suits at law, and finally (for this concerns us most) given yearly dinners, and kept for that purpose (luxurious and luxurious bridge that it was) the best stocked cellar of wines in all Devon.

To one of these dinners, as it happened, were invited in the year 1583 all the notabilities of Bideford, and beside them Mr St Leger of Annery close by, brother of the Marshal of Munster, and of Lady Grenville, a most worthy and hospitable gentleman, who, finding riches a snare, parted with them so freely to all his neighbours as long as he lived, that he effectually prevented his children after him from falling into the temptations thereunto incident.

Between him and one of the bridge trustees arose an argument, whether a salmon caught below the bridge was better or worse than one caught above, and as that weighty question could only be decided by practical experiment, Mr St Leger vowed that as the bridge had given him a good dinner, he would give the bridge one, offered a lot of five pounds that he would find them, out of the pool below Annery, as firm and flaky a salmon as the Applecore one which they had just eaten, and then, in the fulness of his heart, invited the whole company present to dine with him at Annery three days after, and bring with them each a wife or daughter, and Don Guzman being at table, he was invited too.

So there was a mighty feast in the great hall at Annery, such as had seldom been since Judge Hunkford feasted Edward the Fourth there, and while every one was eating their best and drinking their worst, Rose Salterne and Don Guzman were pretending not to see each other, and watching each other all the more. But Rose, at least, had to be very careful of her glances, for not only was her father at the table, but just opposite her sat none other than Messrs William Cary and Arthur St Leger, lieutenants in her Majesty's Irish army, who had returned on furlough a few days before.

Rose Salterne and the Spaniard had not exchanged a word in the last six months, though they had met many times. The Spaniard by no means avoided her company, except in her father's house, he only took care to obey her curiously, by seeming always unconscious of her presence, beyond the stateliest of salutes at entering and departing. But he took care, at the same time, to lay himself out to the very best advantage whenever he was in her presence; to be more witty, more eloquent, more romantic, more full of wonderful tales than he ever yet had been. The cunning Don had found himself foiled in his first tactic, and he was now trying another, and a far more formidable one. In the first place, Rose deserved a very severe punishment, for having dared to refuse the love of a Spanish nobleman, and what greater punish-

ment could he inflict than withdrawing the honour of his attentions, and the sunshine of his smiles? There was conceit enough in that notion, but there was cunning too; for none knew better than the Spaniard that women, like the world, are pretty sure to value a man (especially if there be any real worth in him) at his own price, and that the more he demands for himself, the more they will give for him.

And now he would put a high price on himself, and pique her pride, as she was too much accustomed to worship, to be wouly flattering it. He might have done that by paying attention to some one else, but he was too wise to employ so coarse a method, which might raise indignation, of disgust, or despair in Rose's heart, but would have never brought her to his feet—as it will never bring any woman worth bringing. So he quietly and unobtrusively showed her that he could do without her, and she, poor fool, as she was meant to do, began forthwith to ask herself—why? What was the hidden treasure, what was the reserve force, which made him independent of her, while she could not say that she was independent of him? Had he a secret? how pleasant to know it! Some huge ambition? how pleasant to share in it! Some mysterious knowledge? how pleasant to learn it! Some capacity of love beyond the common? how delicious to have it all for her own! He must be greater, wiser, richer-hearted than she was, as well as better-born. Ah, if his wealth would but supply her poverty! And so, step by step, she was being led to sue in formal *supplicas* to the very man whom she had spurned when he sued in like form to her. That temptation of having some mysterious private treasure, of being the priestess of some hidden sanctuary, and being able to thank Heaven that she was not as other women are, was becoming fast too much for Rose, as it is too much for most. For none knew better than the Spaniard how much more fond women are, by the very law of their sex, of worshipping than of being worshipped, and of obeying than of being obeyed, how their coyness, often their scorn, is but a mask to hide their consciousness of weakness; and a mask, too, of which they themselves will often be the first to tire.

And Rose was utterly tired of that same mask as she sat at table at Annery that day, and Don Guzman saw it in her uneasy and downcast looks, and thinking (eminent coxcomb) that she must, she by now sufficiently punished, stole a glance at her now and then, and was not ashamed when he saw that she dropped her eyes when they met his, because he saw her silence and abstraction increase, and something like a blush steal into her cheeks. So he pretended to be as much downcast and abstracted as she was, and went on with his glances, till he once found her, poor thing, looking at him to see if he was looking at her, and then he knew his prey was safe, and asked her, with his eyes, 'Do you forgive me?' and saw her stop dead in her talk to her next neighbour, and falter, and drop her eyes, and

raise them again after a minute in search of him, that he might repeat the pleasant question And then what could she do but answer with all her face and every bend of her pretty neck, 'And do you forgive me in turn?'

Whereon Don Guzman broke out jubilant like nightingale on bough, with story and jest and repartee, and became forthwith the soul of the whole company, and the most charming of all cavaliers. And poor Rose knew that she was the cause of his sudden change of mood and blamed herself for what she had done, and shuddered and blushed at her own delight, and longed that the feast was over, that she might hurry home and hide herself alone with sweet fancies about a love the reality of which she felt she dared not face.

It was a beautiful sight, the great terrace at Annery that afternoon, with the smart dames in their gaily dresses parading up and down in twos and threes before this stately house, or looking down upon the park with the old oaks, and the deer, and the broad landlocked river spread out like a lake beneath, all bright in the glare of the midsummer sun, or listening obsequiously to the two great ladies who did the honours, Mrs. St. Leger the hostess, and her sister-in-law, fair Lady Grenville. All chatted, and laughed, and eyed each other's dresses, and gossiped about each other's husbands and servants, only Rose Salterne kept apart, and longed to get into a corner and laugh or cry, she knew not which.

'Our pretty Rose seems sad,' said Lady Grenville, coming up to her. 'Cheer up, child! we want you to come and sing to us.'

Rose answered she knew not what, and obeyed mechanically.

She took the lute, and sat down on a bench beneath the house, while the rest grouped themselves round her.

'What shall I sing?'

'Let us have your old song, "Earl Haldan's Daughter".'

Rose shrank from it. It was a loud and dashing ballad, which chimed in but little with her thoughts, and Frank had praised it too, in happier days long since gone by. She thought of him, and of others, and of her pride and carelessness, and the song seemed ominous to her and yet for that very reason she dared not refuse to sing it, for fear of suspicion where no one suspected, and so she began perforce—

1

'It was Earl Haldan's daughter,
She look'd across the sea,
She look'd across the water,
And long and loud laugh'd she,
'The locks of six princesses
Must be my marriage-dowry,
So hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat!
Who comes a wooing me?'

2

'It was Earl Haldan's daughter,
She walk'd along the sand,
When she was aware of a knight so fair,
Come sailing to the land.'

His sails were all of velvet,
His mast of beaten gold,
And "hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat,
Who saileth here so bold?"

3

'The locks of six princesses
I won beyond the sea,
I shore their golden tresses,
To fringe a cloak for thee
One handkerchief is wanting,
That one of all the tale,
So hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat!
Hurl up thy velvet sail!'

4

'He leapt into the water,
That rover young and bold,
He gript Earl Haldan's daughter,
He shore her locks of gold,
'Go weep, go weep, you sad maiden,
The tale is full of day,
Now hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat!
Hail Westward ho, and away!

As she ceased, a measured voice, with a foreign accent, thrilled through her.

'In the East, they say the nightingale sings to the rose, Devon, more happy, has nightingale and rose in one.'

'We have no nightingales in Devon, Don Guzman,' said Lady Grenville, 'but our little forest thrushes sing, as you hear, sweetly enough to content any ear. But what brings you away from the gentlemen so early?'

'These letters,' said he, 'which have just been put into my hand, and as they call me home to Spain, I was loth to lose a moment of that delightful company from which I must part so soon.'

'To Spain?' asked half a dozen voices for the Don was a general favourite.

'Yes, and thence to the Indies. My ransom has arrived, and with it the promise of an office. I am to be Governor of La Guayra in Caraccas. Congratulate me on my promotion.'

A mist was over Rose's eyes. The Spaniard's voice was hard and sharp. Did he care for her after all? And if he did, was it nevertheless hopeless? How her cheeks glowed! Everybody must see it! Anything to turn away their attention from her, and in that nervous haste which makes people speak, and speak foolishly too, just because they ought to be silent, she asked—

'And where is La Guayra?'

'Half round the world, on the coast of the Spanish Main. The loveliest place on earth, and the loveliest governor's house, in a forest of palms at the foot of a mountain eight thousand feet high. I shall only want a wife there to be in paradise.'

'I don't doubt that you may persuade some fair lady of Seville to accompany you thither,' said Lady Grenville.

'Thanks, gracious Madam, but the truth is, that since I have had the bliss of knowing English ladies, I have begun to think that they are the only ones on earth worth wooing.'

'A thousand thanks for the compliment, but I fear none of our free English maidens would like to submit to the guardianship of a duenna

Eh, Rose! how should you like to be kept under lock and key all day by an ugly old woman with a horn on her forehead!

Poor Rose turned so scarlet that Lady Grenville knew her secret on the spot, and would have tried to turn the conversation but before she could speak, some Englishman's wife blundered out a common-place about the jealousy of Spanish husbands, and another, to make matters better, giggled out something more true than delicate about West Indian masters and fair slaves.

'Ladies,' said Don Guzman, reddening, 'believe me that these are but the calumnies of ignorance. If we be more jealous than other nations, it is because we love more passionately. If some of us abroad are quondam, it is because they, poor men, have no helpmate, which, like the ancient, keeps us in a state of pure. I could tell you stories, ladies, of the constancy and devotion of Spanish husbands, even in the Indies, as strange as ever romance invented.'

'Can you? Then we challenge you to give us one at least.'

'I fear it would be too long, Madam.'

'The longer the more pleasant, Señor. How can we spend an hour better this afternoon, while the gentlemen within are amusing their wives?'

Story-telling, in those old times, when books (and authors also, lucky for the public) were rarer than now, was a common amusement, and as the Spaniards' accomplishments in that line were well known, all the ladies crowded round him, the servants brought chairs and benches, and Don Guzman, taking his seat in the midst, with a proud humility, at Lady Grenville's feet, began—

'Your perfections, fair and illustrious ladies, must doubtless have heard, ere now, how Sebastian Cabota, some forty five years ago, sailed forth with a commission from my late master, the Emperor Charles the Fifth, to discover the golden lands of Tartary, Oplur, and Cipango, but being in want of provisions, stopped short at the mouth of that mighty South American river to which he gave the name of Rio de la Plata, and sailing up it, discovered the fair land of Paraguay. But you may not have heard how, on the bank of that river, at the mouth of the Rio Teneiro, he built a fort which we still call Cabot's Tower, nor have you, perhaps, heard of the strange tale which will ever make the tower a sacred spot to all true lovers.'

'For when he returned to Spain the year after,

he left in his tower a garrison of a hundred and twenty men, under the command of Nuño de Lara, Ruiz Moschera, and Sebastian da Hurtado, old friends and fellow-soldiers of my invincible grandfather Don Fernando de Soto, and with them a jewel, than which Spain never possessed one more precious, Lucia Miranda, the wife of Hurtado, who, famed in the Court of the Emperor no less for her wisdom and modesty than for her unrivalled beauty, had thrown up all the pomp and ambition of a palace, to marry a poor adventurer, and to encounter with him

the hardships of a voyage round the world Mangora, the Cacique of the neighbouring Timbuez Indians (with whom Lara had contrived to establish a friendship), cast his eyes on this fair creature, and no sooner saw than he coveted, no sooner coveted than he plotted, with the devilish subtlety of a savage, to seize by force what he knew he could never gain by right. She soon found out his passion (she was wise enough—what every woman is not—to know when she is loved), and telling her husband, kept as much as she could out of her new lover's sight, while the savage pressed Hurtado to come and visit him, and to bring his lady with him. Hurtado, suspecting the snare, and yet fearing to offend the Cacique, excused himself confidently on the score of his soldier's duty, and the savage, with desire and disappointment, began plotting against Hurtado's life.

'So went on several weeks, till food grew scarce, and Don Hurtado, and Don Ruiz Moschera, with fifty soldiers, were sent up the river on a foraging party. Mangora saw his opportunity, and kept at it forthwith.

'The tower, ladies, as I have heard from those who have seen it, stands on a knoll at the meeting of the two rivers, while on the land side stretches a dreary marsh, covered with tall grass and bushes, a fit place for the ambuscade of four thousand Indians, who Mangora, with devilish cunning, placed around the tower, while he himself went boldly up to it, followed by thirty men, laden with grain, fruit, game, and all the delicacies which his forests could afford.

'There, with a smiling face, he told the men suspecting Lara his sorrow for the Spaniards' want of food, besought him to accept the provision he had brought, and was, as he had expected, invited by Lara to come in and taste the wines of Spain.

'In went he and his thirty fellow-bandits, and the feast continued, with songs and libations, far into the night, while Mangora often looked round, and at last boldly asked for the fair Miranda—but she had shut herself into her lodging, pleading illness.

'A plea, fair ladies, which little availed that hapless dame, for no sooner had the Spaniards retired to rest, leaving (by I know not what madness) Mangora and his Indians within, than they were awakened by the cry of fire, the explosion of their magazine, and the upward rush of the four thousand from the marsh outside.'

'Why pain your gentle ears with details of slaughter? A few fearful minutes sufficed to exterminate my bewildered and unarmed countrymen, to bind the only survivors, Miranda (innocent cause of the whole tragedy) and four other women with their infants, and to lead them away in triumph across the forest towards the Indian town.

'Stunned by the suddenness of the evils which had passed, and still more by the thought of those worse which were to come (as she too well foresaw), Miranda travelled all night through

the forest, and was brought in triumph at day-dawn before the Indian king to receive her doom. Judge of her astonishment, when, on looking up, she saw that he was not Mangora.

'A ray of hope flashed across her, and she asked where he was.

'He was slain last night," said the king, "and I, his brother Siripa, am now Cacique of the Timbora."

'It was true, Lara, maddened with drink, rage, and wounds, had caught up his sword, rushed into the thick of the fight, singled out the traitor, and slain him on the spot, and then, forgetting safety in revenge, had continued to plunge his sword into the corpse, heedless of the blows of the savages, till he fell pierced with a hundred wounds.

'A ray of hope, as I said, flashed across the wretched Miranda for a moment, but the next she found that she had been freed from one bandit only to be delivered to another.

"Yes," said the new king in broken Spanish, "my brother played a bold stake, and lost it, but it was well worth the risk, and he showed his wisdom thereby. You cannot be his queen now; you must content yourself with being mine."

'Miranda, desperate, answered him with every fierce taunt which she could invent against his treachery and his crime, and asked him, how he came to dream that the wife of a Christian Spaniard would condescend to become the mistress of a heathen savage, hoping, unhappy lady, to exasperate him into killing her on the spot. But in vain, she only prolonged thereby her own misery. For, whether it was, indeed, that the novel sight of divine virtue and beauty awed (as it may have awed me ere now), where it had just before maddened, or whether some dream crossed the savage (as it may have crossed me ere now), that he could make the wisdom of a mortal angel help his ambition, as well as her beauty his happiness; or whether (which I will never believe of one of those dark children of the devil, though I can boldly assert of myself) some spark of boldness within him made him too proud to take by force what he could not win by persuasion, certain it is, as the Indians themselves confessed afterwards, that the savage only answered her by smiles, and bidding his men unbind her, told her that she was no slave of his, and that it only lay with her to become the sovereign of him and all his vassals, assigned her a hut to herself, loaded her with savage ornaments, and for several weeks treated her with no less courtesy (so miraculous is the power of love) than if he had been a cavalier of Castile.

'Three months and more, ladies, as I have heard, passed in this misery, and every day Miranda grew more desperate of all deliverance, and ~~now~~ staring her in the face, nearer and nearer, some hideous and shameful end, when one day, going down with the wives of the Cacique to draw water in the river, she saw on the opposite bank a white man in a tattered Spanish dress, with a drawn sword in his hand,

who had no sooner espied her, than shrieking her name, he plunged into the stream, swam across, landed at her feet, and clasped her in his arms. It was no other, ladies, incredible as it may seem, than Don Sebastian himself, who had returned with Ruiz Mosquera to the tower, and found it only a charred and bloodstained heap of ruins.

'He guessed, as by inspiration, what had passed, and whither his lady was gone; and without a thought of danger, like a true Spanish gentleman and a true Spanish lover, started off alone into the forest, and guided only by the inspiration of his own loyal heart, found again his treasure, and found it still unstained and his own.

'Who can describe the joy, and who again the terror, of their meeting? The Indian women had fled in fear, and for the short ten minutes that the lovers were left together, life, to be sure, was one long kiss. But what to do they knew not. To go inland was to rush into the enemy's arms. He would have swum with her across the river, and attempted it, but his strength, worn out with hunger and travel, failed him; he drew her with difficulty on shore again, and sat down by her to await their doom with prayer, the first and last resource of virtuous ladies, as weapons are of cavaliers.

'Alas for them! May no true lovers ever have to weep over joys so soon lost, after having been so hardly gained! For, in a quarter of an hour was passed, the Indian women, who had fled at his approach, returned with all the warriors of the tribe. Don Sebastian, desperate, would fain have slain his wife and himself on the spot, but his hand sank again—and whose would not but an Indian's?—as he raised it against that fair and faithful breast, in a few minutes he was surrounded, seized from behind, disarmed, and carried in triumph into the village. And if you cannot feel for him in that misery, fair ladies, who have known no sorrow, yet I, a prisoner, can.'

Don Guzman paused a moment, as if overcome by emotion, and I will not say that, as he paused, he did not look to see if Rosa Salterne's eyes were on him, as indeed they were.

'Yes, I can feel with him, I can estimate, better than you, ladies, the greatness of that love which could submit to captivity, to the loss of his sword, to the loss of that honour, which, next to God and his mother, is the true Spaniard's deity. There are those who have suffered that shame at the hands of valiant gentlemen' (and again Don Guzman looked up at Rosa), 'and yet would have sooner died a thousand deaths, but he dared to endure it from the hands of villains, savages, heathens; for he was a true Spaniard, and therefore a true lover: but I will go on with my tale.

'This wretched pair, then, as I have been told by Ruiz Mosquera himself, stood together before the Cacique. He, like a true child of the devil, comprehending in a moment who Don Sebastian was, laughed with delight at seeing his rival in

his power, and bade bind him at once to a tree, and shoot him to death with arrows.

But the poor Miranda sprang forward, and throw herself at his feet, and with piteous entreaties besought for mercy from him who knew no mercy.

'And yet love and the sight of her beauty, and the terrible eloquence of her words, while she invoked on his head the just vengeance of Heaven, wrought even on his heart nevertheless the pleasure of seeing her, who had so long scorned him, a suppliant at his feet, was too delicate to be speedily foregone, and not till she was all but blind with tears, and dumb with agony of pleading, did he make answer, that if she would consent to become his wife, her husband's life should be spared. She, in her haste and madness, sobbed out desperately I know not what consent. Don Sebastian, who understood, if not the language, still the meaning (so had love quickened his understanding), shrieked to her not to lose her precious soul for the sake of his worthless body, that death was nothing compared to the horror of that shrine, and such other words as became a noble and valiant gentleman. She, shuddering now at her own frailty, would have recalled her promise, but Sirna kept her to it, vowing, if she disappointed him again, such a death to her husband as made his blood run cold to her of, and the wretched woman could only escape for the present by some story, that it was not the custom of her race to celebrate nuptials till a month after the betrothment, that the anger of Heaven would be on her, unless she first performed in solitude certain religious rites, and lastly, that if he dared to lay hands on her husband, she would die so resolutely, that every drop of water should be deep enough to drown her, every thorn sharp enough to stab her to the heart. Till feeling less by demanding too much he should lose all, and awed too, as he had been at first, by a voice and looks which seemed to be, in comparison with his own, divine, Sirna bade her go back to her hut, promising her husband life, but promising too, that if he ever found the two speaking together, even for a moment, he would pour out on them both all the cruelty of those tortures in which the devil, their father, has so perfectly instructed the Indians.

'So Don Sebastian, being stripped of his garments and painted after the Indian fashion, was set to all mean and toilsome work, and the buffets and insults of the whole village. And thus, Luchas, he endured without a murmur, ay, took delight in enduring it, as he would have endured things worse a thousand times, only for the sake, like a true lover as he was, of being near the goddess whom he worshipped, and of seeing her now and then afar off, happy enough to be repaid even by that for all indignities.

'And yet, you who have loved may well guess, as I can, that ere a week had passed, Don Sebastian and the Lady Miranda had found means, in spite of all spiteful eyes, to speak to

each other once and again, and to assure each other of their love, even to talk of escape, before the month's grace should be expired. And Miranda, whose heart was full of courage as long as she felt her husband near her, went so far as to plan a means of escape which seemed possible and hopeful.

'For the youngest wife of the Cacique, who, till Miranda's coming, had been his favourite, often talked with the captive, insulting and tormenting her in her spite and jealousy, and receiving in return only gentle and conciliatory words. And one day when the woman had been threatening to kill her, Miranda took courage to say, "Do you fancy that I shall not be as glad to be rid of your husband, as you to be rid of me? Why kill me needlessly, when all that you require is to get me forth of the place? Out of sight, out of mind. When I am gone, your husband will soon forget me, and you will be his favourite as before." Soon seeing that the girl was inclined to listen, she went on to tell her of her love to Don Sebastian, entreating and adorning her, by the love which she bore the Cacique, to pity and help her so won upon the girl, that she consented to be privy to Miranda's escape, and even offered to give her an opportunity of speaking to her husband about it, and at last was so won over by Miranda, that she consented to keep all intruders out of the way, while Don Sebastian that very night visited Miranda in her hut.

'The hapless husband, thirsting for his love, was in that hut, be sure, the moment that kind darkness covered his steps -- and what cheer these two made of each other, when they once found themselves together, lovers must fancy for themselves. But so it was, that after many a leave-taking, there was no departure, and when the night was well-nigh past, Sebastian and Miranda were still talking together, as if they had never met before, and would never meet again.

'But it befell, Luchas (would that I was not speaking truth, but inventing, that I might have invented something merrier for your ears), it befell that very night, that the young wife of the Cacique, whose heart was lifted up with the thought that her rival was now at last disposed of, tried all her wiles to win back her faithless husband but in vain. He only answered her carresses by indifference, then by contempt, then insults, then blows (for, with the Indians woman is always a slave, or rather a beast or burden), and went on to draw such cruel comparisons between her dark skin and the glorious fairness of the Spanish lady, that the wretched girl, beside herself with rage, burst out at last with her own secret. "Fool that you are to madden yourself about a stranger who one hair of her Spanish husband's head slip? than your whole body! Much does a bride care for you! She was

her husband's arm's length -- all his old passion to what with a lover, -- and that lover a Spaniard -- he would cut his throat for him, if steel could

hate of the guiltless lady boiling over once for all, bade him, if he doubted her, go see for himself.

'What use of many words? They were taken Love, of rather lust, repelled, turned in a moment into devilish hate, and the Carrique, summoning his Indians, bade them bind the wretched Don Sebastian to a tree, and there inflicted on him the lingering death to which he had at first been doomed. For Miranda he had more exquisite cruelty in store. And shall I tell it? Yes, ladies, for the honour of love and of Spain, and for a justification of those cruelties against the Indians which are so falsely imputed to our most Christian nation, it shall be told: he delivered the wretched lady over to the tender mercies of his wives, and what they were is neither fit for me to tell, nor you to hear.

The two wretched lovers cast themselves upon each other's neck, drank each other's salt tears with the last kisses, accused themselves as the cause of each other's death, and then, rising above fear and grief, broke out into triumph at thus dying for and with each other, and proclaiming themselves the martyrs of love, commended their souls to God, and then stepped joyfully and proudly to their doom.

'And what was that?' asked half a dozen trembling voices.

'Don Sebastian, as I have said, was shot to death with arrows; but as for the lady Miranda, the wretches themselves confessed afterwards, when they received due vengeance for their crimes (as they did receive it), that after all shameful and horrible indignities, she was bound to a tree, and there burned slowly in her husband's sight, stinging her cheeks lest they should wring his heart by one additional pang, and never taking her eyes, to the last, off that beloved face. And so died (but not unavenged) Sebastian de Hurtado and Lucia Miranda,—a Spanish husband and a Spanish wife.'

The Don paused, and the ladies were silent awhile. For, indeed, there was many a gentle tear to be dried, but at last Mrs. St. Leger spoke, half, it seemed, to turn off the too painful impression of the over-true tale, the onlines whereof may be still read in old *Chateaufort*.

'You have told a sad and a noble tale, sir, and told it well; but, though your story was to set forth a perfect husband, it has ended rather by setting forth a perfect wife.'

'And if I have forgotten, Madam, in praising her to praise him also, have I not done that which would have best pleased his hermit and his valiant spirit? He, he wife, would have forgotten his own virtue in the light of hers, and he would have wished me, I doubt not, to Miranda also. And beside, Madam, where and how the theme, who has tuned her heart to nearer, thought upon their slaves?' And the one day, going down deliberate and highly-Carrique to draw water in —

the opposite bank a white man, as far as Spanish dress, with a drawn sword in his

but it was hardly courtierlike of him to find us so sad an entertainment, upon a merry evening.'

'Yes,' said another, 'we must ask him for no more stories.'

'Oh songs either,' said a third. 'I fear he knows none but about forsaken maidens and despairing lovers.'

'I know nothing at all about forsaken ladies, Madam, because ladies are never forsaken in Spain.'

'Nor about lovers despairing there, I suppose.'

'That good opinion of ourselves, Madam, with which you English are pleased to twit us now and then, always prevents so sad a state of mind. For myself, I have had little to do with love, but I have had still less to do with despair, and intend, by help of Heaven, to have less.'

'You are valiant, sir.'

'You would not have me a coward, Madam?' and so forth.

Now all this time Don Guzman had been talking at Rose Salterne, and giving her the very slightest hint, every now and then, that he was talking at her, till the poor girl's face was almost crimson with pleasure, and she gave herself up to the spell. He loved her still, perhaps he knew that she loved him, he must know some day. She felt now that there was no escape, she was almost glad to think that there was none.

The dark, handsome, stately face, the melodious voice, with its rich Spanish accent, the quiet grace of the gestures, the wild pathos of the story, even the measured and inflated style, as if one speaking of another and another world, the chivalrous respect and admiration for woman, and for faithfulness to woman—what a man he was! If he had been pleasant heretofore, he was now enchanting. All the ladies round felt that, she could see, as much as she herself did, no, not quite as much, she hoped. She surely understood him, and felt for his loneliness more than any of them. Had she not, even feeling for it through long and sad months? But it was she whom he was thinking of, she whom he was speaking to, all along. Oh, why had the tale ended so soon? She would gladly have sat and wiped her eyes out till midnight over one melodious misery after another, but she was quite wise enough to keep her secret to herself, and sat behind the rest, with greedy eyes and demure lips, full of strange and new happiness—or misery, she knew not which to call it.

In the meanwhile, as it was ordained, Cary could see and hear through the window of the hall a good deal of what was going on.

'How that Spanish crocodile ogles the Rose!' whispered he to young St. Leger.

'What wonder? He is not the first by many a one.'

'Ay—but—By heaven, she is making ade- shots at him with those languishing eyes of hers, the little baggage!'

'What wonder? He is not the first, say I, and won't be the last. Pass the wine, man.'

'I have had enough, between sack and singing, my head is as mazed as a dizzy sheep. Let me slip out.'

'Not yet, man, remember you are bound for one song more.'

So Cary, against his will, sat and sang another song, and in the meanwhile the party had broken up, and wandered away by twos and threes, among trim gardens and pleasaunces, and clipped yew-walks—

Where west-winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys sing
Nard and cassia a balmy smells—

admiring the beauty of that stately place, long since passed into other hands, and fallen to decay, but then (if old Prince speaks true) one of the noblest mansions of the West.

At last Cary got away and out, sober, but just enough flushed with wine to be ready for any quarrel, and luckily for him, had not gone twenty yards along the great terrace before he met Lady Grenville.

'Has your Ladyship seen Don Guzman?'

'Yes—why, where is he? He was with me not ten minutes ago. You know he is going back to Spain.'

'Going? Has his ransom come?'

'Yes, and with it a governorship in the Indies.'

'Governorship! Much good may it do the governed.'

'Why not, thou? He is surely a most gallant gentleman.'

'Gallant enough—yes,' said Cary carelessly.

'I must find him, and congratulate him on his honours.'

'I will help you to find him,' said Lady Grenville, whose woman's eye and ear had already suspected something. 'Escort me, sir.'

'It is but too great an honour to squire the Queen of Bideford,' said Cary, offering his hand.

'If I am your Queen, sir, I must be obeyed,' answered she in a meaning tone. Cary took the hint, and went on chattering cheerfully enough.

But Don Guzman was not to be found in garden or in pleasaunce.

'Perhaps,' at last said a burgler's wife, with a toss of her head, 'your Ladyship may meet with him at Hankford's oak.'

'At Hankford's oak! what should take him there?'

'Pleasant company, I reckon' (with another toss) 'I heard him and Mistress Sulterne talking about the oak just now.'

Cary turned pale and drew in his breath.

'Very likely,' said Lady Grenville quietly.

'Will you walk with me so far, Mr Cary?'

'To the world's end, if your Ladyship condescends so far.' And off they went, Lady Grenville wishing that they were going anywhere else, but afraid to let Cary go alone, and suspecting, too, that some one or other ought to go.

So they went down past the herds of deer, by a trim-kept path into the lonely dell where stood

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the fatal oak, and, as they went, Lady Grenville, to avoid more unpleasant talk, poured into Cary's unheeding ears the story (which he probably had heard fifty times before) how old Chief-Justice Hankford (whom some contradictory myths make the man who committed Prince Henry to prison for striking him on the bench), weary of life and sickened at the horrors and desolations of the Wars of the Roses, went down to his house at Annery there, and bade his keeper shoot any man who, passing through the deer-park at night, should refuse to stand when challenged, and then going down into that glen himself, and hiding himself beneath that oak, met willingly by his keeper's hand the death which his own dared not inflict. But ere the story was half done, Cary grasped Lady Grenville's hand so tightly that she gave a little shriek of pain.

'There they are!' whispered he, heedless of her, and pointed to the oak, where, half hidden by the tall fern, stood Rose and the Spaniard.

Her head was on his bosom. She seemed sobbing, trembling, he talking earnestly and passionately, but Lady Grenville's little shriek made them both look up. To turn and try to escape was to confess all, and the two, collecting themselves instantly, walked toward her, Rose wishing herself fathoms deep beneath the earth.

'Mind, sir,' whispered Lady Grenville as they came up, 'you have seen nothing.'

'Marian?'

'If you are not on my ground, you are on my brother's. Obey me!'

Cary bit his lip, and bowed courteously to the Duke.

'I have to congratulate you I hear, Señor, on your approaching departure.'

'I kiss your hands, Señor, in return, but I question whether it be a matter of congratulation, considering all that I leave behind.'

'So do I,' answered Cary bluntly enough, and the four walked back to the house, Lady Grenville taking every thing for granted with the most charming good-humour, and chatting to her three silent companions till they gained the terrace once more, and found four or five of the gentlemen, with Sir Richard at their head, proceeding to the bowling-green.

Lady Grenville, in an agony of fear about the quarrel which she knew must come, would have gladly whispered five words to her husband, but she dared not do it before the Spaniard, and dreaded, too, a faint or a scream from the Rose, whose father was of the party. So she walked on with her fair prisoner, commanding Cary to escort them in, and the Spaniard to go to the bowling-green.

Cary obeyed, but he gave her the slip the moment she was made the door, and then darted off to the gentlemen.

His heart was on fire. All his old passion for the Rose had flashed up again at the sight of her with a lover;—and that lover a Spaniard! He would cut his throat for him, if steel could

H

do it! Only he recollected that Salterne was there, and shrink from exposing Rose, and shrink, too, as every gentleman should, from making a public quarrel in another man's house. Never mind. Where there was a will there was a way. He could get him into a corner, and quarrel with him privately about the cut of his beard, or the colour of his ribbon. So in he went, and, luckily or unluckily, found standing together apart from the rest, Sir Richard, the Don, and young St. Leger.

'Well, Don Guzman, you have given us wine-bubblers the slip this afternoon. I hope you have been well employed in the meanwhile.'

'Delightfully to myself, Señor,' said the Don, who, enraged at being interrupted, if not discovered, was as ready to fight as Cary, but disliked, of course, an explosion as much as he did, 'and to others, I doubt not.'

'So the ladies say,' quoth St. Leger. 'He has been making them all cry with one of his stories, and giving us meanwhile of the pleasure we had hoped for from some of his Spanish songs.'

'The devil take Spanish songs!' said Cary in a low voice, but loud enough for the Spaniard. Don Guzman clapt his hand on his sword-hilt instantly.

'Lieutenant Cary,' said Sir Richard in a stern voice, 'the wine has surely made you forget yourself!'

'As sober as yourself, most worshipful knight, but if you want a Spanish song, here's one, and a very scurvy one it is, like its subject—'

'Don Desperado
Walked on the Prado,
And there he met his enemy
He pulled out a knife, a,
And let out his life, a,
And fled for his own across the sea.'

And he bowed low to the Spaniard.

The insult was too gross to require any spluttering.

'Señor Cary, we meet!'

'I thank your quick apprehension, Don Guzman. Maria Magdalena Soto mayor de Soto. When, where, and with what weapons!'

'For God's sake, gentlemen! Nephew Arthur, Cary is your guest, do you know the meaning of this?'

St. Leger was silent. Cary answered for him.

'An old Irish quarrel, I assure you, sir. A matter of years' standing. In unlacing the Señor's helmet, the evening that he was taken prisoner, I was unlucky enough to twitch his mustache. You recollect the fact, of course, Señor?'

'Perfectly,' said the Spaniard, and then, half-amused and half-pleased, in spite of his bitter wrath, at Cary's quickness and delicacy in shielding Rose, he bowed, and—

'And it gives me much pleasure to find that he whom I trust to have the pleasure of killing to-morrow morning is a gentleman whose nice sense of honour renders him thoroughly worthy of the sword of a De Soto.'

Cary bowed in return, while Sir Richard, who saw plainly enough that the excuse was forged, shrugged his shoulders.

'What weapons, Señor?' asked Will again.

'I should have preferred a horse and pistols,' said Don Guzman after a moment, half to himself, and in Spanish, 'they make surer work of it than bodkins, but' (with a sigh and one of his smiles) 'beggars must not be choosers.'

'The best horse in my stable is at your service, Señor,' said Sir Richard Grenville instantly.

'And in mine also, Señor,' said Cary, 'and I shall be happy to allow you a week to train him, if he does not answer at first to a Spanish hand.'

'Don forget in your courtesy, gentle sir, that the insult being with me, the time goes with me also. We wipe it off to-morrow morning with simple rapiers and daggers. Who is your second?'

'My Arthur St. Leger here, Señor, who is yours?'

The Spaniard felt himself alone in the world for one moment, and then answered with another of his smiles.

'Your nation possesses the soul of honour. He who fights an Englishman needs no second.'

'And he who fights among Englishmen will always find one,' said Sir Richard. 'I am the fittest second for my guest.'

'You only add one more obligation, illustrious cavalier, to a two-years' penitentiality of favours, which I shall never be able to repay.'

'But, Nephew Arthur,' said Grenville, 'you cannot surely be second against your father's guest, and your own uncle.'

'I cannot help it, sir, I am bound by an oath, as Will can tell you. I suppose you won't think it necessary to let me bleed?'

'You half-deserve it, sirrah!' said Sir Richard, who was very angry, but the Don interrupted quickly.

'Heaven forbid, Señores! We are no French duellists, who are mad enough to make four or six lives answer for the sins of two. This gentleman and I have quarrelled enough between us, I suspect, to make a right bloody encounter.'

'The dependence is good enough, sir,' said Cary, loking his sinful lips at the thought. 'Very well. Rapiers and stuns at three to-morrow morning—Is that the bill of fare? Ask Sir Richard where, Atty? It is against punishment now for me to speak to him till after I am killed.'

'On the sands opposite. The tide will be out at three. And now, gallant gentlemen, let us join the bowlers.'

And so they went back and spent a merry evening, all except poor Rose, who, ere she went back, had poured all her sorrows into Lady Grenville's ear. For the kind woman, knowing that she was motherless and guileless, carried her off into Mrs. St. Leger's chamber, and there entreated her to tell the truth, and heaped her with pity, but with no comfort. For indeed, what comfort was there to give?

Three o'clock, upon a still pure bright mid-summer morning. A broad and yellow sheet of ribbed tide-sands, through which the shallow river wanders from one hill-foot to the other, whispering round dark knolls of rock, and under low tree-fringed cliffs, and banks of golden broom. A mile below, the long bridge and the white walled town, like sleeping pearls in the soft haze, beneath a cloudless vault of blue. The white glare of dawn, which last night hung high in the north-west, has travelled now to the north-east, and above the wooded wall of the hills the sky is flushing with rose and amber.

A long line of gulls goes wailing up inland, the rocks from which they come cawing and sporting round the corner at Landcross, while high above them four or five herons flap solemnly along to find their breakfast on the shallows. The pheasants and partridges are clucking merrily in the long wet grass, every copse and hedgerow rings with the voice of birds—but the lark, who has been singing since midnight in the 'blank height of the dark,' suddenly hushes his carol and drops headlong among the corn, as a broad-winged buzzard swings from some wooded peak into the abyss of the valley, and hangs high-poised above the heavenward songster. The air is full of perfume, sweet clover, new-mown hay, the fragrant breath of kine, the dainty scent of seaweed wreaths and fresh wet sand. 'Glorious day, glorious place, 'bridal of earth and sky,' decked well with bridal garlands, bridal perfumes, bridal songs.—What do those four clonked figures there by the river bank, a dark spot on the fair face of the summer morn?

Yet one is as cheerful as if he too, like all nature round him, were going to a wedding, and that is Will Cary. He has been bathing down below to cool his brain and steady his hand, and he intends to stop Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto's wooing for ever and a day. The Spaniard is in a very different mood, here and he guards, he is pacing up and down the sand. He intends to kill Will Cary, but then? Will he be the nearer to Rose by doing so? Can he stay in Bideford? Will she go with him? Shall he stoop to stain his family by marrying a burgher's daughter? It is a confused, all but desperate business, and Don Guzman is certain but of one thing, that he is madly in love with this fair witch, and that if she refuse him, then, rather than see her accept another man, he would kill her with his own hands.

Sir Richard Grenville too is in no very pleasant humour, as St Leger soon discovers, when the two seconds begin whispering over their arrangements.

'We cannot have either of them killed, Arthur.'

'Mr. Cary swears he will kill the Spaniard, sir.'

'He shan't. The Spaniard is my guest. I

am answerable for him to Leigh, and for his ransom too. And how can Leigh accept the ransom if the man is not given up safe and sound? They won't pay for a dead carcass, boy. The man's life is worth two hundred pounds.'

'A very bad bargain, sir, for those who pay the said two hundred for the rascal, but what if he kills Cary.'

'Worse still. Cary must not be killed. I am very angry with him, but he is too good a lad to be lost, and his father would never forgive us. We must strike up their swords at the first rabbi.'

'It will make them very mad, sir.'

'Hang them! let them light us then, if they don't like our counsel. It must be, Arthur.'

'Be sure, sir,' said Arthur, 'that whatsoever you shall command I shall perform. It is only too great an honour to a young man as I am to find myself in the same duel with your worship, and to have the advantage of your wisdom and experience.'

Sir Richard smiles, and says—'Now, gentlemen! are you ready?'

The Spaniard pulls out a little crucifix, and kisses it devoutly, smutting on his breast, crosses himself two or three times, and says—'Most willingly, Señor.'

Cary kisses no crucifix, but says a prayer nevertheless.

Cloaks and doublets are tossed off, the men placed, the rapiers measured hilt and point, Sir Richard and St Leger place themselves right and left of the combatants, facing each other, the points of their drawn swords on the sand. Cary and the Spaniard stand for a moment quite upright, their sword-arms stretched straight before them, holding the long rapier horizontally, the left hand clutching the dagger close to their breasts. So they stand eye to eye, with clenched teeth and pale crushed lips, while men might count a score. St Leger can hear the beating of his own heart. Sir Richard is praying inwardly that no life may be lost. Suddenly there is a quick turn of Cary's wrist and a leap forward. The Spaniard's dagger flashes, and the rapier is turned aside. Cary springs six feet back as the Spaniard rushes on him in turn. Parry, thrust, parry—the steel rattles, the sparks fly, the men breathe fierce and loud, the devil's game is begun in earnest.

Five minutes have the two had instant fighting, short six inches off from three wild sinful hearts of theirs, and not a scratch has been given. Yes! the Spaniard's rapier passes under Cary's left arm, he bleeds.

'A hit! a hit! Strike up, Atty!' and the swords are struck up instantly.

Cary, nettled by the smart, tries to close with his foe, but the seconds cross their swords before him.

'It is enough, gentlemen. Don Guzman's honour is satisfied.'

But not my revenge, Señor, says the Spaniard, with a frown. This duel is a foul-

rance, on my part, and, I believe, on Mr. Cary's also.

'By heaven, it is I,' says Will, trying to push past. 'Let me go, Arthur St. Legu, one of us must down. Let me go, I say!'

'If you stir, Mr. Cary, you have to do with Richard Grenvile!' thunders the lion voice. 'I am angry enough with you for having brought on this duel at all. Don't provoke me still further, young hot-head!'

Cary stops sulkily.

'You do not know all, Sir Richard, or you would not speak in this way.'

'I do, sir, all and I shall have the honour of talking it over with Don Guzman myself.'

'Hey!' said the Spaniard. 'You came here as my second, Sir Richard, as I understood but not as my counsellor.'

'Arthur, take your man away! Cary! obey me as you would your father, sir! Can you not trust Richard Grenvile?'

'Come away, for God's sake!' says poor Arthur, dragging Cary's sword from him, 'Sir Richard must know best!'

So Cary is led off sulking, and Sir Richard turns to the Spaniard, —

'And now, Don Guzman, allow me, though much against my will, to speak to you as a friend to a friend. You will pardon me if I say that I cannot but have seen last night's devotion to —'

'You will be pleased, Señor, not to mention the name of any lady to whom I may have shown devotion. I am not accustomed to have my little affairs talked over by any unworldly counsellors.'

'Well, Señor, if you take offence, you take that which is not given. Only I warn you, with all apologies for any seeming forwardness, that the quest on which you seem to be is one on which you will not be allowed to proceed.'

'And who will stop me?' asked the Spaniard, with a fierce oath.

'You are not aware, illustrious Señor,' said Sir Richard, parrying the question, 'that our English lady look upon mixed marriages with full as much dislike as your own ecclesiastics.'

'Marriage, sir? Why gave you leave to mention that word to me?'

As Sir Richard's brow darkened, the Spaniard, in his insane pride, had forced upon the good knight a suspicion which was not really just.

'If it possible, then, Señor Don Guzman, that I am to have the shame of mentioning a baser word?'

'Mention what you will, sir. All words are the same to me; for, just or unjust, I shall answer them alike only by my sword.'

'You will do no such thing, sir. You forget that I am your host.'

'And do you suppose that you have therefore a right to insult me? Stand on your guard, sir!'

Grenvile answered by slapping his own rapier home into the sheath with a quiet smile.

'Señor Don Guzman must be well enough

aware of who Richard Grenvile is, to know that he may claim the right of refusing duel to any man, if he shall so think fit.'

'Sir!' cried the Spaniard with an oath, 'this is too much! Do you dare to hint that I am unworthy of your sword? Know, insolent Englishman, I am not merely a De Soto, — though that, by St. James, were enough for you or any man. I am a Sotomayor, a Mendosa, a Bovadilla, a Losada, a — sir! I have blood rival in my veins, and you dare to refuse my challenge?'

'Richard Grenvile can show quarterings, probably, against even Don Guzman Maria Magalena Sotomayor de Soto, or against (with no offence to the unquestioned nobility of your pedigree) the bluest blood of Spain. But he can show, moreover, thank God, a reputation which raises him as much above the imputation of cowardice, as it does above that of discourtesy. If you think fit, Señor, to forget what you have just, in very excusable anger, vented, and to return with me, you will find me still, as ever, your most faithful servant and host. If otherwise, you have only to name whither you wish your mails to be sent, and I shall, with unfeigned sorrow, obey your commands concerning them.'

The Spaniard bowed stiffly, answered, 'To the nearest tavern, Señor,' and then strode away. His baggage was sent rather. He took a boat down to Ajedrez that very afternoon, and vanished, none knew whither. A very courteous note to Lady Grenvile, enclosing the jewel which he had been used to wear round his neck, was the only memorial he left behind him — except, indeed, the scar on Cary's arm, and poor Rose's broken heart.

Now county towns are scandalous places at best, and though all parties tried to keep the duel secret, yet, of course, before noon all Bedford knew what had happened, and a great deal more, and what was even worse, Rose, in an agony of terror, had seen Sir Richard Grenvile enter her father's private room, and sit there closeted with him for an hour and more, and when he went, upstairs came old Salt-rue, with his stick in his hand, and after rating her soundly for far worse than a flirt, gave her (I am sorry to have to say it, but such was the mild fashion of paternal rule in those times, even over such daughters as Lady Jane Grey, if Roger Ascham is to be believed) such a beating that her poor sides were black and blue for many a day, and then putting her on a pillow behind him, carried her off twenty miles to her old prison at Stow Mill, commanding her aunt to tame down her saucy blood with bread of affliction and water of affliction. Which commands were willingly enough fulfilled by the old damo, who had always borne a grudge against Rose for being rich while she was poor and pretty while her daughter was plain, so that between flouts, and sneers, and watchings, and pretty open hints that she was a disgrace to her family, and no better than she should be,

the poor innocent child watered her couch with her tears for a fortnight or more, stretching out her hands to the wide Atlantic, and calling wildly to Don Guzman to return and take her where he would, and she would live for him and die for him, and perhaps she did not call in vain.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW 'GOLDEN HIND' CAME HOME AGAIN

'The spirits of your fathers
Shall start on every wave,
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And ocean was their grave.'

CAMPFIRE.

'So you see, my dear Mrs. Hawkins, having the silver, as your own eyes show you, beside the ores of lead, manganese, and copper, and above all this gossan (as the Cornish call it), which I suspect to be not merely the matrix of the ore, but also the very ground form and *materie prima* of all metals—you mark me?—If my recipes, which I had from Doctor Dee, succeed only half so well as I expect, then I refine out the Linn, the silver, lay it by, and transmute the remaining ores into Sol, gold. Whereupon Peru and Mexico become superfluous, and England the mistress of the globe. Strange, no doubt, distant, no doubt—but possible, my dear madam, possible!'

'And what good to you if it be, Mr. Gilbert? If you could find a philosopher's stone to turn sinners into saints, now—but nought save God's grace can do that—and that last seems oftentimes over long in coming.' And Mrs. Hawkins smiled.

'But indeed, my dear madam, conceive now.—The Oamb Martin mine thus becomes a gold mine, perhaps inexhaustible, yields me wherewithal to carry out my North-West patent, meanwhile, my brother Humphrey holds Newfoundland, and lands me fresh ships year by year (for the forests of pine are boundless) for my China voyage.'

'Sir Humphrey has better thoughts in his dear heart than gold, Mr. Adrian, a very close and cautious walker he has been these seven years. I wish my Captain John were so too.'

'And how do you know I have nought better in my mind's eye than gold? Or, indeed, what better could I have? Is not gold the Spaniard's strength—the very mainspring of Antichrist? By gold only, therefore, can we out-wrestle him. You shake your head—but say, dear madam (for gold England must have), which is better, to make gold bloodlessly at home, or take it bloodily abroad?'

O Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Gilbert! is it not written, that those who make haste to be rich, perforce themselves through with many sorrows? O Mr. Gilbert! God's blessing is not on it all.'

'Not on you, madam? Be sure that brave Captain John Hawkins's star told me a different tale, when I cast his nativity for him—Born under stormy planets, truly, but under right royal and fortunate ones.'

'Ah, Mr. Adrian! I am a simple body, and you a great philosopher—but I hold there is no star for a seaman like the star of Bethlehem, and that goes with "peace on earth and good-will to men," and not with such arms as that, Mr. Adrian. I can't abide to look upon them.'

And she pointed up to one of the bosses of the ribbed oak-roof, on which was emblazoned the fatal crest which Clarendieux Hervey had granted years before to her husband, the 'Duchess Moor proper, bound.'

'Ah, Mr. Gilbert! some first he went to Guinea after those poor negroes, little lightness has my heart known, and the very day that that crest was put up in our grand new house, as the parson read the first lesson, there was this text in it, Mr. Gilbert, "Woe to him that buildeth his house by iniquity, and his chambers by wrong. Shalt thou live because thou chorest thyself in cedar?" And it went into my ears like fire, Mr. Gilbert, and into my heart like lead, and when the parson went on, "Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice?" Then it was well with him, "I thought of good old Captain Will, and—I tell you Mr. Gilbert, those negroes are on my soul from morning until night! We are all mighty grand now, and money comes in fast—but the Lord will require the blood of them at our hands yet, He will!"'

'My dearest madam, who can prosper more than you? If your husband copied the Duke too closely once or twice in the matter of those negroes (which I do not deny), was he not punished at once when he lost ships, men, all but his, at St. Juan d'Iloa?'

'Ay, yes,' she said, 'and that did give me a bit of comfort, especially when the Queen—God save her tender heart—was so sharp with him for pity of the poor wretches—but it has not mended him. He is growing fast like the rest now, Mr. Gilbert, greedy to win, and niggardly to spend (God forgive him!), and always hetting and plotting for some new gain, and envying and grudging at Drake, and all who are deeper in the snare of prosperity than he is. Gold, gold, nothing but gold in every mouth—there it is! Ah! I mind when Plymouth was a quiet little God-fearing place as God could smile upon—but ever since my John, and Sir Francis, and poor Mr. Queham found out the way to the Indies, it's been a sad place. Not a sailor's wife but is crying "Give, give," like the daughters of the horse-leech, and every woman must drive her husband out across seas to bring her home money to squander on hoods and farthingales, and go madding with out stretched necks and wanton eyes; and they will soon learn to do worse than that for the sake of gain. But the Lord's hand will be against their tires and cringing-pans, their

infusers and farthingales, as it was against the Jews of old. Ah, dear me!

The two interlocutors in this dialogue were sitting in a low oak-panelled room in Plymouth town, handsomely enough furnished, adorned with carving and gilding and coats of arms, and noteworthy for many strange knickknacks, Spanish gold and silver vessels on the sideboard, strange birds and skins, and charts and rough drawings of coast which hung about the room, while over the fireplace, above the portrait of old Captain Will Hawkins, pet of Henry the Eighth, hung the Spanish ensign which Captain John had taken in fair fight at Rio de la Hacha fifteen years before, when, with two hundred men, he seized the town in despite of ten hundred Spanish soldiers, and watered his ship triumphantly at the enemy's wells.

The gentleman was a tall fair man, with a broad and lofty forehead, wrinkled with study, and eyes weakened by long poring over the crucible and the furnace.

The lady had once been comely enough, but she was aged and worn, as sailors' wives are apt to be, by many sorrows. Many a sad day had she had already; for although John Hawkins, port-admiral of Plymouth, and patriarch of British shipbuilders, was a faithful husband enough, and as ready to forgive as he was to quarrel, yet he was obstinate and ruthless, and in spite of his religiosity (for all men were religious then) was by no means a 'consistent walker'.

And sadder days were in store for her, poor soul. Nine years hence she would be asked to name her son's brave new ship, and would christen it the *Repentance*, giving no reason in her quiet steadfast way (so says her son Sir Richard) but that 'Repentance was the best ship in which we could sail to the harbour of heaven', and she would hear that Queen Elizabeth, complaining of the name for an unlucky one, had re-christened her the *Dunty*, not without some by-gone, perhaps, at the character of her most dainty captain, Richard Hawkins, the complete seaman and Euphuist afloat, of whom, perhaps, more hereafter.

With sad eyes Mrs (then Lady) Hawkins would see that gallant bark sail Westward-ho, to go the world around, as many another ship sailed, and then wait, as many a mother beside had waited, for the sail which never returned, till, dim and uncertain, came tidings of her boy fighting for four days three great Armadas (for the cockcomb had his father's heart in him after all), a prisoner, wounded, ruined, languishing for weary years in Spanish prisons. And a sadder day than that was in store, when a gallant fleet should round the Ram Head, not with drum and trumpet, but with solemn minute-guns, and all flags half-mast high, to tell her that her terrible husband's work was done, his terrible heart broken by failure and fatigue, and his body laid by Drake's honest, the far-off tropic seas.

And if, at the close of her eventful life, one

gleam of sunshine opened for a while, when her boy Richard returned to her bosom from his Spanish prison, to be knighted for his valour, and made a Privy Councillor for his wisdom, yet soon, how soon, was the old cloud to close in again above her, until her weary eyes should open in the light of Paradise. For that son dropped dead, some say at the very council-table, leaving behind him nought but broken fortunes, and huge purposes which never were fulfilled, and the stormy star of that bold race was set for ever, and Lady Hawkins bowed her weary head and died, the groan of those stolen negroes ringing in her ears, having lived long enough to see her husband's youthful sin become a national institution, and a national curse for generations yet unborn.

I know not why she opened her heart that night to Adrian Gilbert, with a frankness which she would hardly have dared to use to her own family. Perhaps it was that Adrian, like his great brothers, Humphrey and Raleigh, was a man full of all lofty and delicate enthusiasms, tender and poetical, such as women cling to when their hearts are lonely, but so it was, and Adrian, half-ashamed of his own ambitious dreams, sat looking at her awhile in silence, and then

'The Lord be with you, dearest lady. Strange, how you women sit at home to love and suffer, while we men rush forth to break our hearts and yours against rocks of our own seeking! Ah well! were it not for Scripture I should have thought that Adam, rather than Eve, had been the one who plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree.'

'We women, I fear, did the deed nevertheless, for we bear the doom of it our lives long.'

'You always remind me, in Adam, of my dear Mrs Leigh of Barrrough, and her counsels.'

'Do you see her often? I hear of her as one of the Lord's most precious vessels.'

'I would have done more ere now than see her,' said he with a blush, 'had she allowed me, but she lives only for the memory of her husband and the fame of her noble name.'

As he spoke the door opened, and in walked, wrapped in his rough sea-gown, none other than one of those sad noble sons.

Adrian turned pale.

'Amyas Leigh! What brings you hither? How fares my brother? Where is the ship?'

'Your brother is well, Mr Gilbert. The *Golden Hind* is gone on to Dartmouth, with Mr Hayes. I came ashore here, meaning to go north to Bideford, ere I went to London. I called at Drake's just now, but he was away.'

'The *Golden Hind*? What brings her home so soon?'

'Yet welcome ever, sir,' said Mrs Hawkins. 'This is a great surprise, though Captain John did not look for you till next year.'

Amyas was silent.

'Something is wrong!' cried Adrian. 'Speak!'

Amyas tried, but could not

'Will you drive a man mad, sir? Has the adventure failed? You said my brother was well.'
'He is well.'

'Then what—Why do you look at me in that fashion, sir?' and springing up, Adrian rushed forward, and held the candle to Amyas's face.

Amyas's lip quivered, as he laid his hand on Adrian's shoulder.

'Your great and glorious brother, sir, is better bestowed than in settling Newfoundland.'

'Dead?' shrieked Adrian.

'He is with the God whom he served.'

'He was always with Him, like Enoch. Parable me no parables, if you love me, sir!'

'And, like Enoch, he was not, for God took him.'

Adrian clasped his hands over his forehead, and leaned against the table.

'Go on, sir, go on. God will give me strength to hear all.'

And gradually Amyas opened to Adrian the true story, which Mr. Haycox has long ago told far too well to allow a second edition of it from me. Of the murmurings of the men, ruthless as I said before, caught up at baybazar, of conspiracies to carry off the ships, plunder of trading vessels, desertions multiplying daily, he comes from the General to the lazy and fearful to return home till Adrian broke out with a groan—

'From him? Conspired against him? Deserted from him? Soldiers, ruffians? Where would they have found such another leader?'

'Your illustrious brother, sir,' said Amyas, 'if you will pardon me, was a very great philosopher, but not so much of a general.'

'General, sir? Where was braver man?'

'Not on God's earth! But that does not make a general, sir. If Cortes had been brave and no more, Mexico would have been Mexico still. The truth is, sir, Cortes, like my Captain Drake, knew when to hang a man, and your great brother did not.'

Amyas, as I suppose, was right. Gilbert was a man who could be angry enough at baseless or neglectful but who was too kindly to punish it, he was one who could form the wisest and best-digested plans, but who could not stoop to that half-fellow-well-met drudgery among his subordinates which has been the talisman of great captains.

Then Amyas went on to tell the rest of his story: the setting sail from St. John's to discover the southward coast, Sir Humphrey's chivalrous determination to go in the little *Squirrel* of only ten tons, and 'overcharged with nettles, fights, and small ordinance,' not only because she was more fit to examine the creeks, but because he had heard of some taunt against him among the men, that he was afraid of the sea.

After that, 'not on war', how, seven days after they left Cape Raz, their largest ship, the *Delight*, after she had 'most part of the night' (I quote Haycox), 'like the swan that singeth before her death, continued in sounding of trumpets, drums, and fifes, also winding of the cornets

and hautboys, and, in the end of their jollity, left off with the battle and doleful knells, struck the next day (the *Golden Hind* and the *Squirrel* sheering off just in time) upon unknown shoals where were lost all but fourteen, and among them Frank's philosopher friend, poor Hudæus, and those who escaped, after all horrors of cold and famine, were cast on shore in Newfoundland. How, worn out with hunger and want of clothes, the crews of the two remaining ships persuaded Sir Humphrey to sail toward England on the 31st of August, and on 'that very instant, even in winding about,' beheld close alongside 'a very lion in shape, hair, and colour, not swimming but sliding on the water, with his whole body, who passed along, turning his head to and fro, yawning and gazing wide, with ugly demonstration of long teeth and glaring eyes, and to bid us farewell (coming right against the *Hind*) he sent forth a horrible voice, roaring and bellowing as though a lion.' 'What cynic others had there-of, and chiefly the General himself, I forbear to deliver, but he took it for bonum omen, rejoicing that he was to war against such an enemy, if it were the devil.'

'And the devil it was, doubtless,' said Adrian, 'the roaring lion who goes about seeking whom he may devour.'

'He has not got your brother at least,' groined Amyas.

'No,' rejoined Mrs. Hawkins (smile not, reader, for those were days in which men believed in the devil), 'he roared for joy to think how many poor souls would be left still in heathen darkness by Sir Humphrey's death. God be with that good knight, and send all sinners where he's now!'

Then Amyas told the last scene: how, when they were off the Azores, the storms came on heavier than ever, with terrible seas breaking short and pyramid-wise, till on the 9th September, the tiny *Squirrel* nearly foundered and yet recovered, 'and the General sitting aloft with a book in his hand, cried out to us in the *Hind*, so oft as we did approach within hearing, "We are as near heaven by sea as by land," reiterating the same speech, well besecming a soldier resolute in Jesus Christ, as I can testify he was.'

'The same Monday about twelve of the clock, or not long after, the frigate (the *Squirrel*) being ahead of us in the *Golden Hind*, suddenly her lights were out, and withal our water-cured, the General was cast away, which was true: for in that moment, the frigate was dismasted and swallowed up of the sea.'

And so ended (I have used Haycox's own words) Amyas Leigh's story.

'Oh my brother's my brother,' moaned poor Adrian, 'the glory of his house, the glory of Devon.'

'Ah! what will the Queen say?' asked Mrs. Hawkins through her tears.

'Tell me,' asked Adrian, 'had he the jewel on when he died?'

'The Queen's jewel? He always wore that

and his own pony too, "Mutare vel timere sperno." He wore it, and he lived it.

'Ay,' said Adrian, 'the same to the last!'

'Not quite that,' said Amyas. 'He was a meeker man latterly than he used to be. As he said himself once, a better refiner than any whom he had on board had followed him close all the seas over, and purified him in the fire. And gold seven times tried he was, when God, having done His work in him, took him home at last.'

And so the talk ended. There was no doubt that the expedition had been an utter failure, Adrian was a ruined man, and Amyas had lost his venture.

Adrian rose, and begged leave to retire; he must collect himself.

'Poor gentleman!' said Mrs. Hawkins, 'it is little else he has left to collect.'

'Or I either,' said Amyas. 'I was going to ask you to lend me one of your son's shirts, and five pounds to get myself and my men home.'

'Five? Fifty, Mr. Leigh! God forbid that John Hawkins's wife should refuse her last penny to a distressed mariner, and he a gentleman born. But you must eat and drink.'

'It's more than I have done for many a day worth speaking of.'

And Amyas sat down in his rags to a good supper, while Mrs. Hawkins told him all the news which she could of his mother, whom Adrian Gilbert had seen a few months before in London, and then went on, naturally enough, to the Bideford news.

'And by the bye, Captain Leigh, I've said news for you from your place, and I had it from one who was there at the time. You must know a Spanish captain, a prisoner—'

'What, the one I sent home from Smerwick?'

'You sent! Mercy on us! Then, perhaps, you've heard—'

'How can I have heard? What?'

'That he's gone off, the villain!'

'Without paying his ransom!'

'I can't say that, but there's a poor innocent young maid gone off with him, one Salterne's daughter—the Popish serpent!'

'Rose Salterne, the mayor's daughter, the Rose of Torridge!'

'That's her. Bless your dear soul, what ails you?'

Amyas had dropped back in his seat as if he had been shot, but he recovered himself before Mrs. Hawkins could rush to the cupboard for cordials.

'You'll forgive me, madam, but I'm weak from the sea, and your good ale has turned me a bit dizzy, I think.'

'Ay, yes, 'tis too, too heavy, till you've been on shore a while. Try the aqua vite, my Captain John has it right good, and a bit too fond of it too, poor dear soul, between whiles, Heaven forgive him!'

And so she poured some strong brandy and water down Amyas's throat, in spite of his refusals, and sent him to bed, but not to sleep,

and after a night of tossing, he started for Bideford, having obtained the means for so doing from Mrs. Hawkins.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW SALVATION YEO SLEW THE KING OF THE GUBBINGS

'Ignorance and evil, even in full flight, deal terrible back-hauled strokes at their pursuers.—HERA.

Now I am sorry to say, for the honour of my country, that it was by no means a safe thing in those days to travel from Plymouth to the north of Devon, because, to get to your journey's end, unless you were minded to make a circuit of many miles, you must needs pass through the territory of a foreign and hostile potentate, who had many times ravaged the dominions and defeated the forces of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and was named (behind his back at least) the King of the Gubbings. 'So now I dare call them,' says Fuller, 'secured by distance, which one of more valour durst not do to their face, for fear their fury fall upon him. Yet hitherto have I met with none who could render a reason of their name. We call the shavings of fish (which are little worth) gubbings, and sure it is that they are sensible that the word importeth shame and disgrace.'

As for the suggestion of my worthy and learned friend, Mr. Joseph Maynard, that such as did "inhabitare montes gibberosos," were called Gubbings, such will smile at the ingenuity who dissent from the truth of the etymology.

I have read of an England beyond Wales, but the Gubbings' land is a Scythia within England, and they pure heathens therein. It lieth nigh Brent. For in the edge of Dartmoor it is reported that, some two hundred years since, two bad women, being with child, fled thither to hide themselves; to whom certain low fellows resorted, and thus was their first original. They are a peculiar of their own making, exempt from bishop, archdeacon, and all authority, either ecclesiastical or civil. They live in cots (rather holes than houses) like swine, having all in common, multiplied without marriage into many hundreds. Their language is the dress of the dregs of the vulgar Devonian; and the more learned a man is, the worse he can understand them. During our civil wars no soldiers were quartered upon them, for fear of being quartered amongst them. Their wealth consisteth in other men's goods, they live by stealing the sheep on the moors, and vain is it for any to search their houses, being a work beneath the pains of any sheriff, and above the power of any constable. Such is their fleetness, they will outrun many horses; vivaciousness, they outlive most men, living in an ignorance of luxury, the extinguisher of life. They hold together like bees, offend one, and all will revenge his quarrel.

'But now I am informed that they begin to be civilised, and tender their children to baptism, and return to be men, yea, Christians again I hope no *evil* people amongst us will turn barbarians, now these barbarians begin to be civilised.'

With which quip against the Anabaptists of his day, Fuller ends his story, and I leave him to set forth how Amyas, in fear of these same Scythians and heathens, rode out of Plymouth on a right good horse, in his full suit of armour, carrying lance and sword, and over and above two great daggs, or horse-pistols, and behind him Salvation Yeo, and five or six north Devon men (who had served with him in Ireland, and were returning on furlough), clad in head-pieces and quilted jerkins, such men with his pike and sword, and Yeo with arquebuse and match, while two sumpter ponies carried the baggage of this formidable troop.

They pushed on as fast as they could, through Tavistock, to reach before nightfall Lydford, where they meant to sleep, but what with buying the horses, and other delays, they had not been able to start before noon, and night fell just as they reached the frontiers of the enemy's country. A dreary place enough it was, by the wild glare of sunset. A high table-land of heath, banked on the right by the crags and hills of Dartmoor, and sloping away to the south and west toward the foot of the great cone of Brent-Tor, which towered up like an extinct volcano (as some say that it really is), crowned with the tiny church, the votive offering of some Plymouth merchant of old times, who vowed in sore distress to build a church to the Blessed Virgin on the first point of English land which he should see. Far away, down those waste slopes, they could see the tiny threads of blue smoke rising from the dens of the Gubbings, and more than once they called a halt, to examine whether distant tuze-bushes and ponies might not be the patrols of an advancing army. It is all very well to laugh at it now, in the nineteenth century, but it was no laughing matter then, as they found before they had gone two miles farther.

On the middle of the down stood a wayside inn, a desolate and villainous-looking lump of heben-spotted granite, with windows paper-patched, and rotting thatch kept down by stones and straw-banks, and at the back a rambling courtledge of barns and walls, around which pigs and barefoot children grunted in loving communion of dirt. At the door, rapt apparently in the contemplation of the mountain peaks, which glowed rich orange in the last lingering sun-rays, but really watching which way the sheep on the moor were taking, stood the innkeeper, a brawny, sodden-visaged, bleary-eyed six feet of brutishness, holding up his hose with one hand, for want of points, and clawing with the other his elf-locks, on which a fair sprinkling of feathers might denote first, that he was just out of bed, having been out sheep-

¹ Fuller, p. 202.

stealing all the night before, and secondly, that by natural genius he had anticipated the opinion of that great apostle of sluttishness, Fridericus Dedekind, and his faithful disciple Dekker, which last speaks thus to all gulls and grobians — 'Consider that as those trees of cobweb lawn, woven by spinners in the fresh May mornings, do dress the curled heads of the mountains, and adorn the swelling bosoms of the valleys, or as those anowy fleeces, which the naked briar steals from the innocent sheep to make himself a warm winter livery, are, to either of them both, an excellent ornament, so make thou account, that to have feathers sticking here and there on thy head will embellish thee, and set thy crown out rarely. None dare upbraid thee, that like a beggar thou hast lain on straw, or like a travelling pedlar upon rusty flocks, for those feathers will rise up as witnesses to choke him that says so, and to prove thy bed to have been of the softest down.' Even so did those feathers bear witness that the possessor of Rogues' Harbour Inn, on Brent-Tor Down, whatever else he lacked, lacked not geese enough to keep him in soft lying.

Presently he spies Amyas and his party coming slowly over the hill, picks up his ears, and counts them, sees Amyas's armour, shakes his head and grunts, and then, being a man of few words, utters a sleepy howl —

'Mirooi! — Fushing poosle!'

A strapping lass — whose only covering (for country women at work in those days dispensed with the ornament of a gown) is a green bodice and red petticoat, neither of them over ample — brings out his fishing rod and basket, and the man, having tied up his hose with some ends of string, examines the footlink.

'Don't lies' gone!

'May be,' says Mary, 'shouldn't hav' left nun out to cool. May be old lies' ate nun off. I see her chocking about a while ago.'

The host receives this intelligence with an oath, and replies by a violent blow at Mary's head, which she, accustomed to such slight matters, dodges, and then returns the blow with good effect on the shock head.

Whereon mine host, equally accustomed to such slight matters, quietly shambles off, howling as he departs —

'Tell patrico!'

Mary runs in, combs her hair, slips a pair of stockings and her best gown over her dirt, and awaits the coming guests, who make a few long faces at the 'muckay sort of a place,' but prefer to spend the night there than to huddle close to the enemy's camp.

So the old hen who has swallowed the dun fly is killed, plucked, and roasted, and certain 'black Dartmoor mutton' is put on the gridiron, and being compelled to confess the truth by that fiery torment, proclaims itself to all noses as red deer venison. In the meanwhile Amyas has put his horse and the ponies into a shed, to which he can find neither lock nor key, and therefore returns grumbling, not without fear for his

steed's safety. The baggage is heaped in a corner of the room, and Amyas stretches his legs before a turf fire, while Yeo, who has his notions about the place, posts himself at the door, and the men are seized with a desire to superintend the cooking, probably to be attributed to the fact that Mary is cook.

Presently Yeo comes in again.

'There's a gentleman just coming up, sir, all alone.'

'Ask him to make one of our party, then, with my compliments.' Yeo goes out, and returns in five minutes.

'Please sir, he's gone in back way, by the count.'

'Well, he has an odd taste, if he makes himself at home here.'

Out goes Yeo again, and comes back once more after five minutes, in high excitement.

'Come out, sir, for goodness' sake come out! I've got him! Safe as a rat in a trap, I give it.'

'Who?'

'A Jesuit, sir.'

'Nonsense, man!'

'I tell you truth, sir. I went round the house, for I didn't like the looks of him as he came up. I knew he was one of them villains the minute he came up, by the way he turned in his toes, and put down his feet so still and careful, like as if he was afraid of offending God at every step. So I just put my eye between the wall and the den of the gate, and I saw him come up to the back door and knock, and call "Mary!" quite still, like any Jesuit, and the French flew out to him ready to eat him, and "Go away," I heard her say, "there's a dear man," and then something about a "queer English" (that's a justice in these rascals' thieves' Latin), and with that he takes out a somewhat—I'll swear it was one of those Popish Agnuscs—and gives it her and she kisses it, and crosses herself, and asks him if that's the right way, and then puts it into her bosom, and he says, "Bless you, my daughter," and then I was sure of the dog, and he slips quite still to the stable, and peeps in, and when he sees no one there, in he goes, and out I go, and shut to the door, and back a cart that was there up against it, and call out one of the men to watch the stable, and the girl's crying like mad.'

'What a fool's trick, man! How do you know that he is not some honest gentleman, after all?'

'Fool or none, sir, honest gentlemen don't give maidens Agnuscs. I've put him in, sir, if you want him let out again, you must come and do it yourself, for my conscience is against it, sir. If the Lord's enemies are delivered into my hand, I'm answerable, sir, wont on Yeo as Amyas hurried out with him. "Tis written, "If any let one of them go, his life shall be for the life of him."'

So Amyas ran out, pulled back the cart grumbling, opened the door, and began a string of apologies to—his cousin Eustace.

Yes, here he was, with such a countenance, half foolish, half venomous, as Reynard wears

when the last spadeful of earth is thrown back, and he is revealed sitting disconsolately on his tail within a yard of the terriers' noses.

Neither cousin spoke for a minute or two. At last Amyas—

'Well, cousin hide-and-seek, how long have you added horse-stealing to your other trades?'

'My dear Amyas,' said Eustace very meekly, 'I may surely go into an inn stable without intending to steal what is in it.'

'Of course, old fellow,' said Amyas, mollified, 'I was only in jest. But what brings you here? Not prudence, certainly.'

'I am bound to know no prudence save for the Lord's work.'

'That's giving away Agnus Dey, and deceiving poor heathen wenchies, I suppose,' said Yeo.

Eustace answered pretty roundly—

'Heathens? Yes, truly, you Protestants leave these poor wretched heathens, and then insult and persecute those who, with a devotion unknown to you, labour at the danger of their lives to make them Christians. Mr Amyas laugh, you can give me up to be hanged at Exeter, if it shall so please you to disgrace your own family, but from this spot neither you, no, nor all the myrmidons of your Queen, shall drive me, while there is a soul here left unsaved.'

'Come out of the stable, at least,' said Amyas, 'you don't want to make the horses' puppets, as well as the asses, do you? Come out, man, and go to the devil your own way. I shan't inform against you, and Yeo here will hold his tongue if I tell him, I know.'

'It goes sorely against my conscience, sir, but being that he is your cousin, of course—'

'Of course, and now come in and eat with me, supper's just ready, and by-gones shall be by-gones, if you will have them so.'

How much forgiveness Eustace felt in his heart, I know not, but he knew, of course, that he ought to forgive, and to go in and eat with Amyas was to perform an act of forgiveness, and for the best of motives, too, for by it the ranse of the Church might be furthered, and acts and motives being correct, what more was needed? So in he went, and yet he never forgot that scar upon his cheek, and Amyas could not look him in the face but Eustace must fancy that his eyes were on the scar, and peep up from under his lids to see if there was any smile of triumph on that honest visago. They talked away over the venison, guardedly enough at first, but as they went on, Amyas's straightforward kindness warmed poor Eustace's frozen heart, and ere they were aware, they found themselves talking over old haunts and old passages of their boyhood—uncles, aunts, and cousins, and Eustace, without any sinister intention, asked Amyas why he was going to Bideford, while Frank and his mother were in London.

'To tell you the truth, I cannot rest till I have heard the whole story about poor Rose Salterne.'

'What about her?' cried Eustace.

'Do you not know?'

'How should I know anything here! For heaven's sake what has happened?'

Amyas told him, wondering at his eagerness, for he had never had the least suspicion of Eustace's love.

Eustace shrieked aloud

'Fool, fool that I have been! Caught in my own trap! Villain, villain that he is! After all he promised me at Landy!'

And springing up, Eustace stamped up and down the room, gnashing his teeth, tossing his head from side to side, and clutching with outstretched hands at the empty air, with the horrible gesture (Heaven grant that no reader has ever witnessed it!) of that despair which still seeks blindly for the object which it knows is lost for ever.

Amyas sat thunderstruck. His first impulse was to ask, 'Lundy! What knew you of him? What had he or you to do at Lundy?' but pity conquered curiosity.

'Oh Eustace! And you then loved her too?'

'Don't speak to me! Loved her? Yes, sir, and had as good a right to love her as any one of your precious brotherhood of the Rose. Don't speak to me, I say, or I shall do you a mischief!'

So Eustace knew of the brotherhood too! Amyas longed to ask him how, but what use in that? If he knew it, he knew it, and what harm? So he only answered—

'My good cousin, why be wroth with me? If you really love her, now is the time to take counsel with me how best we shall—'

Eustace did not let him finish his sentence. Conscious that he had betrayed himself upon more points than one, he stopped short in his walk, suddenly collected himself by one great effort, and eyed Amyas from underneath his brows with the old down look.

'How best we shall do what, my valiant cousin?' said he in a meaning and half scornful voice. 'What does your most chivalrous brotherhood of the Rose propose in such a case?'

Amyas, a little nettled, stood on his guard in return, and answered bluntly—

'What the Brotherhood of the Rose will do, I can't yet say. What it ought to do, I have a pretty sure guess.'

'So have I. To hunt her down as you would an outlaw, because forsooth she has dared to love a Catholic, to murder her lover in her arms, and drag her home again stained with his blood, to be forced by threats and persecution to renounce that Church into whose maternal bosom she has doubtless long since found rest and holiness!'

'If she has found holiness, it matters little to me where she has found it, Master Eustace; but that is the very point that I should be glad to know for certain.'

'And you will go and discover for yourself?'

'Have you no wish to discover it also?'

'And if I had, what would that be to you?'

'Only,' said Amyas, trying hard to keep his temper, 'that, if we had the same purpose, we might sail in the same ship.'

'You intend to sail, then?'

'I mean simply, that we might work together.'

'Our paths lie on very different roads, sir!'

'I am afraid you never spoke a truer word, sir. In the meanwhile, ere we part, be so kind as to tell me what you meant by saying that you had met this Spaniard at Lundy?'

'I shall refuse to answer that.'

'You will please to recollect, Eustace, that however good friends we have been for the last half hour, you are in my power. I have a right to know the bottom of this matter, and, by Heaven, I will know it.'

'In your power? See that you are not in mine! Remember, sir, that you are within a few miles, at least, of those who will obey me, their Catholic benefactor—but who owe no allegiance to those Protestant authorities who have left them to the lot of the beasts which perish.'

Amyas was very hungry. He wanted but little more to make himself h h Eustace by the shoulders, shake the hie out of him, and deliver him into the tender guardianship of Yeo, but he knew that to take him at all was to bring certain death on him, and disgrace on the family, and remembering Frank's conduct on that memorable night at Clovelly, he kept himself down.

'Take me,' said Eustace, 'if you will, sir. You, who complain of us that we keep no faith with heretics, will perhaps recollect that you asked me into this room as your guest—and that in your good faith I trusted when I entered it.'

The argument was a worthless one in law, for Eustace had been a prisoner before he was a guest, and Amyas was guilty of something

reason

over to the nearest justice. However, all he did was, to go to the door, open it, and bowing to his cousin, bid him walk out and go to the devil, since he seemed to have set his mind on ending his days in the company of that personage.

Whereon Eustace vanished.

'Pooh!' said Amyas to himself. 'I can find out enough, and too much, I fear, without the help of such crooked vermin. I must see Cary. I must see Salterne, and I suppose, if I am ready to do my duty, I shall learn somehow what it is. Now to sleep, to-morrow up and away to what God sends.'

'Come in hither, men,' shouted he down the passage, 'and sleep here. Haven't you had enough of this villainous sour cider?'

The men came in yawning, and settled themselves to sleep on the floor.

'Where's Yeo?'

No one knew, he had gone out to say his prayers, and had not returned.

'Never mind,' said Amyas, who suspected some plot on the old man's part. 'He'll take care of himself, I'll warrant him.'

'No fear of that, sir,' and the four tars were soon snoring in concert round the fire, while Amyas laid himself on the settle, with his saddle for a pillow.

It was about midnight when Amyas leaped to his feet, or rather fell upon his back, upsetting saddle, settle, and finally table, under the notion that ten thousand flying dragons were bursting in the window close to his ear, with howls most fierce and fell. The flying dragons past, however, being only a flock of terror-stricken geese, which flew flapping and screaming round the corner of the house but the noise which had startled them did not pass, and another minute made it evident that a sharp fight was going on in the courtyard, and that Yeo was hallooing lustily for help.

Out turned the men, sword in hand, burst the back door open, stumbling over pails and pitchers, and into the courtyard, where Yeo, his back against the stable-door, was holding his own manfully with sword and buckler against a dozen men.

Dire and manifold was the screaming, geese screamed, chickens screamed, pigs screamed, donkeys screamed, Mary screamed from an upper window; and to complete the chorus, a flock of plovers, attracted by the noise, wheeled round and round overhead, and added their screams also to that Dutch concert.

The screaming went on, but the fight ceased, for as Amyas rushed into the yard, the whole party of ruffians took to their heels, and vanished over a low hedge at the other end of the yard.

'Are you hurt, Yeo?'

'Not a scratch, thank Heaven! But I've got two of them, the ringleaders, I have. One of them's against the wall. Your horse did for t'other.'

The wounded man was lifted up, a huge ruffian, nearly as big as Amyas himself. Yeo's sword had passed through his body. He groaned and choked for breath.

'Carry him indoors. Where is the other?'

'Dead as a herring, in the straw. Have a care, men, have a care how you go in! the horses are near mad!'

However, the man was brought out after a while. With him all was over. They could feel neither pulse nor breath.

'Carry him in too, poor wretch. And now, Yeo, what is the meaning of all this?'

Yeo's story was soon told. He could not get out of his Puritan head the notion (quite unfounded, of course) that Eustace had meant to steal the horses. He had seen the innkeeper sneak off at their approach; and expecting some night-attack, he had taken up his lodging for the night in the stable.

As he expected, an attempt was made. The door was opened (how he could not guess, for he had fastened it inside), and two fellows came in, and began to loose the beasts. Yeo's account was, that he seized the big fellow, who drew a knife on him, and broke loose; the horses, terrified at the scuffle, kicked right and left; one man fell, and the other ran out, calling for help, with Yeo at his heels; 'Whereon,' said Yeo, 'seeing a dozen more on me with clubs and bows, I thought best to shorten the number

while I could, ran the rascal through, and stood on my ward, and only just in time I was, what's more, there's two arrows in the horse wall, and two or three more in my buckler, which I caught up as I went out, for I had hung it close by the door, you see, sir, to be all ready in case,' said the cunning old Philistine-slayer, as they went in after the wounded man.

But hardly had they stumbled through the low doorway into the back-kitchen when a fresh hubbub arose inside—more shouts for help. Amyas ran forward, breaking his head against the doorway, and beheld, as soon as he could see for the flashes in his eyes, an old acquaintance, held on each side by a sturdy sailor.

With one arm in the sleeve of his doublet, and the other in a not over spotless shirt, holding up his hose with one hand, and with the other a candle, whereby he had lighted himself to his own confusion, foaming with rage, stood Mr. Evan Morgans, alias Father Parsons, looking between his confused habiliments and his fiery visage (as Yeo told him to his face), 'the very moral of a half-pickled turkey-cock.' And behind him, dressed, stood Eustace Leigh.

'We found the maid letting these here two out by the front door,' said one of the rapiers.

'Well, Mr. Parsons,' said Amyas, 'and what did you do about here? A pretty nest of thieves and Jesuits we seem to have routed out this evening.'

'About my calling, sir,' said Parsons stontly. 'By your leave, I shall prepare this my wounded lamb for that account to which your man's cruelty has intinely sent him.'

The wounded man, who lay upon the floor, heard Parsons' voice, and moaned for the 'Patrico.'

'You see, sir,' said he pompously, 'the sheep know their shepherd's voice.'

'The wolves you mean, you hypocritical scoundrel!' said Amyas, who could not contain his disgust. 'Let the fellow truss up his points, lads, and do his work. After all, the man is dying.'

'The requisite matters, sir, are not at hand,' said Parsons, unabashed.

'Eustace, go and fetch his matters for him, you seem to be in all his plots.'

Eustace went silently and sullenly.

'What's that fresh noise at the back, now?'

'The maid, sir, a wailing over her uncle, the fellow that we saw sneak away when we came up. It was him the horse killed.'

It was true. The wretched host had slipped off on their approach, simply to call the neighbouring outlaws to the spoil; and he had been filled with the fruit of his own devices.

'His blood be on his own head,' said Amyas.

'I question, sir,' said Yeo in a low voice, 'whether some of it will not be on the heads of those proud prelates who go clothed in purple and fine linen, instead of going forth to convert such as he, and then wonder how these Jesuits get hold of them. If they give place to the devil in their sheepfolds, sure he'll come in and

lodge there. Look, sir, there's a sight in a gospel land!

And, indeed, the sight was curious enough. For Parsons was kneeling by the side of the dying man, listening earnestly to the confession which the man sobbed out in his gibberish, between the spasms of his wounded chest. Now and then Parsons shook his head, and when Eustace returned with the holy wafer, and the oil for extreme unction, he asked him, in a low voice, 'Ballard, interpret for me.'

And Eustace knelt down on the other side of the sufferer, and interpreted his thieves' dialect into Latin; and the dying man held a hand of each, and turned first to one and then to the other stupid eyes, — not without affection, though, and gratitude.

'I can't stand this mummerly any longer,' said Yeo. 'Here's a soul perishing before my eyes, and it's on my conscience to speak a word in season.'

'Silence!' whispered Anyas, huddling him back by the arm, 'he knows them, and he don't know you, they are the first who ever spoke to him as if he had a soul to be saved, and first come, first served, you can do no good. See, the man's face is brightening already.'

'But, sir, 'tis a false peace.'

'At all events he is confessing his sins, Yeo, and if that's not good for him, and you, and me, what is it?'

'Yea, Amen! sir, but this is not to the right person.'

'How do you know his words will not go to the right person after all, though he may not send them there? By Heaven! the man is dead!'

It was so. The dark catalogue of brutal deeds had been gasped out, but ere the words of absolution could follow, the head had fallen back, and all was over.

'Confession in extremis is sufficient,' said Parsons to Eustace ('Ballard,' as Parsons called him, to Anyas's surprise), as he rose. 'As for the rest, the penitence will be accepted instead of the act.'

'The Lord have mercy on his soul!' said Eustace.

'His soul is lost before our very eyes,' said Yeo.

'Mind your own business,' said Anyas.

'Humph, but I'll tell you, sir, what our business is, if you'll step aside with me. I find that poor fellow that lies dead is none other than the leader of the Gubbings, the king of them, as they dare to call him.'

'Well, what of that?'

'Mark my words, sir, if we have not a hundred stout rogues upon us before two hours are out, forgive us they never will, and if we get off with our lives, which I don't much expect, we shall leave our horses behind, for we can hold the house, sir, well enough till morning, but the courtyard we can't, that's certain!'

'We had better march at once, then.'

'Think, sir, if they catch us up — as they are

sure to do, knowing the country better than we — how will our shot stand their arrows?'

'True, old wisdom, we must keep the road, and we must keep together, and so be a mark for them, while they will be behind every rock and bank, and two or three flights of arrows will do our business for us. Humph! stay, I have a plan.'

And stepping forward he spoke — 'Eustace, you will be so kind as to go back to your lambs, and tell them, that if they meddle with us cruel wolves again to-night, we are ready and willing to fight to the death, and have plenty of shot and powder at their service. Father Parsons, you will be so kind as to accompany us, it is but fitting that the shepherd should be hostage for his sheep.'

'If you carry me off this spot, sir, you carry my corpse only,' said Parsons. 'I may as well die here as be hanged elsewhere, like my martyred brother Campan.'

'If you take him, you must take me too,' said Eustace.

'What if we won't?'

'How will you gain by that? you can only leave me here. You cannot make me go to the Gubbings, if I do not choose.'

Anyas uttered sotto voce an anathema on Jesuits, Gubbings, and things in general. He was in a great hurry to get to Bideford, and he feared that this business would delay him, as it was, a day or two. He wanted to hang Parsons, he did not want to hang Eustace, and Eustace, he knew, was well aware of that latter fact, and played his game accordingly. But time ran on, and he had to answer sulkily enough —

'Well then, if you, Eustace, will go and give my message to your converts, I will promise to set Mr. Parsons free again before we come to Lydford town, and I advise you, if you have any regard for his life, to see that your eloquence be persuasive enough, for as sure as I am an Englishman, and he none, if the Gubbings attack us, the first bullet that I shall fire at them will have gone through his scoundrilly brains.'

Parsons still kicked.

'Very well, then, my merry men all. Tie this gentleman's hands behind his back, get the horses out, and we'll right away up into Dartmoor, find a good high tor, stand our ground there till morning, and then carry him into Okehampton to the nearest justice. If he chooses to delay me in my journey, it is fair that I should make him pay for it.'

Whereon Parsons gave in, and being fast tied by his arm to Anyas's saddle, trudged alongside his horse for several weary miles, while Yeo walked by his side, like a friar by a condemned criminal, and in order to keep up his spirits, told him the woful end of Nicholas Saunders the Legate, and how he was found starved to death in a bog.

'And if you wish, sir, to follow in his blessed steps, which I heartily hope you will do, you have only to go over that big row-backed hill there on your right hand, and down again the

other side to Crammery Pool, and there you'll find as pretty a bog to die in as ever Jesuit needed and your ghost may sit there on a grass tuft, and tell your beads without any one asking for you till the day of judgment, and much good may it do you !'

At which imagination Yeo was actually heard, for the first and last time in this history, to laugh most heartily.

His ho-ho's had scarcely died away when they saw shining under the moon the old tower of Lydford Castle.

'Cast the fellow off now,' said Amyas.

'Ay, ay, sir,' and Yeo and Simon Evans stepped behind, and did not come up for ten minutes after.

'What have you been about so long?'

'Why, sir,' said Evans, 'you see the man had a very fair pair of hose on, and a brand new korsew doublet, very warm-lined, and so, thinking it a pity good clothes should be wasted on such noxious trade, we've just brought them along with us.'

'Spoiling the Egyptians,' said Yeo as comment.

'And what have you done with the man?'

'Hove him over the bank, sir, he pitched into a big furze-bush, and for aught I know, there he'll bide.'

'You rascal, have you killed him?'

'Never fear, sir,' said Yeo in his cool fashion. 'A Jesuit has as many lives as a cat, and, I believe, rides broomsticks post, like a witch. He would be at Lydford now before us, if his master Satan had any business for him there.'

Leaving on their left Lydford and its ill-omened castle (which, a century after, was one of the principal scenes of Judge Jeffreys' cruelty), Amyas and his party trudged on through the mire toward Okehampton till sunrise, and ere the vapours had lifted from the mountain tops, they were descending the long slopes from Sourton down, while Yestor and Amicombe slept steep and black beneath their misty pall, and roaring far below unseen,

'Ockment leapt from crag and cloud
Down her cataracts, laughing loud

The voice of the stream recalled these words to Amyas's mind. The nymph of Torridge had spoken them upon the day of his triumph. He recollected, too, his vexation on that day at not seeing Rose Salterne. Why, he had never seen her since. Never soon her now for six years and more! Of her ripened beauty he knew only by hearsay she was still to him the lovely fifteen years' girl, for whose sake he had smitten the Barnstaple draper over the quay. What a chain of petty accidents had kept them from meeting, though so often within a mile of each other! 'And what a lucky one!' said practical old Amyas to himself. 'If I had seen her as she is now, I might have loved her as Frank does—poor Frank! what will he say! What does he say, for he must know it already! And what ought I to say—to do rather, for

talking is no use on this side the grave, nor on the other either, I expect!' And then he asked himself whether his old oath meant nothing or something; whether it was a mere tavern frolic, or a sacred duty. And he held, the more that he looked at it, that it meant the latter.

But what could he do? He had nothing on earth but his sword, so he could not travel to find her. After all, she might not be gone far. Perhaps not gone at all. It might be a mistake, an exaggerated scandal. He would hope so. And yet it was evident that there had been some passages between her and Don Guzman. Kustato's mysterious words about the promise at Lundy proved that. The villain! He had felt all along that he was a villain, but just the one to win a woman's heart, too. Frank had been away—all the Brotherhood away. What a fool he had been, to turn the wolf loose into the sheepfold! And yet who would have dreamed of it!

'At all events,' said Amyas, trying to comfort himself, 'I need not complain. I have lost nothing. I stood no more chance of her against Frank than I should have stood against the Don. So there is no use for me to cry about the matter.' And he tried to hum a tune concerning the general frailty of women, but nevertheless, like Sir Hugh, felt that 'he had a great disposition to cry.'

He never had expected to win her, and yet it seemed bitter to know that she was lost to him for ever. It was not so easy for a heart of his make to toss away the image of a first love, and all the less easy because that image was stained and ruined.

'Curse on the man who had done that deed! I will yet have his heart's blood somehow, if I go round the world again to find him. If there's no law for it on earth, there's law in heaven, or I'm much mistaken.'

With which determination he rode into the ugly, dirty, and stupid town of Okehampton, with which fulk a man (by some strange perversity) has chosen to defile one of the loveliest sites in the pleasant land of Devon. And heartily did Amyas abuse the old town that day, for he was detained there, as he expected, full three hours, while the Justice Shallow of the place was sent for from his farm (whither he had gone at sunrise, after the early-rising fashion of those days) to take Yeo's deposition concerning last night's affray. Moreover, when Shallow came, he refused to take the depositions, because they ought to have been made before a brother Shallow at Lydford; and in the wrangling which ensued, was very near finding out what Amyas (fearing fresh loss of time and worse evils beside) had commanded to be concealed, namely, the presence of Jesuits in that Moorland Utopia. Then, in broadest Devon—

'And do you call this Christian conduct, sir, to set a quiet man like me upon they Gubblings, as if I was going to risk my precious life—no, nor ever a constable to Okehampton neither! Let Lydford men mind Lydford rooga, and by

Lydfor law if they will, hang first and try after, but as for me, I've rade my Bible, and "Ho that medilleth with strif is like him that taketh a

quire
ing, in course but I expect mortally" (with a wink), 'you want learn much more of the matter from any hard.' 'Leave will alone is a good rule, but leave ill alone is a better'—So we says round about here, and so you'll say, captain, when you be so old as I.'

So Amyas sat down and ate his breakfast, and went on afterwards a long and weary day's journey, till he saw it last beneath him the broad shining river, and the long bridge, and the white houses piled up the hillside, and beyond, over Halesgh downs, the dear old tower Northam Church.

Alas! Northam was altogether a desert to him then, and Bideford, as it turned out, hardly less so. For when he rode up to Sir Richard's door he found that the good knight was still in Ireland, and Lady Grenville at Stow. Whereupon he rode back again down the High Street to that same bow-windowed Ship Tavern where the brotherhood of the horse made their vow, and settled himself in the very room where they had supped.

'Ah! Mr Leigh—Captain Leigh now, I beg pardon,' quoth mine host. 'Bideford is an empty place nowadays, and nothing stirring, sir. What with Sir Richard to Ireland, and Sir John to London, and all the young gentlemen to the war, there's no one to buy good liquor, and no one to court the young ladies, neither sick, sir? I hope so. I haven't brewed a gallon of it this fortnight, if you'll believe me, ale, sir, and aqua vite, and such low-bred trade, is all I draw nowadays. Try a pint of sherry, sir, now, to give you an appetite. You mind my sherry of old? Jane! Sherry and sugar, quick, while I pull off the captain's boots.'

Amyas sat weary and sad, while the innkeeper chattered on.

'Ah, sir! two or three like you would set the young ladies all alive again. By the bye, there's been strange doings among them since you were here last. You mind Mistress Salterne?'

'For God's sake, don't let us live that story, man! I heard enough of it at Plymouth!' said Amyas, in so disturbed a tone that mine host looked up, and said to himself—

'Ah, poor young gentleman, he's one of the hard-hit ones.'

'How is the old man?' asked Amyas, after a pause.

'Bears it well enough, sir, but a changed man. Never speaks to a soul, if he can help it. Some folk say he's not right in his head, or turned miser, or somewhat, and takes thought but bread and water, and sits up all night in the room as was hers, turning over her garments. Heaven knows what's on his mind—they do say he was over hard on her and that drove her to

it. All I know is, he has never been in here for a drop of liquor (and he came as regular every evening as the town clock, sir) since she went, except a ten days ago, and then he met young Mr Cary at the door, and I heard him ask Mr Cary when you would be home, sir.'

'I'm on my boots again. I'll go and see him.'

'Bless you, sir! What, without your sack?'

'Drink it yourself, man.'

'But you wouldn't go out again this time o' night on an empty stomach, now?'

'Fill my men's stomachs for them, and never mind mine. It's market-day, is it not? Send out and see whether Mr Cary is still in town,' and Amyas strode out, and along the quay to Bridge-land Street, and knocked at Mr. Salterne's door.

Salterne himself opened it, with his usual stern courtesy.

'I saw you coming up the street, sir. I have been expecting this honour from you for some time past. I dreamt of you only last night, and many a night before that too. Welcome, sir, into a lonely house. I trust the good knight your general is well.'

'The good knight my general is with God who made him, Mr Salterne.'

'Dead, sir?'

'Thundered at sea on our way home, and the *Delight* lost too.'

'Humph!' growled Salterne, after a minute's silence. 'I had a venture in her. I suppose it's gone. No matter—I can afford it, sir, and more, I trust. And he was three years younger than I! And Diaper heard was buried yesterday, five years younger—How is it that every one can die, except me? Come in, sir, come in. I have forgotten my manners.'

And he led Amyas into his parlour, and called to the apprentices to run one way, and to the cook to run another.

'You must not trouble yourself to get me supper, indeed.'

'I must though, sir, and the best of wine too, and old Salterne had a good tap of Alicante in old time, old time, old time, sir! and you must drink it now, whether he does or not!' and out he bustled.

Amyas sat still, wondering what was coming next, and puzzled at the sudden levity of the man, as well as his hospitality, so different from what the innkeeper had led him to expect.

In a minute more one of the apprentices came in to lay the cloth, and Amyas questioned him about his master.

'Thank the Lord that you are come, sir,' said the lad.

'Why, then?'

'Because there'll be a shame of us poor fellows getting a little broken meat. We'm half starved this three months—bread and dripping, bread and dripping, oh dear, sir! And now help sent out to the inn for chickens, and game, and salads, and all that money can buy, and down in the cellar haling out the best of wine.'

—And the lad smacked his lips audibly at the thought.

'Is he out of his mind?'

'I can't tell, he saith as how he must save mun's money nowadays, for he's got a great venture on hand. but what a be he tell'th no man. They call'th mun "bread and dripping" now, sir, all town over,' said the prentice confidentially to Amyas.

'They do, do they, sirrah! Then they will call me bread and no dripping to-morrow!' and old Salterne, entering from behind, made a dash at the poor fellow's ears. but luckily thought better of it, having a couple of bottles in each hand.

'My dear sir,' said Amyas, 'you don't mean us to drink all that wine!'

'Why not, sir?' answered Salterne, in a grim, half-smoothing tone, thrusting out his square-grizzled beard and chin. 'Why not, sir? why should I not make merry when I have the honour of a noble Captain in my house? one who has sailed the seas, sir, and cut Spaniards' throats, and may cut them again too, eh, sir? Boy, where's the kettle and the sugar?'

'What on earth is the man at?' quoth Amyas to himself—'flattering me, or laughing at me?'

'Yes,' he ran on, half to himself, in a deliberate tone, evidently intending to hint more than he said, as he began brewing the sack—in plain English, hot negus, 'Yes, bread and dripping for those who can't fight Spaniards; but the best that money can buy for those who can. I heard of y'da at Smerwick, sir—Yes, bread and dripping for me too—I can't fight Spaniards but for such as you. Look here, sir, I should like to feed a crew of such up, as you'd feed a main of fighting cocks, and then start them with a pair of Sheffield spurs a-piece—you've a good one there, go your side, sir. but don't you think a man might carry two now, and fight as they say those Chinese do, a sword to each hand? You could kill more that way, Captain Leigh, I reckon!'

Amyas half laughed.

'One will do, Mr. Salterne, if one is quick enough with it.'

'Humph!—Ah—No use being in a hurry. I haven't been in a hurry. No—I waited for you, and here you are and welcome, sir! Here comes supper a light matter, sir, you see. A capon and a brace of partridges. I had no time to feast you as you deserve.'

And so he ran on all supper time, hardly allowing Amyas to get a word in edgewise but heaping him with coarse flattery, and urging him to drink, till after the cloth was drawn, and the two left alone, he grew so outrageous that Amyas was forced to take him to task good-humouredly.

'Now, my dear sir, you have feasted me royally, and better far than I deserve. but why will you go about to make me drunk twice over, first with vainglory and then with wine?'

Salterne looked at him a while fixedly, and then, sticking out his chin—'Because, Captain

Leigh, I am a man who has all his life tried the crooked road first, and found the straight one the safer after all.'

'Eh, sir! That is a strange speech for one who bears the character of the most upright man in Bideford.'

'Humph. So I thought myself once, sir, and well I have proved it. But I'll be plain with you, sir. You've heard how—how I've fared since you saw me last!'

Amyas nodded his head.

'I thought so. Shame rides post. Now then, Captain Leigh, listen to me. I, being a plain man and a burgher, and one that never drew iron in my life except to mend a pen, ask you, being a gentleman and a captain and a man of honour, with a weapon to your side, and harness to your back—what would you do in my place?'

'Humph!' said Amyas, 'that would very much depend on whether "my place" was my own fault or not.'

'And what if it were, sir? What if all that the charitable folks of Bideford—(Heaven reward them for their tender mercies!)—have been telling you in the last hour be true, sir,—true! and yet not half the truth?'

Amyas gave a start.

'Ah, you shrink from me! Of course a man is too righteous to forgive those who repent, though God is not.'

'God knows, sir—'

'Yes, sir, God does know—all, and you shall know a little—as much as I can tell—or you understand. Come upstairs with me, sir, as you'll drink no more, I have a liking for you. I have watched you from your boyhood, and I can trust you, and I'll show you what I never showed to mortal man but one.'

And, taking up a candle, he led the way upstairs, while Amyas followed wondering.

He stepped at a door and unlocked it.

'There, come in. Those shutters have not been opened since she—' and the old man was silent.

Amyas looked round the room. It was a low wainscoted room, such as one sees in old houses; everything was in the most perfect neatness. The snow white sheets on the bed were turned down as if ready for an occupant. There were books arranged on the shelves, fresh flowers on the table, the dressing-table had all its woman's mundus of pins, and rings, and brushes; even the dressing-gown lay over the chair-back. Everything was evidently just as it had been left.

'This was her room, sir,' whispered the old man.

Amyas nodded silently, and half drew back.

'You need not be modest about entering it now, sir,' whispered he, with a sort of sneer. 'There has been no frail flesh and blood in it for many a day.'

Amyas sighed.

'I sweep it out myself every morning, and keep all tidy. See here!' and he pulled open a drawer. 'Here are all her gowns, and there

are her hoods; and there—I know 'em all by heart now, and the place of every one. And there, sir—'

And he opened a cupboard, where lay in rows all Rose's dolls, and the worn-out playthings of her childhood.

'That's the pleasantest place of all in the room to me,' said he, whispering still. 'for it minds me of when—and maybe, she may become a little child once more, sir, it's written in the Scripture, you know—'

'Amen!' said Amyas, who felt, to his own wonder, a big tear stealing down each cheek.

'And now,' he whispered, 'one thing more look here!'—and pulling out a key, he unlocked a chest, and lifted up tray after tray of necklaces and jewels, furs, lawns, cloth of gold. 'Look! there! Two thousand pound won't buy that chest. Twenty years have I been getting those things together. That's the cream of many a Levant voyage, and East Indian voyage, and West Indian voyage. My Lady Bath can't match those pearls in her grand house at Tawstock, I got 'em from a Genoese, though, and paid for 'em. Look at that embroidered lawn! There's not such a piece in London, no, nor in Alexandria, I'll warrant, nor short of Calicut, where it came from. Look here again, there's a golden cup! I bought that of one that was nut with Pizarro in Peru. And look here, again!'—and the old man gloated over the treasure.

'And whom do you think I kept all these for? These were for her wedding-day—for her wedding-day. For your wedding-day, if you'd been minded, sir! Yes, yours, sir! And yet, I believe, I was so ambitious that I would not have let her marry under an earl, all the while I was pretending to be too proud to throw her at the head of a squire's son. Ah well! There was my idol, sir. I made her mad, I pampered her up with gewgaws and vanity, and then, because my idol was just what I had made her, I turned again and rent her.

'And now,' said he, pointing to the open chest, 'that was what I meant, and that' (pointing to the empty bed) 'was what God meant. Never mind. Come downstairs and finish your wine. I see you don't care about it all. Why should you? you are not her father, and you may thank God you are not. Go, and be merry while you can, young sir! . . . And yet, all this might have been yours. And—but I don't suppose you are one to be won by money—but all this may be yours still, and twenty thousand pounds to boot.

'I want no money, sir, but what I can earn with my own sword.

'Earn my money, then!'

'What on earth do you want of me?'

'To keep your oath,' said Salterne, clenching his arm, and looking up into his face with searching eyes.

'My oath! How did you know that I had one?'

'Ah! you were well ashamed of it, I suppose, W. H. .

next day! A drunken frolic all about a poor merchant's daughter! But there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed, nor done in the closet that is not proclaimed on the house-tops.'

'Ashamed of it, sir, I never was—but I have a right to ask how you came to know it?'

'What if a poor fat squinty rogue, a low-born fellow even as I am, whom you had baffled and made a laughing-stock, had come to me in my loneliness and sworn before God that if you honourable gentlemen would not keep your words, he the clown would?'

'John Brumblecombe!'

'And what if I had brought him where I have brought you, and shown him what I have shown you, and, instead of standing as stiff as any Spaniard, as you do, he had thrown himself on his knees by that bedside, and wept and prayed, sir, till he opened my hard heart for the first and last time, and I fell down on my sinful knees and wept and prayed by him?'

'I am not given to weeping, Mr Salterne,' said Amyas, 'and as for praying, I don't know yet what I have to pray for, on her account. My business is to work. Show me what I can do, and when you have done that, it will be full time to upbraid me with not doing it.'

'You can cut that fellow's throat.'

'It will take a long arm to reach him.'

'I suppose it is as easy to sail to the Spanish Main as it was to sail round the world.'

'My good sir,' said Amyas, 'I have at this moment no more worldly goods than my clothes and my sword, so how to sail to the Spanish Main, I don't quite see.

'And do you suppose, sir, that I should hint to you of such a voyage if I meant you to be at the charge of it? No, sir, if you want two thousand pounds, or five, to fit a ship, take it! Take it, sir! I hoarded money for my child, and now I will spend it to avenge her.'

Amyas was silent for a while, the old man still held his aim, still looked up steadfastly and fiercely in his face.

'Bring me home that man's head, and take ship, prizes—all! Keep the gain, sir, and give me the revenge!'

'Gain? Do you think I need bribing, sir? What kept me silent was the thought of my mother. I dare not go without her leave.'

Salterne made a gesture of impatience.

'I dare not, sir, I must obey my parent, whatever else I do.'

'Humph!' said he. 'If others had obeyed theirs as well!—But you are right, Captain Leigh, right. You will prosper, whoever else does not. Now, sir, goodnight, if you will let me be the first to say so. My old eyes grow heavy early nowadays. Perhaps it's old age, perhaps it's sorrow.'

So Amyas departed to the inn, and there, to his great joy, found Cary waiting for him, from whom he learned details, which must be kept for another chapter, and which I shall tell, for convenience sake, in my own words and not in his.

CHAPTER XV

HOW MR. JOHN BRIMBLECOMBE UNDERSTOOD
THE NATURE OF AN OATH

'The Kyng of Spayn is a foul paynim,
And fleveith on Mahound,
And pity it were that lady fayre
Should marry a heathen hound'—*Kyng Jhermes.*

ABOUT six weeks after the duel, the miller at Stow had come up to the great house in much tribulation, to borrow the bloodhounds. Rose Salterne had vanished in the night, no man knew whither.

Sir Richard was in Bideford, but the old steward took on himself to soul for the keepers, and down went the serving-men to the Mill with all the idle lads of the parish at their heels, thinking a maiden hunt very good sport, and of course taking a view of the case as favourable as possible to Rose.

They reviled the miller and his wife roundly for hard-hearted old heathens, and had no doubt that they had driven the poor maid to throw herself over cliff, or throw herself in the sea, while all the women of Stow, on the other hand, were of unanimous opinion that the hussy had 'gone off' with some bad fellow, and that pride was sure to have a fall, and so forth.

The facts of the case were, that all Rose's trinkets were left behind, so that she had at least gone off honestly, and nothing seemed to be missing but some of her linn, which old Anthony the steward broadly hinted was likely to be found in other people's boxes. The only trace was a little footstaple under her bedroom window. On that the bloodhound was laid (of course in leash), and after a premonitory whinper, lifted up his mighty voice, and started hell-mouthed through the garden gate, and up the lane, towing behind him the panting keeper, till they reached the downs above, and went straight away for Marsland-moath, where the whole posse comitatus pulled up breathless at the door of Lucy Palsmore.

'Lucy, as perhaps I should have said before, was now a widow, and found her widowhood not altogether contrary to her interest. Her anxiety about her old man had been fulfilled, he had never returned since the night on which he put to sea with Eustace and the Jesuits.

'Some natural tears she shed, but dried them soon'—as many of them, at least, as were not required for purposes of business, and then determined to prevent suspicion by a bold move, she started off to Stow, and told Lady Grenville a most pathetic tale; how her husband had gone out to pollock fishing, and never returned: but how she had heard horsemen gallop past her window in the dead of night, and was sure they must have been the Jesuits, and that they had carried off her old man by main force, and probably, after making use of his services, had killed and salted him down for provision on their voyage back to the Pope at Rome; after

which she ended by entreating protection against those 'Popish skulkers up to Chapel,' who were sworn to do her a mischief; and by an appeal to Lady Grenville's sense of justice, as to whether the Queen ought not to allow her a pension, for having had her heart's love turned into a sainted martyr by the hands of idolatrous traitors.

Lady Grenville (who had a great opinion of Lucy's medical skill, and always sent for her if one of the children had a 'housty,' i.e. sore throat) went forth and pleaded the case before Sir Richard with such effect, that Lucy was on the whole better off than ever for the next two or three years. But now—what had she to do with Rose's disappearance? and, indeed, where was she herself? Her door was fast, and round it her flock of goats stood, crying in vain for her to come and milk them, whilst from the down above, her donkeys, wandering at their own sweet will, answered the bay of the bloodhound with a burst of harmony.

'They'm laughing at us, keper, they nedlles, sure enough, we'm lost our labour here.'

But the bloodhound, after working about the door a while, turned down the glen, and never stopped till he reached the margin of the sea.

'They'm taken water. Let's go back, and rout out the old witch's house.'

'Tis just like that old Lucy, to lock a poor maid into shame.'

And returning, they attacked the cottage, and by a general phreaticum, ransacked the little dwelling, partly in indignation, and partly, if the truth be told, in the hope of plunder. But plunder there was none. Lucy had decamped with all her movable wealth, saving the huge black cat among the rubbers, who at the sight of the bloodhound vanished up the chimney (some said with a strong smell of brimstone), and being viewed outside, was hived into the woods, where she lived, I don't not, many happy years, a scourge to all the rabbits of the glen.

The goats and donkeys were driven off up to Stow, and the mob returned, a little ashamed of themselves when their brief wrath was past, and a little afraid, too, of what Sir Richard might say.

Ho, when he returned, sold the donkeys and goats, and gave the money to the poor, promising to refund the same, if Lucy returned and gave herself up to justice. But Lucy did not return; and her cottage, from which the neighbours shrank as from a haunted place, remained as she had left it, and crumbled slowly down to four fern-covered walls, past which the little stream went murmuring on from pool to pool—the only voice, for many a year to come, which broke the silence of that lonely glen.

A few days afterwards, Sir Richard, on his way from Bideford to Stow, looked in at Clovelly Court, and mentioned, with a 'by the bye,' news which made Will Cary leap from his seat almost to the ceiling. What it was we know already.

'And there is no clue!' asked old Cary; for his son was speechless.

'Only this; I hear that some fellow prowling about the cliffs that night saw a pinnace running for Lundy.'

Will rose, and went hastily out of the room.

In half an hour, he and three or four armed servants were on board a trawling skiff, and away to Lundy. He did not return for three days, and then brought news that an elderly man, seemingly a foreigner, had been lodging for some months past in a part of the ruined Moresco Castle, which was tenanted by one John Braund, that a few weeks since a younger man, a foreigner also, had joined him from on board a ship, the ship a *Flushing*, or *Easterling* of some sort. The ship came and went more than once, and the young man in her. A few days since, a lady and her maid, a stout woman, came with him up to the castle, and talked with the older man a long while in secret, abode there all night, and then all three sailed in the morning. The fishermen on the beach had heard the young man call the other father. He was a very still man, much as a mass-priest might be. More they did not know, or did not choose to know.

Whereon old Cary and Sir Richard sent Will on a second trip with the parish constable of Hartland (in which huge parish, for its size, is situate the Isle of Lundy, ten miles out at sea), who returned with the body of the hapless John Braund, farmer, fisherman, smuggler, etc., which worthily, after much fruitless examination (wherein examinee was afflicted with extreme deafness and loss of memory), departed to Exeter gaol, on a charge of 'harbouring priests, Jesuits, gypsies, and other suspect and traitorous persons.'

Poor John Braund, whose motive for entertaining the squalid ugly customers had probably been not treason, but a wife, seven children, and arrears of rent, did not thrive under the change from the pure air of Lundy to the pestiferous one of Exeter gaol, made infamous, but two years after (if I recollect right), by a 'black assize,' nearly as fatal as that more notorious one at Oxford, for in it, whether by the stench of the prisoners, or by a stream of foul air, judge, jury, counsel, and bystanders, numbering among them many members of the best families in Devon, sickened in court, and died miserably within a few days.

John Braund, then, took the gaol-fever in a week, and died raving in that noisome den. His secret, if he had one, perished with him, and nothing but vague suspicion was left as to Rose Salterne's fate. That she had gone off with the Spaniard, few doubted, but whither, and in what character? On that last subject, he sure, no mercy was shown to her by many a Bideford dame, who had hated the poor girl simply for her beauty; and by many a country lady, who had 'always expected that the girl would be brought to ruin by the absurd notice, beyond what her station had a right to, which was taken of her; while every young maiden aspired to fill the throne which Rose had abdicated. So

that, on the whole, Bideford considered itself as going on as well without poor Rose as it had done with her, or even better. And though she lingered in some hearts still as a fair dream, the business and the bustle of each day soon swept that dream away, and her place knew her no more.

And Will Cary?

He was for a while like a man distracted. He heaped himself with all manner of superfluous reproaches, for having (as he said) first brought the Rose into disgrace, and then driven her into the arms of the Spaniard, while St. Leger, who was a sensible man enough, tried in vain to persuade him that the fault was not his at all; that the two must have been attached to each other long before the quarrel, that it must have ended so, sooner or later, that old Salterne's harshness, rather than Cary's wrath, had hastened the catastrophe, and finally, that the Rose and her fortunes were, now, what she had eloped with a Spaniard, not worth troubling their heads about. Poor Will would not be so comforted. He wrote off to Frank at Whitehall, telling him the whole truth, calling himself all fools and villains, and entreating Frank's forgiveness; to which he received an answer, in which Frank said that Will had no reason to accuse himself, that these strange attachments were due to a syzygia, or sympathy of the stars, which ruled the destinies of each person, to fight against which was to fight against the heavens themselves, that he, as a brother of the Rose, was bound to believe, nay, to assert at the sword's point if need were, that the incomparable Rose of Torridge could make none but a worthy and virtuous choice, and that to the man whom she had honoured by her affection was due on their part, Spaniard and Papist though he might be, all friendship, worship, and loyal faith for evermore.

And honest Will took it all for gospel, little dreaming, what agony of despair, what fearful suspicions, what bitter prayers, this letter had cost to the gentle heart of Francis Leigh.

He showed the letter triumphantly to St. Leger, and he was quite wise enough to gain-say no word of it, at least aloud, but quite wise enough, also, to believe in secret that Frank looked on the matter in quite a different light; however, he contented himself with saying—

'The man is an angel as his mother is!' and there the matter dropped for a few days, till one came forward who had no mind to let it drop, and that was Jack Brimblecombe, now curate of Hartland town, and 'passing such on forty pounds a year.'

'I hope no offence, Mr. William, but when are you and the rest going after—after her?' The name stuck in his throat.

Cary was taken aback.

'What's that to thee, Catiline the blood-drinker?' asked he, trying to laugh it off.

'What? Don't laugh at me, sir, for it's no laughing matter. I drank that night nought worse, I expect, than red wine. Whatever it

was, we swore our oaths, Mr Cary; and oaths are oaths, say I.

'Of course, Jack, of course, but to go to look for her—and when we've found her, cut her lover's throat. Absurd, Jack, even if she were worth looking for, or his throat worth cutting. Tut, tut, tut—'

But Jack looked steadfastly in his face, and after some silence—

'How far is it to the Caraccas, then, sir?'

'What is that to thee, man?'

'Why, he was made governor thereof, I hear, so that would be the place to find her!'

'You don't mean to go thither to seek her?'

shouted Cary, forcing a laugh
'That depends on whether I can go, sir, but if I can scrape the money together, or get a berth on board some ship, why, God's will must be done.'

Will looked at him, to see if he had been drinking, or gone mad, but the little, jagged eyes were both sane and sober.

Will knew no answer. To laugh at the poor fellow was easy enough, to deny that he was right, that he was a hero and cavalier, outdoing romance itself in faithfulness, not so easy, and Cary, in the first impulse, wished him at the bottom of the bay for embarrassing him. Of course, his own plan of letting it all alone was the rational, prudent, irrefragable plan, and just what any gentleman in his senses would have done, but here was a vulgar, fat curate, out of his senses, determined not to let it all alone, but to do something, as Cary felt in his heart, of a far diviner stamp.

'Well,' said Jack, in his stupid steadfast way, 'it's a very bad look-out,' but mother's pretty well off, if father dies, and the maidens are stout wenches enough, and will make tidy servants, please the Lord. And you'll see that they come to no harm, Mr William, for old acquaintance sake, if I never come back.'

Cary was silent with amazement.

'And, Mr. William, you know me for an honest man, I hope. Will you lend me a five pound, and take my books in pawn for them, just to help me out.'

'Are you mad, or in a dream? You will never find her!'

'That's no reason why I shouldn't do my duty in looking for her, Mr William.'

'But, my good fellow, even if you got to the Indies, you will be clapt into the Inquisition, and burnt alive, as sure as your name is Jack.'

'I know that,' said he in a doleful tone, 'and a sore struggle of the flesh I have had about it, for I am a great coward, Mr William, a dirty coward, and always was as you know—but maybe the Lord will take care of me, as He does of little children and drunken men, and if not, Mr Will, I'd sooner burn, and have it over, than go on this way any longer, I would!' and Jack burst out blubbering.

'What way, my dear old lad?' said Will, softened as he well might be.

'Why, not—not to know whether—whether—whether she's married to him or not—her that I looked up to as an angel of God, as pure as the light of day, and knew she was too good for a poor pot-head like me, and prayed for her every night, God knows, that she might marry a king, if there was one fit for her—and I not to know whether she's living in sin or not, Mr William—it's more than I can bear, and there's an end of it. And if she is married to him they keep no faith with heretics, they can dissolve the marriage, or make away with her into the Inquisition, burn her, Mr Cary, as soon as burn me, the devils incarnate!'

Cary shuddered; the fact, true and palpable as it was, had never struck him before.

'Yes! or make her deny her God by torments, if she hasn't done it already for love to that—I know how love will make a body sell his soul, for I've been in love. Don't you laugh at me, Mr. Will, or I shall go mad!'

God knows, I was never less inclined to laugh at you in my life, my brave old Jack.'

'Is it so, then? Bless you for that word!' and Jack held out his hand. 'But what will become of my soul, after my oath, if I don't seek her out, just to speak to her, to warn her, for God's sake, even if it did no good, just to set before her the Lord's curse on idolatry and Antichrist, and those who deny Him for the sake of any creature, though I can't think He would be hard on her,—for who could? But I must speak all the same. The Lord has laid the burden on me, and done it must be. God help me!'

'Jack,' said Cary, 'if this is your duty, it is others'.'

'No, sir, I don't say that, you're a layman, but I am a deacon, and the chaplain of you all, and sworn to seek out Christ's sheep scattered up and down this naughty world, and that innocent lamb first of all.'

'You have sheep at Hartland, Jack, already.'

'There's plenty better than I will tend them, when I am gone, and none that will tend her, because none love her like me, and they won't venture. Who will? It can't be expected, and no shame to them!'

'I wonder what Amyas Leigh would say to all this, if he were at home!'

'Say! He'd do. He isn't one for talking. He'd go through fire and water for her, you trust him, Will Cary, and call me an ass if he won't.'

'Will you wait, then, till he comes back, and ask him?'

'He may not be back for a year and more.'

'Hear reason, Jack. If you will wait like a rational and patient man, instead of rushing blindfold on your ruin, something may be done.'

'You think so?'

'I cannot promise, but—'

'But promise me one thing. Do you tell Mr Frank what I say—or rather, I'll warrant, if I knew the truth, he has said the very same thing himself already.'

'You are out there, old man; for here is his own handwriting.'

Jack read the letter and sighed bitterly.

'Well, I did take him for another queer sort of fine gentleman. Still, if my duty isn't his, it's mine all the same. I judge no man, but I go, Mr. Cary.'

'But go you shall not till Amyas returns. As I live, I will tell your father, Jack, unless you promise, and you dare not disobey him.'

'I don't know even that, for conscience sake,' said Jack doubtfully.

'At least, you stay and dine here, old fellow, and we will settle whether you are to break the fifth commandment or not over good brewed sack.'

Now a good dinner was (as we know) what Jack loved, and loved too oft in vain, so he submitted for the nonce, and Cary thought, ere he went, that he had talked him pretty well round. At least he went home, and was seen no more for a week.

But at the end of that time he returned, and said with a joyful voice—

'I have settled all, Mr. Will. The parson of Welcombe will serve my church for two Sundays, and I am away for London town, to speak to Mr. Frank.'

'To London? How wilt get there?'

'On Shanks's mare,' said Jack, pointing to his handy legs. 'But I expect I can get a lift on board of a coaster so far as Bristol, and it's no way out to signify, I hear.'

Cary tried in vain to dissuade him; and then forced on him a small loan, with which away went Jack, and Cary heard no more of him for three weeks.

At last he walked into Clovelly Court again just before supper-time, thin and leg-weary, and sat himself down among the serving-men till Will appeared.

Will took him up above the salt, and made much of him (which indeed the honest fellow much needed), and after supper asked him in private how he had sped.

'I have learnt a lesson, Mr. William. I've learnt that there is one on earth loves her better than I, if she had but had the wit to have taken him.'

'But what says he of going to seek her?'

'He says what I say, Go! and he says what you say, Wait.'

'Go? Impossible! How can that agree with his letter?'

'That's no concern of mine. Of course, being nearer heaven than I am, he sees clearer what he should say and do than I can see for him. Oh, Mr. Will, that's not a man, he's an angel of God; but he's dying, Mr. Will.'

'Dying?'

'Yes, faith, of love for her. I can see it in his eyes, and hear it in his voice, but I am of tougher hide, and stiffer clay, and so you see I can't die even if I tried. But I'll obey my betters, and wait.'

And so Jack went home to his parish that

very evening, weary as he was, in spite of all entreaties to pass the night at Clovelly. But he had left behind him thoughts in Cary's mind, which gave their owner no rest by day or night, till the touch of a seeming accident made them all start suddenly into shape, as a touch of the freezing water covers it in an instant with crystals of ice.

He was lounging (so he told Amyas) one murky day on Bideford quay, when up came Mr. Salterne. Cary had shunned him of late, partly from delicacy, partly from dislike of his supposed hard-heartedness. But this time they happened to meet full, and Cary could not pass without speaking to him.

'Well, Mr. Salterne, and how goes on the shipping trade?'

'Well enough, sir, if some of you young gentlemen would but follow Mr. Leigh's example, and go forth to find us stay-at-homes new markets for our ware.'

'What? you want to be rid of us, eh?'

'I don't know why I should, sir. We shan't cross each other now, sir, whatever might have been once. But if I were you, I should be in the Indies about now, if I were not fighting the Queen's battles nearer home.'

'In the Indies? I should make but a poor hand of Drake's trade.' And so the conversation dropped, but Cary did not forget the hint.

'So, lad, to make an end of a long story,' said he to Amyas, 'if you are minded to take the old man's offer, so am I—and Westward-ho with you, cogie soul come fair.'

'It will be but a wild goose chase, Will.'

'If she is with him, we shall find her at La Gajra. If she is not, and the villain has cast her off down the wind, that will be only an additional reason for making an example of him.'

'And if neither of them is there, Will, the Plate-fleets will be, so it will be our own shame if we come home empty-handed. But will your father let you run such a risk?'

'My father! said Cary, laughing. 'He has just now so good hope of a long string of little Carys to fill my place, that he will be in no lack of an heir, come what will.'

'Little Carys?'

'I tell you truth. I think he must have had a sly sup of that fountain of perpetual youth, which our friend Don Guzman's grandfather went to seek in Florida, for some twelvemonth since, he must needs marry a tenant's daughter, and Mistress Abishag Jewell has brought him one fat baby already. So I shall go back to Ireland, or with you, but somewhere. I can't abide the thing's squalling any more than I can seeing Mistress Abishag sitting in my poor dear mother's place, and informing me every other day that she is come of an illustrious house, because she is (or is not) third cousin seven times removed to my father's old friend, Bishop Jewell of glorious memory. I had three-farts of a quarrel with the dear old man the other day; for after one of her peacock-bouts, I couldn't for the life of me help saying, that

as the Bishop had written an Apology for the people of England, my father had better conjure up his ghost to write an apology for him, and head it, 'Why green heads should grow on gray shoulders.'

'You impudent villain! And what did he say!'

'Laughed till he cried again, and told me if I did not like it I might leave it, which is just what I intend to do. Only mind, if we go, we must needs take Jack Brimblecombe with us, or he will surely leave himself over Harty Point, and his ghost will haunt us to our dying day.'

'Jack shall go. None deserves it better.'

After which there was a long consultation on practical matters, and it was concluded that Amyas should go up to London and sound Frank and his mother before any further steps were taken. The other brethren of the Rose were scattered far and wide, each at his post, and St. Leger had returned to his uncle, so that it would be unfair to them, as well as a considerable delay, to demand of them any fulfilment of their vow. And, as Amyas sagely remarked, 'Too many cooks spoil the broth, and half a dozen gentlemen aboard one ship are as bad as two kings of Brentford.'

With which maxim he departed next morning for London, leaving Yeo with Cary.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MOST CHIVALROUS ADVENTURE OF THE GOOD SHIP 'ROSE'

'He is brass within, and steel without,
With beams on his topcastle strong,
And eighteen pieces of ordinance
He carries on either side along

— Sir Andrew Barton.

LET us take boat, as Amyas did, at Whitehall-stairs, and slip down ahead of him under old London Bridge, and so to Deptford Creek, where remains, as it were embayed, the famous ship *Felican*, in which Drake had sailed round the world. There she stands, drawn up high and dry upon the sedge bank of Thames, like an old warrior resting after his toil. Nailed upon her mainmast are epigrams and verses in honour of her and of her captain, three of which, by the Winchester scholar, Camden gives in his *History*, and Elizabeth's self consecrated her solemnly, and having banqueted on board, there and then honoured Drake with the dignity of knighthood. 'At which time a bridge of planks, by which they came on board, broke under the press of people, and fell down with a hundred men upon it, who, notwithstanding, had none of them any harm. So as that ship may seem to have been built under a lucky planet.'

There she has remained since as a show, and moreover as a sort of dining-hall for jovial parties from the City, one of which would seem to be on board this afternoon, to judge from the flags which bedizen the masts, the sounds of

revelry and savoury steams which issue from those windows which once were port-holes, and the rushing to and fro along the river brink, and across that lucky bridge, of white-aproned waiters from the neighbouring Pelican Inn. A great feast is evidently toward, for with those white-aproned waiters are gay serving-men, wearing on their shoulders the City badge. The Lord Mayor is giving dinner to certain gentlemen of the Leicester House party, who are interested in foreign discoveries, and what place so fit for such a feast as the *Felican* itself!

Look at the men all round; a nobler company you will seldom see. Especially too, if you be Americans, look at their faces, and reverence them, for to them and to their wisdom you owe the existence of your mighty fatherland.

At the head of the table sits the Lord Mayor, whom all readers will recognise at once, for he is none other than that famous Sir Edward Osborne, clothworker, and ancestor of the Dukes of Leeds, whose romance nowadays is in every one's hands. He is aged, but not changed, since he leaped from the window upon London Bridge into the roaring tide below, to rescue the infant who is now his wife. The chivalry and promptitude of this 'prince boy' have grown and hardened into the thoughtful daring of the wealthy merchant adventurer. There he sits, a right kingly man, with my lord Earl of Cumberland on his right hand, and Walter Raleigh on his left, the three talk together in a low voice on the chance of there being vast and rich countries still undiscovered between Florida and the River of Canada. Raleigh's half-scientific declamation, and his often quotations of Doctor Dee the conjuror, have less effect on Osborne than on Cumberland (who tried many an adventure to foreign parts, and failed in all of them, apparently for the simple reason that instead of going himself, he sent other people), and Raleigh is fain to call to his help the quiet student who sits on his left hand, Richard Hakluyt, of Oxford. But he is deep in talk with a reverend elder, whose long white beard flows almost to his waist, and whose face is furrowed by a thousand storms, Anthony Jenkinson by name, the great Asiatic traveller, who is discoursing to the Christchurch virtuoso of reindeer sledges and Siberian steppes, and of the fossil ivory, plain proof of Noah's flood, which the Tungus dig from the ice-cliffs of the Arctic sea. Next to him is Christopher Carhile, Walsingham's son-in-law (as Sidney also is now), a valiant captain, afterwards general of the soldiery in Drake's triumphant West Indian raid of 1585, with whom a certain Bishop of Carthage will hereafter drink good wine. He is now busy talking with Alderman Hart the grocer, Sheriff Spencer the clothworker, and Charles Leigh (Amyas's merchant cousin), and with Aldworth the mayor of Bristol, and William Selterne, alderman thereof, and cousin of our friend at Bideford. For Carhile, and Secretary Walsingham also, have been helping them heart and soul for the last two years to collect money for

Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert's great adventures to the North-West, on one of which Carlile was indeed to have sailed himself, but did not go after all, I never could discover for what reason.

On the opposite side of the table is a group, scarcely less interesting. Martin Frobisher and John Davis, the pioneers of the North-West passage, are talking with Alderman Sanderson, the great geographer and 'setter forth of globes', with Mr Towerson, Sir Gilbert Peckham, our old acquaintance Captain John Winter, and last, but not least, with Philip Sidney himself, who, with his accustomed courtesy, has given up his rightful place toward the head of the table that he may have a knot of virtuous all to himself, and has brought with him, of course, his two nearest intimates, Mr Edward Dyer and Mr Francis Leigh. They too are talking of the North-West passage and Sidney is lamenting that he is tied to diplomacy and courts, and expressing his envy of old Martin Frobisher in all sorts of pretty compliments, to which the other replies that—

'It's all very fine to talk of here, a sailing on dry land with a good glass of wine before you, but you'd find it another guess sort of business, knocking about among the icebergs with your head frozen fast to your ruff, Sir Philip, specially if you were a bit squeamish about the stomach.'

'That were a slight matter to endure, my dear sir, if by it I could win the honour which her Majesty bestowed on you, when her own ivory hand waved a farewell kerchief to your ship from the windows of Greenwich Palace.'

'Well, sir, folks say you have no reason to complain of lack of favours, as you have no reason to deserve lack, and if you can get them by staying ashore, don't you go to sea to look for more, say I. Eh, Master Towerson?'

Towerson's gray beard, which has stood many a foreign voyage, both fair and foul, wags grimly. But at this moment a waiter enters, and—

'Please my Lord Mayor's Worship, there is a tall gentleman outside, would speak with the Right Honourable Sir Walter Raleigh.'

'Show him in, man. Sir Walter's friends are ours.'

Amyas enters, and stands hesitating in the doorway.

'Captain Leigh!' cry half a dozen voices.

'Why did you not walk in, sir?' says Osborne. 'You should know your way well enough between these decks.'

'Well enough, my lords and gentlemen. But Sir Walter—you will excuse me,—and he gave Raleigh a look which was enough for his quick wit. Turning pale as death, he rose, and followed Amyas into an adjoining cabin. They were five minutes together, and then Amyas came out alone.

In few words he told the company the sad story which we already know. Ere it was ended, noble tears were glistening on some of those stern faces.

'The old Egyptians,' said Sir Edward Osborne, 'when they banqueted, set a corpse among their guests, for a memorial of human vanity. Have we forgotten God and our own weakness in this our feast, that He Himself has sent us thus a message from the dead?'

'Nay, my Lord Mayor,' said Sidney, 'not from the dead, but from the realm of everlasting life.'

'Amen!' answered Osborne. 'But, gentlemen, our feast is at an end. There are those here who would drink on merrily, as brave men should, in spite of the private losses of which they have just had news, but none here who can drink with the loss of so great a man still ringing in his ears.'

It was true. Though many of the guests had suffered severely by the failure of the expedition, they had utterly forgotten that fact in the awful news of Sir Humphrey's death, and the feast broke up sadly and hurriedly, while each man asked his neighbour, 'What will the Queen say?'

Raleigh re-entered in a few minutes, but was silent, and pressing many an honest hand as he passed, went out to call a wherry, beckoning Amyas to follow him. Sidney, Cumberland, and Frank went with them in another boat, leaving the two to talk over the sad details.

They disembarked at Whitehall-stairs, Raleigh, Sidney, and Cumberland went to the palace, and the two brothers to their mother's lodgings.

Amyas had prepared his speech to Frank about Rose Salterne, but now that it was come to the point, he had not courage to begin, and longed that Frank would open the matter. Frank, too, shrank from what he knew must come, and all the more because he was ignorant that Amyas had been to Bladford, or knew aught of the Rose's disappearance.

So they went upstairs, and it was a relief to both of them to find that their mother was at the Abbey, for it was for her sake that both dreaded what was coming. So they went and stood in the bay-window which looked out upon the river, and talked of things indifferent, and looked earnestly at each other's faces by the fading light, for it was now three years since they had met.

Years and events had deepened the contrast between the two brothers, and Frank smiled with affectionate pride as he looked up in Amyas's face, and saw that he was no longer merely the rollicking heady sailor-lad, but the self-confident and stately warrior, showing in every look and gesture

'The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,'

worthy of one whose education had been begun by such men as Drake and Grenville, and finished by such as Raleigh and Gilbert. His long locks were now cropped close to the head, but as a set-off, the lips and chin were covered with rich golden beard; his face was browned by a thousand suns and storms; a long scar, the trophy of some Irish fight, crossed his right temple,

his huge figure had gained breadth in proportion to its height; and his hand, as it lay upon the window sill, was hard and massive as a smith's. Frank laid his own upon it, and sighed, and Amyas looked down, and started at the contrast between the two—so slender, bloodless, all but transparent, were the delicate fingers of the courtier. Amyas looked anxiously into his brother's face. It was changed, indeed, since they last met. The brilliant red was still on either cheek, but the white had become dull and opaque, the lips were pale, the features sharpened, his eyes glittered with unnatural fire, and when Frank told Amyas that he looked aged, Amyas could not help thinking that the remark was far more true of the speaker himself.

Trying to shut his eyes to the palpable truth, he went on with his chat, asking the name of one building after another.

'And so this is old Father Thames, with his bank of palaces!'

'Yes. His banks are stately enough, yet, you see, he cannot stay to look at them. He hurries down to the sea, and the sea into the ocean, and the ocean Westward-ho, for ever. All things move Westward-ho. Perhaps we may move that way ourselves some day, Amyas.'

'What do you mean by that strange talk?'

'Only that the ocean follows the *primum mobile* of the heavens, and flows for ever from East to West. Is there anything so strange in my thinking of that, when I am just come from a party where we have been drinking success to Westward-ho?'

'And much good has come of it! I have lost the best friend and the noblest captain upon earth, not to mention all my little earnings, in that same confounded gulf of Westward-ho.'

'Yes, Sir Humphrey Gilbert's star has set in the West—why not? Sun, moon, and planets sink into the West: why not the masters of this lower world? why not a will o'-the-wisp like me, Amyas?'

'God forbid, Frank!'

'Why, then? Is not the West the land of peace and the land of dreams? Do not our hearts tell us so each time we look upon the setting sun, and long to float away with him upon the golden-cushioned clouds? They bury men, with their faces to the East. I should rather have mine turned to the West, Amyas, when I die, for I cannot but think it some divine instinct which made the ancient poets guess that Elysium lay beneath the setting sun. It is bound up in the heart of man, that longing for the West. I complain of no one for fleeing away thither beyond the utmost sea, as David wished to flee, and be at peace.'

'Complain of no one for fleeing thither!' asked Amyas. 'That is more than I do.'

Frank looked inquiringly at him; and then—

'No. If I had complained of any one, it would have been of you just now, for seeming to be tired of going Westward-ho.'

'Do you wish me to go, then?'

'God knows,' said Frank, after a moment's pause. 'But I must tell you now, I suppose, once and for all. That has happened at Bideford which—'

'Spare us both, Frank; I know all. I came through Bideford on my way hither, and came hither not merely to see you and my mother, but to ask your advice and her permission.'

'True heart! noble heart!' cried Frank.

'I knew you would be staunch!'

'Westward-ho it is, thou?'

'Can we escape?'

'We?'

'Amyas, does not that which binds you bind me?'

Amyas started back, and held Frank by the shoulders at arm's length, as he did so, he could feel, through that his brother's arms were but skin and bone.

'You! Dearest man, a month of it would kill you!'

Frank smiled, and tossed his head on one side in his pretty way.

'I belong to the school of Thales, who held that the ocean is the mother of all life; and feel no more repugnance at returning to her bosom again than Humphrey Gilbert did.'

'But, Frank,—my mother?'

'My mother knows all, and would not have us unworthy of her.'

'Impossible! She will never give you up!'

'All things are possible to them that believe in God, my brother, and she believes. But, indeed, Doctor Dee, the wise man, gave her but this summer I know not what of prognostics and diagnostics concerning me. I am born, it seems, under a cold and watery planet, and need, if I am to be long-lived, to go nearer to the vivifying heat of the sun, and there bask out my little life, like fly on wall. To tell truth, he has bidden me spend no more winters here in the East, but return to our native sea-breezes, there to warm my frozen lungs, and has so filled my mother's fancy with stories of sick men, who were given up for lost in Germany and France, and yet renewed their youth, like any serpent or eagle, by going to Italy, Spain, and the Canaries, that she herself will be more ready to let me go than I to leave her all alone. And yet I must go, Amyas. It is not merely that my heart pants, as Sidney's does, as every gallant's ought, to make one of your noble choir of Argonauts, who are now replenishing the earth and subduing it for God and for the Queen, it is not merely, Amyas, that love calls me—love tyrannous and uncontrollable, strengthened by absence, and deepened by despair; but honour, Amyas—my oath—'

And he paused for lack of breath, and bursting into a violent fit of coughing, leaned on his brother's shoulder, while Amyas cried—

'Fools, fools that we were—that I was, I mean—to take that fantastical vow!'

'Not so,' answered a gentle voice from behind. 'you vowed for the sake of peace on earth, and

goodwill toward men, and "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." No, my sons, be sure that such self-sacrifice as you have shown will meet its full reward at the hand of Him who sacrificed Himself for you."

"Oh mother! mother!" said Amiyas, "and do you not hate the very sight of me—come here to take away your first-born!"

"My boy, God takes him, and not you. And if I dare believe in such predictions, Doctor Dee assured me that some exceeding honour awaited you both in the West, to each of you according to your deserts."

"Ah!" said Amiyas. "My blessing, I suppose, will be like *Fortunio's*, to live by my sword, while Jacob was, the spiritual man, inherits the kingdom of heaven and an angel's crown."

"Be it what it may, it will surely be a blessing, as long as you are such, my children, as you have been. At least my Frank will be safe from the intrigues of court and the temptations of the world. Would that I too could go with you, and share in your glory!" Come, now," said she, laying her hand upon Amiyas's breast, and looking up into his face with one of her most winning smiles, "I have heard of heroic mothers ere now who went forth with their sons to battle, and cheered them on to victory. Why should I not go with you on a more peaceful errand? I could nurse the sick, if there were any; I could perhaps have speech of that poor girl, and win her back more easily than you. She might listen to words from a woman—a woman, too, who has loved—which she could not hear from men. At least I could mend and wash for you. I suppose it is as easy to play the good housewife aloft as on shore? Come, now!"

Amiyas looked from one to the other.

"God only knows which of the two is less fit to go. Mother! mother! you know not what you ask. Frank! Frank! I do not want you with me. This is a sterner matter than either of you fancy it to be; one that must be worked out, not with kind words, but with sharp shot and cold steel."

"How!" cried both together, aghast.

"I must pay my men, and pay, my fellow-adventurers, and I must pay them with Spanish gold. And what is more, I cannot, as a loyal subject of the Queen's, go to the Spanish Main with a clear conscience on my own private quarrel, unless I do all the harm that my hand finds to do, by day and night, to her enemies, and the enemies of God."

"What nobler knight-errantry!" said Frank cheerfully, but Mrs. Leigh shuddered.

"What! Frank too!" she said, half to herself, but her sons knew what she meant. Amiyas's warlike life, honourable and righteous as she knew it to be, she had borne as a sad necessity; but that Frank as well should become 'a man of blood,' was more than her gentle heart could face at first sight. That one youthful duel of his he had carefully concealed from

her, knowing her feeling on such matters. And it seemed too dreadful to her to associate that gentle spirit with all the ferocities and the carnage of a battlefield. "And yet," said she to herself, "is this but another of the self-willed idols which I must renounce one by one!" And then, catching at a last hope she answered—

"Frank must at least ask the Queen's leave to go, and if she permits, how can I gainsay her wisdom!"

And so the conversation dropped, sadly enough.

But now began a fresh perplexity in Frank's soul, which amused Amiyas at first, when it seemed merely jest, but nettled him a good deal when he found it earnest. For Frank looked forward to asking the Queen's permission for his voyage with the most abject despondency and terror. Two or three days passed before he could make up his mind to ask for an interview with her, and he spent the time in making as much interest with Leicester, Hatton, and Sidney, as if he were about to sue for a reprieve from the scaffold.

So said Amiyas, remarking, further, that the Queen could not cut his head off for wanting to go to sea.

"But what axe so sharp as her frown!" said Frank in most ingenuous tone.

Amiyas began to whistle in a very rude way.

"Ah, my brother, you cannot comprehend the pain of parting from her."

"No, I can't. I would die for the least hair of her royal head, God bless it!" but I could live very well from now till Doomsday without ever setting eyes on the said head."

"Plato's Troglodytes regretted not that sunlight which they had never beheld."

Amiyas, not understanding this recondite conceit, made no answer to it, and the matter ended for the time. But at last Frank obtained his audience, and after a couple of hours' absence returned quite pale and exhausted.

"Thank Heaven, it is over!" She was very angry at first—what else could she be?—and upbraided me with having set my love so low. I could only answer, that my fatal fault was committed before the sight of her had taught me what was supremely lovely, and only worthy of admiration. Then she accused me of disloyalty in having taken an oath which bound me to the service of another than her. I confessed my sin with tears, and when she threatened punishment, pleaded that the offence had avenged itself heavily already,—for what worse punishment than exile from the sunlight of her presence into the outer darkness which reigns where she is not? Then she was pleased to ask me, how I could dare, as her sworn servant, to desert her side in such dangerous times as these; and asked me how I should reconcile it to my conscience, if on my return I found her dead by the assassin's knife? At which most pathetic demand I could only throw myself at once on my own knees and her mercy, and so awaited my sentence. Whereon, with that angelic pity

'which alone makes her awfulness endurable, she turned to Hatton and asked, "What say you, Monton? Is he humbled sufficiently?" and so dismissed me.'

'Heigh ho!' yawned Amyas—

'If the bridge had been stronger,
My tale had been longer.'

'Amyas! Amyas!' quoth Frank solemnly, 'you know not what power over the soul has the native and God-given majesty of royalty (awful enough in itself), when to it is super-added the wisdom of the sage, and therewithal the tenderness of the woman. Had I my will, there should be in every realm not a salue, but an anti-salue law whereby no knigs, but only queens should rule mankind. Then would weakness and not power be to man the symbol of divinity, love, and not cunning, would be the arbiter of every cause, and chivalry, not fear, the spring of all obedience.'

'Humph! There's some sense in that,' quoth Amyas. 'I'd run a mile for a woman when I would not walk a yard for a man, and—Who is this our mother is bringing in? The handsomest fellow I ever saw in my life!'

Amyas was not far wrong, for Mrs. Leigh's companion was none other than Mr Secretary, Amyas's Smerwick Fort acquaintance, *alias* Colin Clout, *alias* Inimorto *alias* Edmund Spenser. Some half-jesting conversation had seemingly been passing between the poet and the saint, for as they came in she said with a smile (which was somewhat of a forced one)—

'Well, my dear sons, you are sure of immortality, at least on earth, for Mr Spenser has been vowing to me to give your adventure a whole canto to itself in his *Fairy Queen*.'

'And you no less, madam,' said Spenser. 'What were the story of the Gracchi worth without the figure of Cornelia? If I honour the fruit, I must not forget the stem which bears it. Frank, I congratulate you.'

'Then you know the result of my interview, mother!'

'I know everything, and am content,' said Mrs. Leigh.

'Mrs Leigh has reason to be content,' said Spenser, 'with that which is but her own likeness.'

'Spare your flattery to an old woman, Mr Spenser. When, pray, did I' (with a most loving look at Frank) 'refuse knighthood for duty's sake?'

'Knighthood?' cried Amyas. 'You never told me that, Frank!'

'That may well be, Captain Leigh,' said Spenser; 'but believe me, her Majesty (so Hatton assures me) told him this day, no less than that by going on this quest he deprived himself of that highest earthly honour, which crowned heads are fain to seek from their own subjects.'

Spenser did not exaggerate. Knighthood was then the prize of merit only, and one so valuable, that Elizabeth herself said, when

asked why she did not bestow a peerage upon some favourite, that having already knighted him, she had nothing better to bestow. It remained for young Essex to begin the degradation of the order in his hapless Irish campaign, and for James to complete that degradation by his novel method of raising money by the sale of baronetcies; a new order of hereditary knighthood which was the laughing-stock of the day, and which (however venerable it may have since become) reflects anything but honour upon its first possessors.

'I owe you no thanks, Colin,' said Frank, 'for having broached my secret. but I have lost nothing after all. There is still an order of knighthood in which I may yet aspire, even though her Majesty refuse me the accolade.'

'What, then? you will not take it from a foreign prince?'

Frank smiled.

'Have you never read of that knighthood which is eternal in the heavens, and of those true cavaliers whom John saw in Patmos, riding on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, knights-errant in the everlasting war against the False Prophet and the Beast? Let me but become worthy of their ranks hereafter, what matter whether I be called Sir Frank on earth?'

'My son,' said Mrs Leigh, 'remember that they follow One whose vesture is dipped, not in the blood of His enemies, but in His own.'

'I have remembered it for many a day, and remembered, too, that the garments of the knights may need the same tokens as their captain's.'

'O Frank! Frank! is not His precious blood enough to cleanse all sin, without the sacrifice of our own?'

'We may need no more than His blood, mother, and yet He may need ours,' said Frank.

How that conversation ended I know not, nor whether Spenser fulfilled his purpose of introducing the two brothers and their mother into his *Fairy Queen*. If so, the manuscripts must have been lost among those which perished (along with Spenser's baby) in the sack of Kilcolman by the Irish in 1598. But we need hardly regret the loss of them, for the temper of the Leighs and their mother is the same which inspires every canto of that noblest of poems; and which inspired, too, hundreds in those noble days, when the chivalry of the Middle Ages was welded to the free thought and enterprise of the now.

So mother and sons returned to Bideford, and set to work. Frank mortgaged a farm, Will Cary did the same (having some land of his own from his mother). Old Salterne grumbled at any man save himself spending a penny on the voyage, and forced on the adventurers a good ship of two hundred tons burden, and five hundred pounds toward fitting her out; Mrs. Leigh worked day and night at clothes

and comforts of every kind, Amyas had nothing to give but his time and his brains. but, as Salterne said, the rest would have been of little use without them, and day after day he and the old merchant were on board the ship, superintending with their own eyes the fitting of every rope and nail. Cary went about beating up recruits, and made, with his jests and his frankness, the best of crimps. while John Brimblecombe, beside himself with joy, toddled about after him from tavern to tavern, and quay to quay, exalted for the time being (as Cary told him) into a second Peter the Hermit, and so fiercely did he preach a crusade against the Spaniards, through Bideford and Appledore, Clovelly and Ilfracombe, that Amyas might have had a hundred and fifty loose fellows in the first fortnight. But he knew better still, smarting from the effects of a similar haste in the Newfoundland adventure, he had determined to take none but picked men, and by dint of labour he obtained them.

Only one scapegrace did he take into his crew, named Parracombe, and by that scapegrace hangs a tale. He was an old schoolfellow of his at Bideford, and son of a merchant in that town—one of those unlucky members who are 'nobody's enemy but their own'—a handsome, idle, clever fellow, who used his scholarship, of which he had picked up some smattering, chiefly to justify his own escapades, and to string songs together. Having drunk all that he was worth at home, he had in a penitent fit forsown liquor, and tormented Amyas into taking him to sea, where he afterwards made as good a sailor as any one else, but sorely scandalised John Brimblecombe by all manner of heretical arguments, half Anacreontic, half smacking of the rather loose doctrines of that 'Family of Love' which tormented the orthodoxy and morality of more than one Bishop of Exeter. Poor Will Parracombe! he was born a few centuries too early. Had he but lived now, he might have published a volume or two of poetry, and then settled down on the staff of a newspaper. Had he even lived thirty years later than he did, he might have written frantic tragedies or filthy comedies for the edification of James's profligate metropolis, and roystered it in taverns with Marlowe, to die as Marlowe did, by a footman's sword in a drunken brawl. But in those stern days such weak and hysterical spirits had no fair vent for their 'humours,' save in being reconciled to the Church of Rome, and plotting with Jesuits to assassinate the Queen, as Parry, and Somerville, and many other madmen, did.

So, at least, some Jesuit or other seems to have thought, shortly after Amyas had agreed to give the spendthrift a berth on board. For one day Amyas, going down to Appledore about his business, was called into the little 'Mariners' Rest' inn, to extract therefrom poor Will Parracombe, who (in spite of his vow) was drunk and outrageous, and had vowed the death of the landlady and all her kin. So Amyas fetched him out by the collar, and walked him home

thereby to Bideford, during which walk Will told him a long and confused story, how an Egyptian rogue had met him that morning on the sands by Boathythe, offered to tell his fortune, and prophesied to him great wealth and honour, but not from the Queen of England, had coaxed him to the Mariners' Rest, and gambled with him for liquor, at which it seemed Will always won, and of course drank his winnings on the spot, whereon the Egyptian began asking him all sorts of questions about the projected voyage of the *Rose*—a good many of which, Will confessed, he had answered before he saw the fellow's drift, after which the Egyptian had offered him a vast sum of money to do some desperate villainy, but whether it was to murder Amyas, or the Queen, whether to bore a hole in the bottom of the good ship *Rose*, or to set the Torridge on fire by art magic, he was too drunk to recollect exactly. Whereon Amyas treated three-quarters of the story as a tipsy dream, and contented himself by getting a warrant against the landlady for harbouring 'Egyptians,' which was then a heavy offence—a gipsy disguise being a favourite one with Jesuits and their emissaries. She of course denied that any gipsy had been there, and though there were some who thought they had seen such a man come in, none had seen him go out again. On which Amyas took occasion to ask, what had become of the suspicious Popish ostler whom he had seen at the Mariners' Rest three years before, and discovered, to his surprise, that the said ostler had vanished from the very day of Don Guzman's departure from Bideford. There was evidently a mystery somewhere—but nothing could be proved, the landlady was dismissed with a reprimand, and Amyas soon forgot the whole matter, after rating Parracombe soundly. After all, he could not have told the gipsy (if one existed) anything important, for the special destination of the voyage (as was the custom in those times, for fear of Jesuits playing into the hands of Spain) had been carefully kept secret among the adventurers themselves, and, except Yeo and Drew, none of the men had any suspicion that La Guayra was to be their aim.

And Salvation Yeo?

Salvation was almost wild for a few days, at the sudden prospect of going in search of his little maid, and of fighting Spaniards once more before he died. I will not quote the texts out of Isaiah and the Psalms with which his mouth was filled from morning to night, for fear of seeming irreverent in the eyes of a generation which does not believe, as Yeo believed, that fighting the Spaniards was as really fighting in God's battle against evil as were the wars of Joshua or David. But the old man had his practical hint too, and entreated to be sent back to Plymouth to look for men.

'There's many a man of the old *Pelican*, sir, and of Captain Hawkins's *Minion*, that knows the Indies as well as I, and longs to be back again. There's Drew, sir, that we left behind

(and no better sailing master for us in the West country, and has accounts against the Spaniards, too; for it was his brother, the Barnstable man, that was factor aboard of poor Mr Andrew Barker, and got clapt into the Inquisition at the Canaries), you promised him, sir, that night he stood by you on board the *Raleigh* and if you'll be as good as your word, he'll be as good as his, and bring a score more brave fellows with him.

So off went Yeo to Plymouth, and returned with Drew and a score of old never-strikes. One look at their visages, as Yeo proudly ushered them into the Ship Tavern, showed Amyas that they were of the metal which he wanted, and that, with the four North-Devon men who had gone round the world with him in the *Pelican* (who all joined in 'the first week'), he had a reserve-force on which he could depend in utter need, and that utter need might come he knew as well as any.

Nor was this all which Yeo had brought, for he had with him a letter from Sir Francis Drake, full of regrets that he had not seen 'his dear lad' as he went through Plymouth. 'But indeed I was up to Dartmoor, surveying with cross staff and chain, over my knees in bog for a three weeks or more. For I have a project to bring down a leat of fair water from the hill-tops right into Plymouth town, cutting off the heads of Tavy, Meavy, Wallcomb, and West Dart, and thereby purging Plymouth harbour from the silt of the mines whereby it has been choked of late years, and giving pure drink not only to the townsmen, but to the fleets of the Queen's Majesty, which if I do, I shall both make some poor return to God for all His unspeakable mercies, and erect unto myself a monument better than of brass or marble, not merely honourable to me, but useful to my countrymen.'¹ Whereon Frank sent Drake a pretty epigram, comparing Drake's projected leat to that river of eternal life whereof the just would drink throughout eternity, and quoting (after the fashion of those days) John vii '38, while Amyas took more heed of a practical appendage to the same letter, which was a list of hints scrawled for his use by Captain John Hawkins himself, on all sea matters, from the mounting of ordnance to the use of vitriol against the 'scurvy, in default of oranges and 'limmons', all which stood Amyas in good stead during the ensuing month, while Frank grew more and more proud of his brother, and more and more humble about himself.

For he watched with astonishment how the simple sailor, without genius, scholarship, or fancy, had gained, by plain honesty, patience, and common sense, a power over the human heart, and a power over his work, whatsoever it might be, which Frank could only admire afar off. The men looked up to him as infallible, prided themselves on forestalling his wishes, carried out his slightest hint, worked early and late to win a smile from him, while as for him,

¹ This noble monument of Drake's piety and public spirit still remains in full use.

no detail escaped him, no drudgery sickened him, no disappointment angered him, till on the 15th of November 1583 dropped down from Ridesford Quay to Appledore Pool the tall ship *Rose*, with a hundred men on board (for sailors packed close in those days), beef, pork, biscuit, and good ale (for ale went to sea always then) in abundance, four culverins on her main deck, her poop and fore-castle well fitted with swivels of every size, and her racks so full of muskets, calivers, long-bows, pikes, and swords, that all agreed so well-appointed a ship had never sailed 'out over Bar'.

The next day being Sunday, the whole crew received the Communion together at Northam Church, amid a mighty crowd; and then going on board again, hove anchor and sailed out over the Bar before a soft east wind, to the music of sacbut, fife, and drum, with discharge of all ordinance, great and small, with cheering of young and old from cliff and strand and quay, and with many a tearful prayer and blessing upon that gallant bark, and all brave hearts on board.

And Mrs. Leigh, who had kissed her sons for the last time after the Communion at the altar steps (and what more fit place for a mother's kiss?), went to the rocky knoll outside the churchyard wall, and watched the ship glide out between the yellow dunes, and lessen slowly hour by hour into the boundless West, till her hull sank below the dun horizon, and her white sails faded away into the gray Atlantic mist perhaps for ever.

And Mrs. Leigh gathered her cloak about her, and bowed her head and worshipped, and then went home to loneliness and prayer.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW THEY CAME TO BARBADOS, AND FOUND NO MEN THEREIN

'The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark—COLUMBOE.

LAND! land! land! Yes, there it was, far away to the south and west, beside the setting sun, a long blue bar between the crimson sea and golden sky. Land at last, with fresh streams, and cooling fruits, and free room for cramped and scurvy-weakened limbs. And there, too, might be gold, and gems, and all the wealth of Ind. Who know? Why not? The old world of fact and prose lay thousands of miles behind them, and before them and around them was the realm of wonder and fable, of boundless hope and possibility. Sick men crawled up out of their stifling hammocks, strong men fell on their knees and gave God thanks; and all eyes and hands were stretched eagerly toward the far blue cloud, fading as the sun sank down, yet rising higher and broader as the ship rushed on before the rich trade-wind, which whispered lovingly round brow and sail, 'I am the faith-

ful friend of those who dare!' 'Blow freshly, fresher yet, thou good trade-wind, of whom it is written that He makes the winds His angels, ministering breaths to the heirs of His salvation. Blow fresher yet, and save, if not me from death, yet her from worse than death. Blow on, and land me at her feet, to call the lost lamb home, and die!'

So murmured Frank to himself, as with straining eyes he gazed upon that first outlier of the New World which held his all. His cheeks were thin and wasted, and the hectic spot on each glowed crimson in the crimson light of the setting sun. A few minutes more, and the rainbows of the West were gone, the herald and topos, amethyst and ruby, had faded into silver-gray, and overhead, through the alk sapphire depths, the Moon and Venus reigned above the sea.

'That should be Barbados, your worship,' said Drew, the master, 'unless my reckoning is far out, which, Heaven knows, it has no right to be, after such a passage, and God be praised!'

'Barbados? I never heard of it.'

'Very like, sir, but Yeo and I were here with Captain Drake, and I was here after, too, with poor Captain Bailow, and there is good harbourage to the south and west of it, I remember.'

'And neither Spaniard, cannibal, or other evil beast,' said Yeo. 'A very garden of the Lord, sir, laid away in the sea, for an inheritance to those who love Him. I heard Captain Drake talk of planting it, if ever he had a chance.'

'I recollect now,' said Amyas, 'some talk between him and poor Sir Humphrey about an island here. Would God he had gone thither instead of to Newfoundland!'

'Nay, then,' said Yeo, 'he is in bliss now with the Lord, and you would not have kept him from that, sir?'

'He would have waited as willingly as he went, if he could have served his Queen thereby. But what say you, my masters? How can we do better than to spend a few days here, to get our sick round, before we strike the main, and set to our work?'

All approved the counsel except Frank, who was silent.

'Come, fellow-adventurer,' said Cary, 'we must have your voice too.'

'To my impatience, Will,' said he, aside in a low voice, 'there is but one place on earth, and I am all day longing for wings to fly thither, but the counsel is right. I approve it.'

So the verdict was announced, and received with a hearty cheer by the crew, and long before morning they had run along the southern shore of the island, and were feeling their way into the bay where Bridgetown now stands. All eyes were eagerly fixed on the low wooded hills which slept in the moonlight, spangled by fireflies, with a million dancing stars, all nostrils drank greedily the fragrant air, which swept from the land, laden with the scent of a thousand flowers, all ears welcomed, as a grateful change from the monotonous whisper and lap of the

water, the hum of insects, the snore of the tree-toads, the plaintive notes of the shore-fowl, which fill a tropic night with noisy life.

At last she stopped, at last the cable rattled through the hawchole, and then, careless of the chance of lurking Spaniard or Carib, an instinctive cheer burst from every throat. Poor fellows! Amyas had much ado to prevent them going on shore at once, dark as it was, by reminding them that it wanted but two hours of day.

'Never were two such long hours,' said one young lad, fidgeting up and down.

'You never were in the Inquisition,' said Yeo, 'or you'd know better how slow time can run. Stand, you still, and give God thanks you're where you are.'

'I say, Gunner, be there good to that island?'

'Never heard of none, and so much the better for it,' said Yeo drily.

'But, I say, Gunner,' said a poor scurvy stricken cripple, licking his lips, 'be there oranges and limmons there?'

'Not of my seeing, but plenty of good fruit down to the beach, thank the Lord. There comes the dawn at last.'

Up flushed the rose, up rushed the sun, and the level rays glittered on the smooth stems of the palm-trees, and threw rainbows across the foam upon the coral reefs, and gilded lonely uplands far away, where now stands many a stately country-seat and busy engine-house. Long lines of pelicans went clanging out to sea, the hum of the insects hushed, and a thousand birds burst into jubilant song; a thin blue mist crept upward toward the inner downs, and vanished, leaving them to quiver in the burning glare, the land-breeze, which had blown fresh out to sea all night, died away into glassy calm, and the tropic day was begun.

The sick were lifted over the side, and landed boat-load after boat-load on the beach, to stretch themselves in the shade of the palms, and in half an hour the whole crew were scattered on the shore, except some dozen worthy men, who had volunteered to keep watch and ward on board till noon.

And now the first instinctive cry of nature was for fruit! fruit! fruit! The poor lame wretches crawled from place to place plucking greedily the violet grapes of the creeping shore vine, and stinging their mouths and blistering their lips with the prickly pears, in spite of Yeo's entreaties and warnings against the thorns. Some of the healthy began hewing down cocoanut trees to get at the nuts, doing little thereby but blunt their hatchets, till Yeo and Drew, having mustered half a dozen reasonable men, went off inland, and returned in an hour laden with the dainties of that primeval orchard,—with acid Jamaica-apples, luscious guavas, and crowned ananas, queen of all the fruits, which they had found by hundreds on the broiling ledges of the low tufa-cliffs, and then all, sitting on the sandy turf, defiant of gallwasps and jackspaniards, and all the weapons of the

insect host, partook of the equal banquet, while old blue land-crabs sat in their house-doors and brandished their fists in defiance at the invaders, and solemn cranes stood in the water on the shoals with their heads on one side, and meditated how long it was since they had seen bipeds without feathers breaking the solitude of their isle.

And Frank wandered up and down, silent, but rather in wonder than in sadness, while great Amyas walked after him, his mouth full of junipa-apples, and enacted the part of show-man, with a sort of patronising air, as one who had seen the wonders already, and was above being astonished at them.

'Now, now, everything new!' said Frank meditatively. 'Oh! awful feeling! All things changed around us, even to the tiniest fly and flower, yet we the same, the same for ever!'

Amyas, to whom such utterances were altogether sublyne and unintelligible, answered by—

'Look, Frank, that's a colibri! You've heard of colibris!'

Frank looked at the living gem, which hung, loud humming, over some fantastic bloom, and then dashed away, seemingly to call its mate, and whirled and danced with it round and round the flower-starred bushes, flashing fresh rainbows at every shifting of the lights.

Frank watched solemnly awhile, and then—

'Qualis Natura formatrix, si talis formata? Oh, my God, how fair must be Thy real world, if even Thy phantoms are so fair!'

'Phantoms?' asked Amyas uneasily. 'That's no ghost, Frank, but a jolly little honey-sucker, with a wee wife, and children no bigger than peas, but yet solid greedy little fellows enough, I'll warrant!'

'Not phantoms in thy sense, good fellow, but in the sense of those who know the worthlessness of all below!'

'I'll tell you what, brother Frank, you are a great deal wiser than me, I know, but I can't abide to see you turn up your nose as it were at God's good earth. See now, God made all these things, and never a man, perhaps, set eyes on them till fifty years ago, and yet they were as pretty as they are now, ever since the making of the world. And why do you think God could have put them here, then, but to please Himself?—and Amyas took off his hat—
'With the sight of them? Now, I say, brother Frank, what's good enough to please God, is good enough to please you and me!'

'Your rebuke is just, dear old simple-hearted fellow, and God forgive me, if with all my learning, which has brought me no profit, and my longings, which have brought me no peace, I presume at moments, madder than I am, to be more dainty than the Lord Himself. He walked in Paradise among the trees of the garden, Amyas, and so will we, and be content with what He sends. Why should we long for the next world, before we are fit even for this one?'

'And in the meanwhile,' said Amyas, 'this

earth's quite good enough, at least here in Barbados.'

'Do you believe,' asked Frank, trying to turn his own thoughts, 'in those tales of the Spaniards, that the Sirens and Tritons are heard singing in these seas?'

'I can't tell. There's more fish in the water than ever came out of it, and more wonders in the world, I'll warrant, than we ever dreamt of; but I was never in these parts before; and in the South Sea, I must say, I never came across any, though Yeo says he has heard fair music at night up in the Gulf, far away from land.'

'The Spaniards report that at certain seasons choirs of these nymphs assemble in the sea, and with ravishing music sing their patory loves. It may be so. For Nature, which has peopled the land with rational souls, may not have left the sea altogether barren of them, above all, when we remember that the ocean is as it were the very fount of all fertility, and its alimo (as the most learned hold with Thales of Miletus) that prima materia out of which all things were one by one concocted. Therefore, the ancients feigned wisely that Venus, the mother of all living things, whereby they designed the plastic force of nature, was born of the sea-foam, and rising from the deep, floated ashore upon the isles of Greece.'

'I don't know what plastic force is; but I wish I had had the luck to baby when the pretty poppet came up. However, the nearest thing I ever saw to that was maidens swimming alongside of us when we were in the South Seas, and would have come aboard, too, but Drake sent them all off again for a lot of naughty packs, and I verily believe they were no better. Look at the butterflies, now! Don't you wish you were a boy again, and not too proud to go catching them in your cap?'

And so the two wandered on together through the glorious tropic woods, and then returned to the beach to find the sick already grown cheerful, and many who that morning could not stir from their hammocks, pacing up and down, and gaining strength with every step.

'Well done, lads!' cried Amyas, 'keep a cheerful mind. We will have the music ashore after dinner, for want of mermaids to sing to us, and those that can dance may.'

And so those four days were spent; and the men, like schoolboys on a holiday, gave themselves up to simple merriment, not forgetting, however, to wash the clothes, take in fresh water, and store up a good supply of such fruit as seemed likely to keep, until, tired with fruitless rambles after gold, which they expected to find in every bush, in spite of Yeo's warnings that none had been heard of on the island, they were fain to lounge about, full-grown babies, picking up shells and sea-fans to take home to their sweethearts, smoking agoutis out of the hollow trees, with shout and laughter, and tormenting every living thing they could come near, till not a land-crab dare look out of his hole, or an armadillo unroll himself, till they

were safe out of the bay, and off again to the westward, unconscious pioneers of all the wealth, and commerce, and beauty, and science which has in later centuries made that lovely isle the richest gem of all the tropic seas.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOW THEY TOOK THE PEARLS AT MARGARITA

'P Henry Why, what a rascal art thou, then, to praise him so for running!
Baldass O' how black, ye ruckoo! but a-foot, he will not budge a foot.
'P Henry Yes, Jack, upon instinct.
Baldass I go not upon instinct.

Henry IV Pt I

THEY had slipped past the southern point of Grenada in the night, and were at last within that fairy ring of islands, on which nature had concentrated all her beauty, and man all his sin. If Barbados had been invested in the eyes of the newcomers with some strange glory, how much more the seas on which they now entered, which smile in almost perpetual calm, untouched by the hurricane which roars past them far to northward! Sky, sea, and islands were one vast rainbow, though little marked, perhaps, by those stately practical sailors, whose main thought was of Spanish gold and pearls, and as little by Amvas, who, accustomed to the scenery of the tropics, was speculating inwardly on the possibility of extirpating the Spaniards, and annexing the West Indies to the domains of Queen Elizabeth. And yet even their unpoetic eyes could not behold without awe and excitement lands so famous and yet so new, around which all the wonder, all the pity, and all the greed of the age had concentrated itself. It was an awful thought, and yet inspiring, that they were entering regions all but unknown to Englishmen, where the penalty of failure would be worse than death—the torments of the Inquisition. Not more than five times before, perhaps, had those mysterious seas been visited by English keels, but there were those on board who knew them well, and too well, who, first of all British mariners, had attempted under Captain John Hawkins to trade along those very coasts, and, interdicted from the necessities of life by Spanish jealousy, had, in true English fashion, won their markets at the sword's point, and then bought and sold honestly and peaceably therein. The old mariners of the *Pelican* and the *Mignon* were questioned all day long for the names of every isle and cape, every fish and bird, while Frank stood by, listening serious and silent.

A great awe seemed to have possessed his soul yet not a word one: for his face seemed duly to drink in glory from the glory round him, and murmuring to himself at times, 'Thus is the gate of heaven,' he stood watching all day long, careless of food and rest, as every forward plunge of the ship displayed some fresh wonder

Islands and capes hung high in air, with their inverted images below them, long sand-hills rolled and weltered in the mirage, and the yellow flower-beds, and huge thorny cacti like giant candelabra, which clothed the glaring slopes, twisted, tossed, and flickered, till the whole scene seemed one blazing phantom-world, in which everything was as unstable as it was fantastic, even to the sun itself, distorted into strange oval and pear-shaped figures by the beds of crimson mist through which he sank to rest. But while Frank wondered, Yeo rejoiced, for to the southward of that setting sun a cluster of tall peaks rose from the sea, and they, unless his reckonings were wrong, were the mountains of Masanao, at the western end of Margarita, the Isle of Pearls, then famous in all the cities of the Mediterranean, and at the great Griman fair, and second only in richness to that pearl island in the Gulf of Panama, which fifteen years before had cost John Oxenham his life.

The next day, saw them running along the north side of the island, having passed undiscovered (as far as they could see) the castle which the Spaniards had built at the eastern end for the protection of the pearl fisheries.

At last they opened a deep and still light, wooded to the water's edge, and lying in the roadstead a caravel, and three boats by her. And at that sight there was not a man but was on deck at once, and not a month but was giving its opinion of what should be done. Some were for sailing right into the roadstead, the breeze blowing fresh toward the shore (as it usually does throughout those islands in the afternoon). However, seeing the billows break here and there off the bay's mouth, they thought it better, for fear of rocks, to run by quietly, and then send in the pinnace and the boat. Yeo would have had them show Spanish colours, for fear of alarming the caravel, but Amvas stoutly refused, 'counting it,' he said, 'a mean thing to tell a lie in that way, unless in extreme danger, or for great ends of state.'

So holding on their course till they were shut out by the next point, they started, Cary in the largest boat with twenty men, and Amvas in the smaller one with fifteen more, among whom was John Brimblecombe, who must needs come in his cassock and bands, with an old sword of his uncle's which he prized mightily.

When they came to the bight's mouth, they found, as they had expected, coral rocks, and too many of them, so that they had to run along the edge of the reef a long way before they could find a passage for the boats. While they were so doing, and those of them who were new to the Indies were dimming through the clear element those living flower-beds, and sub-aqueous gardens of Nereus and Amphitrite, there suddenly appeared below what Yeo called 'a school of sharks,' some of them nearly as long as the boat, who looked up at them wistfully enough out of their wicked scowling eyes.

'Jack,' said Amvas, who sat next to him, 'look how that big fellow eyes thee—he has

surely taken a fancy to that plump hide of thine, and thinks thou wouldst eat as tender as any sucking porker.'

Jack turned very pale, but said nothing.

Now, as it befell, just then that very big fellow, seeing a parrot-fish come out of a cleft of the coral, made at him from below, as did two or three more, the poor fish, finding no other escape, leaped clean into the air, and almost aboard the boat, while just where he had come out of the water, three or four great brown shagreened noses clashed together within two yards of Jack as he sat, each showing its horrible rows of saw teeth, and then sank silently down again, to watch for a fresh bait. At which Jack said very softly, '*In manus tuas, Domine!*' and turning his eyes inboard, had no lust to look at sharks any more.

So having got through the reef, in they ran with a fair breeze, the caravel not being now a musket-shot off. Cary laid her aboard before the Spaniards had time to get to their ordnance, and standing up in the stern-sheets, shouted to them to yield. The captain asked boldly enough, in whose name? 'In the name of common sense, ye dogs,' cries Will, 'do you not see that you are but fifty strong to our twenty?' Whereon up the side he scrambled, and the captain fired a pistol at him. Cary knocked him over, unwilling to shed needless blood, on which all the crew yielded, some falling on their knees, some leaping overboard, and the prize was taken.

In the meanwhile, Amyas had pulled round under her stern, and boarded the boat which was second from her, for the nearest was fast alongside, and so a sure prize. The Spaniards in her yielded without a blow, crying '*Mercordus!*'; and the negroes, leaping overboard, swam ashore like sea-dogs. Meanwhile, the third boat, which was not an oar's length off, turned to pull away. Whereby befell a notable adventure for John Brimblecombe, casting about in a valiant mind how he should distinguish himself that day, must needs catch up a boat-hook, and claw on to her stern, shouting 'Stay, ye Papists! Stay, Spanish dogs!'—by which, as was to be expected, they being ten to his one, he was forthwith pulled overboard, and fell all along on his nose in the sea, leaving the hook fast in her stern.

Where, I know not how, being seized with some panic fear (his lively imagination fill all the sea with those sharks which he had just seen), he fell a-roaring like any town bull, and in his confusion never thought to turn and get aboard again, but struck out lustily after the Spanish boat, whether in hope of catching hold of the boat-hook which trailed behind her, or from a very madness of valour, no man could divine; but on he swam, his casock afloat behind him, looking for all the world like a great black menk-fish, and howling and pulling, with his mouth full of salt water, 'Stay, ye Spanish dogs! Help, all good fellows! See you not that I am a dead man! They are nuzzling

already at my toes! He hath hold of my leg! My right thigh is bitten clean off! Oh that I were preaching in Hartland pulpit! Stay, Spanish dogs! Yield, Papist cowards, lest I make mincemeat of you, and take me aboard! Yield, I say, or my blood be on your heads! I am no Jonah, if he swallow me, he will never cast me up again! it is better to fall into the hands of man, than into the hands of devils with three rows of teeth apiece. *In manus tuas. Orate pro animâ—!*

And so forth, in more frantic case than ever was Panurgo in that his ever-memorable sea-sickness, till the English, expecting him every minute to be snapped up by sharks, or brained by the Spaniards' oars, let fly a volley into the fugitives, on which they all leaped overboard like their fellows, whereon Jack scrambled into the boat, and drawing sword with one hand, while he wiped the water out of his eyes with the other, began to lay about him like a very lion, cutting the empty air, and crying, 'Yield, idolaters! Yield, Spanish dogs!' However, coming to himself after a while, and seeing that there was no one on whom to flesh his maiden steel, he sits down panting in the stern-sheets, and begins stripping off his hose. On which Amyas, thinking surely that the good fellow had gone mad with some stroke of the sun, or by having fallen into the sea after being overheated with his rowing, bade pull alongside, and asked him in heaven's name what he was doing with his nether tackle. On which Jack, amid such laughter as may be conceived, vowed and swore that his right thigh was bitten clean through, and to the bone, yea, and that he felt his hose full of blood, and so would have swooned away for unguinary loss of blood (so strong was the delusion on him) had not his friends, after much arguing on their part, and anger on his, persuaded him that he was whole and sound.

After which they set to work to overhaul their maiden prize, which they found full of hides and salt-pork, and yet not of that alone, for in the captain's cabin, and also in the stern-sheets of the boat which Brimblecombe had so valorously boarded, were certain frails of leaves packed neatly enough, which being opened were full of goodly pearls, though somewhat brown (for the Spaniards used to damage the colour in their haste and greediness, opening the shells by fire, instead of leaving them to decay gradually after the Arabian fashion); with which prize, though they could not guess its value very exactly, they went off content enough, after some malicious fellow had set the ship on fire, which, being laden with hides, was no nosegay as it burnt.

Amyas was very angry at this wanton damage, in which his model, Drake, had never indulged, but Cary had his jest ready. 'Ah!' said he, "'Lutheran devils" we are, you know; so we are bound to vanish, like other fiends, with an evil savour.'

As soon, however, as Amyas was on board again, he rounded his friend Mr. Brimblecombe

in the ear, and told him he had better play the man a little more, roaring less before he was hurt, and keeping his breath to help his strokes, if he wished the crew to listen much to his discourses. Frank, hearing this, bade Amyas leave the offender to him, and so began upon him with—

'Come hither, thou recreant Jack, thou lily-livered Jack, thou hysterical Jack. Tell me now, thou hast read Plato's *Dialogues*, and Aristotle's *Logic*?'

To which Jack very meekly answered, 'Yes.'

'Thou I will deal with thee after the manner of those ancient sages, and ask whether the greater must not contain the less?'

Jack—Yes, sure.

Frank—And that which is more than a part, contain that part, more than which it is?

Jack—Yes, sure.

Frank—Then tell me, is not a priest more than a layman?

Jack (who was always very loud about the dignity of the priesthood, as many of his cloth air, who have no other dignity whereon to stand) answered very boldly—'Of course.'

Frank—Then a priest containeth a man, and is a man, and something over, viz his priest-hood?

Jack (who saw whither this would lead)—I suppose so.

Frank—Then, if a priest show himself no man, he shows himself all the more no priest?

'I'll tell you what, Master Frank,' says Jack, 'you may be right by logic, but sharks aren't logic, nor don't understand it neither.'

Frank—Nay, but, my reukulent Jack, my still-necked Jack, is it the part of a man to howl like a pig in a gate, because he thinks that is there which is not there?

Jack had not a word to say.

Frank—And still more, when if that had been there, it had been the duty of a brave man to have kept his mouth shut, if only to keep salt water out, and not add the evil of choking to that of being eaten?

'Ah!' says Jack, 'that's all very fine, but you know as well as I that it was not the Spaniards I was afraid of. They were Heaven's handiwork, and I know how to deal with them, but as for those hends' spawn of sharks, when I saw that fellow take the fish alongside, it upset me clean, and there's an end of it?'

Frank—O Jack, Jack, behold how one sin begets another! Just now thou wert but a coward, and now thou art a Manichee. For thou hast imputed to an evil creator that which was formed only for a good end, namely, sharks, which were made on purpose to devour useless carcasses like thine. Moreover, as a brother of the Rose, thou wert bound by the vow of thy brotherhood to have leaped joyfully down that shark's mouth.

Jack—Ay, very likely, if Mistress Rose had been 'in his stomach,' but I wanted to fight Spaniards just then, not to be shark-bitten.

Frank—Jack, thy answer savours of self will

W. H.

If it is ordained that thou shouldst advance the ends of the Brotherhood by being shark-bitten, or flea-bitten, or bitten by sharpers, to the detriment of thy carnal wealth, or, shortly, to suffer any shame or torment whatsoever, even to strappado and scarpines, thou art bound to obey thy destiny, and not, after that vain Roman conceit, to choose the manner of thine own death, which is indeed only another sort of self-murder. We therefore consider thee as a cause of scandal, and a rotten and creaking branch, to be excised by the spiritual arm, and do hereby excommunic thee, and cut thee off.

Jack—Nay, faith, that's a little too much, Master Frank. How long have you been Bishop of Exeter?

Frank—Jack, thy wit being blinded, and full of gross vapours, by reason of the perturbations of fear (which, like anger, is a short madness, and raises in the phantasy vain spectres,—vile hector, of sharks and Spaniards), mistakes our lucidity. For thy Manicheism, in his lordship of Exeter deal with it. For thy abominable howling and waterwauling, offensive in a chained cur, but scandalous in a preacher and a brother of the Rose, we do hereby deprive thee of thine office of chaplain to the Brotherhood; a id warn thee, that unless within seven days thou do some deed equal to the Seven Champions, or Ruggiero and Orlando's self, thou shalt be deprived of sword and dagger, and allowed henceforth to carry no more iron about thee than will serve to mend thy pen.

'And now, Jack,' said Amyas, 'I will give thee a piece of news. No wonder that young men, as the parsons complain so loudly, will not listen to the Gospel. While it is preached to them by men on whom they cannot but look down, a set of soft-handed fellows who cannot dig, and are ashamed to beg, and, as my brother has it, must needs be parsons before they are men.'

Frank—Ay, and even though we may excuse that in Popish priests and friars, who are vowed not to be men, and get their bread shamefully and rascally by telling sinners who owe a hundred measures to sit down quietly and take their bill and write fifty yet for a priest of the Church of England (whose business it is not merely to smuggle sinful souls up the backstairs into heaven, but to make men good Christians by making them good men, good gentlemen, and good Englishmen) to show the white feather in the hour of need, is to unpreach in one minute all that he had been preaching his life long.

'I tell thee,' says Amyas, 'if I had mistaken thee for another guess sort of ungodly had never let thee have the care of a hundred brave lads' immortal souls—'

And so on, both of them boarding him at once with their heavy shot, larboard and starboard, till he fairly clapped his hands to his ears and ran for it, leaving poor Frank laughing so heartily, that Amyas was after all glad the thing had happened, for the sake of the smile which it put into his sad and steadfast countenance.

The next day was Sunday; on which, after divine service (which they could hardly persuade Jack to read, so shamefaced was he; and as for preaching after it, he would not hear of such a thing), Amyas read aloud, according to custom, the articles of their agreement, and then seeing abreast of them a sloping beach with a shoot of clear water running into the sea, agreed that they should land there, wash the clothes, and again water the ship, for they had found water somewhat scarce at Barbados. On this party Jack Brimblecombe must needs go, taking with him his sword and a great arquebuse, for he had dreamed last night (he said) that he was set upon by Spaniards, and was sure that the dream would come true, and moreover, that he did not very much care if they did, or if he ever got back alive, 'for it was better to die than be made an ape, and a scarecrow, and laughed at by the men, and badgered with Ramus his logic, and Plato his dialectical dovlins, to confess himself a Maunkee, and, for aught he knew, a turbaned Turk, or Hebrew Jew,' and so flung into the boat like a man desperate.

So they went ashore, after Amyas had given strict commands against letting off his arms, for fear of alarming the Spaniards. There they washed their clothes, and stretched their legs with great joy, admiring the beauty of the place, and then began to shoot the vems which they had brought on shore with them. 'In which,' says the chronicler, 'we caught many strange fishes, and beside them, a sea-cow full seven feet long, with limpets and barnacles on her back, as if she had been a stick of drift-timber. This is a fond and foolish beast, and yet proud withal, for finding a corpse, she watches over it day and night until it decay or be buried. The Indians call her *manati*, who carries her young under her arm, and gives it suck like a woman, and being wounded, she lamenteth aloud with a human voice, and is said at certain seasons to sing very melodiously, which melody, perhaps, having been heard in those seas, is that which Mr. Frank reported to be the choir of the Sirens and Tritons. The which I do not avouch for truth, neither rashly deny, having seen myself such fertility of Nature's wonders that I hold him who denieth aught merely for its strangeness to be a ribald and an ignoramus. Also one of our men brought in two great black fowls which he had shot with a crossbow, bodied and headed like a capon, but bigger than any eagle, which the Spaniards call *cuaranos*; which, with that sea-cow, afterwards made us good cheer, both roast and sudden, for the cow was very dainty meat, as good as a four-months' calf, and tender and fat withal.'

After that they set to work filling the casks and harkoes, having laid the boat up to the outflow of the rivulet. And lucky for them it was, as it fell out, that they were all close together at that work, and not abroad skylarking as they had been half an hour before.

Now John Brimblecombe had gone apart as soon as they landed, with a shamefaced and

doleful countenance, and sitting down under a great tree, plucked a Bible from his bosom, and read steadfastly, girded with his great sword, and his arquebuse lying by him. This too was well for him, and for the rest, for they had not yet finished their watering, when there was a cry that the enemy was on them, and out of the wood, not twenty yards from the good parson, came full fifty shot, with a multitude of negroes behind them, and an officer in front on horseback, with a great plume of feathers in his hat, and his sword drawn in his hand.

'Stand, for your lives!' shouted Amyas: and only just in time, for there was ten good minutes lost in running up and down before he could get his men into some order of battle. But when Jack beheld the Spaniards, as if he had expected their coming, he plucked a leaf and put it into the page of his book for a mark, laid the book down soberly, caught up his arquebuse, ran like a mad dog right at the Spanish captain, shot him through the body stark dead, and then, flinging the arquebuse at the head of him who stood next, fell on with his sword like a very Colbrand, breaking in among the arquebuses, and striking right and left such ugly strokes, that the Spaniards (who thought him a very fiend, or Luther's self come to life to plague them) gave back pell-mell, and shot at him two or six at once with their arquebuses, but whether from fear of him, or of wounding each other, made no bad play with their pieces, that he only got one shrewd gall in his thigh, which made him limp for many a day. But as fast as they gave back he came on, and the rest by this time ran up in good order, and altogether nearly forty men well armed. On which the Spaniards turned, and went as fast as they had come, while Cary hinted that, 'The dogs had had such a taste of the parson, that they had no mind to wait for the clerk and people.'

'Come back, Jack! are you mad?' shouted Amyas.

But Jack (who had not all this time spoken one word) followed them as he could as ever, till, reaching a great blow at one of the arquebusers, he caught his foot in a root, on which down he went, and striking his head against the ground, knocked out of himself all the breath he had left (which between fatness and fighting was not much), and so lay. Amyas, seeing the Spaniards gone, did not care to pursue them, but picked up Jack, who, staring about, cried, 'Glory be! glory be!—How many have I killed? How many have I killed?'

'Nineteen, at the least,' quoth Cary, 'and seven with one back stroke,' and then showed Brimblecombe the captain lying dead, and two arquebusers, one of which was the fugitive by whom he came to his fall, beside three or four more who were lumping away wounded, some of them by their fellows' shot.

'There!' said Jack, puffing and blowing, 'will you laugh at me any more, Mr. Cary, or say that I cannot fight, because I am a poor parson's son?'

Cary took him by the hand, and asked pardon of him for his scoffing, saying that he had that day played the best man of all of them, and Jack, who never bore malice, began laughing in his turn, and—

'O Mr Cary, we have all known your pleasant ways, ever since you used to put drum-bledrones into my desk to Bideford school! And so they went to the boats, and pulled off, thanking God (as they had need to do) for their great deliverance while all the boat's crew rejoiced over Jack, who after a while grew very faint (having bled a good deal without knowing it), and made as little of his real wound as he made much the day before of his imaginary one.

Frank asked him that evening how he came to grow so cool and approved a valour in so sudden a mishap.

'Well, my masters,' said Jack, 'I don't deny that I was very downcast on account of what you said, and the scandal which I had given to the crew, but as it happened I was reading there under the tree, to fortify my spirits, the history of the ancient worthies, in St Paul his eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, and just as I came to that "out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens," arose the cry of the Spaniards. At which, gentlemen, thinking in myself that I fought in just so good a cause as they, and, as I hoped, with like faith, there came upon me so strange an assurance of victory, that I verily believed in myself that if there had been a ten thousand of them, I should have taken no hurt. Wherefore, said Jack modestly, 'there is no credit due to me, for there was no valour in me whatsoever, but only a certainty of safety, and any coward would fight if he knew that he were to have all the killing and none of the scratches.'

Which words he next day, being Sunday, repeated in his sermon which he made on that chapter, with which all, even Salvation Yeo himself, were well content and edified, and allowed him to be as godly a preacher as he was (in spite of his squire ways) a valiant and true-hearted comrade.

They brought away the Spanish officer's sword (a very good blade), and also a great chain of gold which he wore about his neck, both of which were allotted to Brimblecombe as his fair prize, but he, accepting the sword, steadfastly refused the chain, entreating Amyas to put it into the common stock, and when Amyas refused, he cut it into links and distributed it among those of the boat's crew who had succoured him, winning thereby much good will. 'And indeed' (says the chronicler), 'I never saw in that worthy man, from the first day of our school-fellowship till he was laid in his parish church of Hartland (where he now sleeps in peace), any touch of that sin of covetousness which has in all ages, and in ours no less than others, beset especially (I know not why) them who minister about the sanctuary. But this man, though he was ugly and lowly in person, and in understanding simple, and of

breeding but a poor parson's son, had yet in him a spirit so loving and cheerful, so lifted from base and selfish purposes to the worship of duty, and to a generosity rather knightly than sacerdotal, that all through his life he seemed to think only that it was more blessed to give than to receive. And all that wealth which he gained in the wars he dispersed among his sisters and the poor of his parish, living unmarried till his death like a true lover and constant mourner (as shall be said in place), and leaving hardly wherewith to bring his body to the grave. At whom if we often laughed once, we should now rather envy him, desiring to be here what he was, that we may be hereafter where he is. Amen.'

CHAPTER XIX

WHAT BEFELL AT LA GUAYRA

'Great was the crying, the running and riving,
Which at that season was made in the place.
The beacons were fired, as need then required,
To save their great treasure they had little space.
The men of La Guayra.'

THE men would gladly have hawked awhile round Margarita and Cubagua for another pearl prize. But Amyas having, as he phrased it, 'fleshed his dogs,' was loth to hang about the islands after the alarm had been given. They ran, therefore, south west across the mouth of that great bay which stretches from the Peninsula of Paria to Cape Codera, leaving on their right hand Tortuga, and on their left the meadow-islands of the Piritoos, two long green lines but a few inches above the tideless sea. Yeo and Drew knew every foot of the way, and had good reason to know it, for they, the first of all English mariners, had tried to trade along this coast with Hawkins. And now, right ahead, sheer out of the sea from base to peak, arose higher and higher the mighty range of the Caracas mountains, beside which all hills which most of the crew had ever seen, as petty mounds. Frank, of course, knew the Alps, and Amyas the Andes, but Cary's notions of height were bounded by Mr Willmaddy's Reeks, and Brimblecombe's by Exmoor, and the latter, to Cary's infinite amusement, spent a whole day holding on by the rigging, and staring upwards with his chin higher than his nose, till he got a stiff neck. Soon the sea became rough and chopping, though the breeze was soft and gentle, and ere they were abreast of the Cape, they became aware of that strong eastward current which, during the winter months, so often baffles the mariner who wishes to go to the westward. All night long they struggled through the billows, with the huge wall of Cape Codera a thousand feet above their heads to the left, and beyond it again, bank upon bank of mountain, bathed in the yellow moonlight.

Morning showed them a large ship, which had passed them during the night upon the

opposite course, and was now a good ten miles to the eastward. Yeo was for going back and taking her. Of the latter he made a matter of course, and the former was easy enough, for the breeze blowing dead off the land, was a 'soldier's wind, there and back again,' for either ship, but Anyas and Frank were both unwilling.

'Why, Yeo, you said that one day more would bring us to La Guayra.'

'All the more reason, sir, for doing the Lord's work thoroughly, when He has brought us safely so far on our journey.'

'She can pass well enough, and no loss.'

'Ah, sirs, sirs, she is delivered into your hands and you will have to give an account of her.'

'My good Yeo,' said Frank, 'I trust we shall give good account enough of many a tall Spaniard before we return, but you know surely that La Guayra, and the salvation of one whom we believe dwells there, was our first object in this adventure.'

Yeo shook his head sadly. 'Ah, sirs, a lady brought Captain Oxenham to ruin.'

'You do not dare to compare her with this one!' said Frank and Cary, both in a breath.

'God forbid, gentlemen, but no adventure will prosper, unless there is a single eye to the Lord's work, and that is, as I take it, to cripple the Spaniard, and exalt her Majesty the Queen. And I had thought that nothing was more dear than that to Captain Leigh's heart.'

Anyas stood somewhat irresolute. His duty to the Queen bade him follow the Spanish vessel, his duty to his vow, to go on to La Guayra. It may seem a far-fetched dilemma. He found it a practical one enough.

However, the Counsel of Frank prevailed, and on to La Guayra they went. He half hoped that the Spaniard would see and attack them. However, he went on his way to the eastward, which if he had not done, my story had had a very different ending.

'About mid-day a canoe, the first which they had seen, came staggering toward them under a huge three-cornered sail. As it came near, they could see two Indians on board.

'Metal floats in these seas, you see,' quoth Cary. 'There's a fresh marvel for you, Frank.'

'Expound,' quoth Frank, who was really ready to swallow any fresh marvel, so many had he seen already.

'Why, how else would those two bronze statues dare to go to sea in such a cockleshell, eh? Have I given you the dor now, master courtier?'

'I am long past dor, Will. But what noble creatures they are! and how fearlessly they are coming alongside! Can they know that we are English, and the avengers of the Indians?'

'I suspect they just take us for Spaniards, and want to sell their coconuts. See, the canoe is laden with vegetables.'

'Hail them, Yeo!' said Anyas. 'You talk

the best Spanish, and I want speech of one of them.'

Yeo did so; the canoe, without more ado, ran alongside, and lowered her felucca sail, while a splendid Indian scrambled on board like a cat.

He was full six feet high, and as bold and graceful of bearing as Frank or Anyas's self. He looked round for the first moment unwillingly, showing his white teeth; but the next, his countenance changed, and springing to the side, he shouted to his comrade in Spanish—

'Treachery! No Spaniard! and would have leaped overboard, but a dozen strong fellows caught him ere he could do so.

It required some trouble to master him, so strong was he, and so slippery his red limbs. Anyas, meanwhile, alternately entreated the men not to hurt the Indian, and the Indian to be quiet, and no harm should happen to him; and so, after five minutes' confusion, the stranger gave in sulkily.

'Don't bind him! Let him loose, and make a ring round him. Now, my man, there's a dollar for you.'

The Indian's eyes glistened, and he took the coin.

'All I want of you is, first, to tell me what ships are in La Guayra, and next, to go thither on board of me, and show me which is the governor's house, and which the custom-house.'

The Indian laid the coin down on the deck, and crossing himself, looked Anyas in the face.

'No, Señor! I am a freeman and a cavalier, a Christian Guayqueria, whose forefathers, first of all the Indians, swore fealty to the King of Spain, and whom he calls to this day in all his proclamations his most faithful, loyal, and noble Guayquerias. God forbid, therefore, that I should tell ought to his enemies, who are my enemies likewise.'

A growl arose from those of the men who understood him, and more than one hinted that a cord twisted round the head, or a match put between the fingers, would speedily extract the required information.

'God forbid!' said Anyas, 'a brave and loyal man he is, and as such will I treat him. Tell me, my brave fellow, how do you know us to be his Catholic Majesty's enemies?'

The Indian, with a sly smile, pointed to half a dozen different objects, saying to each, 'Not Spanish.'

'Well, and what of that?'

'None but Spaniards and free Guayquerias have a right to sail these seas.'

Anyas laughed.

'Thou art a right valiant bit of copper. Pick up thy dollar, and go thy way in peace. Make room for him, men. We can learn what we want without his help.'

The Indian paused, incredulous and astonished. 'Overboard with you!' quoth Anyas. 'Don't you know when you are well off?'

'Most illustrious Señor,' began the Indian, in the drawing sententious fashion of his race (when they take the trouble to talk at all), 'I

have been deceived. I heard that you heretics roasted and ate all true Catholics (as we Guayquerias are), and that all your padres had tails.

'Plague on you, surrah!' squeaked Jack Brimblecombe. 'Have I a tail? Look here!'

'Quen sabe? Who knows?' quoth the Indian, through his nose.

'How do you know we are heretics?' said Amyas.

'Humph! But in repayment for your kindness, I would warn you, illustrious Señor, not to go on to La Guayra. There are ships of war there waiting for you, and moreover, the governor Don Guzman sailed to the eastward only yesterday to look for you, and I wonder much that you did not meet him.'

'To look for me? On the watch for us?' said Cary. 'Impossible, lies! Amyas, this is some trick of the rascal's to frighten us away.'

'Don Guzman came out but yesterday to look for us? Are you sure you spoke truth?'

'As I live, Señor, he and another ship, for which I took yours.'

Amyas stamped upon the deck that then was the ship which they had passed.

'Fool that I was to have been close to my enemy, and let my opportunity slip! If I had but done my duty, all would have gone right!'

But it was too late to repent, and after all, the Indian's story was likely enough to be false.

'Off with you!' said he, and the Indian bounded over the side into his canoe, leaving the whole crew wondering at the stateliness and courtesy of this bold sea-cavalier.

So Westward ho they ran, beneath the mighty northern wall, the highest cliff on earth, some seven thousand feet of rock parted from the sea by a narrow strip of bright green lowland. Here and there a patch of sugar cane, or a knot of coconut trees, close to the water's edge, reminded them that they were in the tropics, but above, all was savage, rough, and bare as an Alpine precipice. Sometimes deep clefts allowed the southern sun to pour a blaze of light down to the sea margin, and gave glimpses far above of strange and stately trees lining the glens, and of a veil of perpetual mist which shrouded the inner summits, while up and down, between them and the mountain side, white fleecy clouds hung motionless in the burning air, increasing the impression of vastness and of solemn rest, which was already overpowering.

'Within those mountains, three thousand feet above our heads,' said Drew, the master, 'lies Saint Yago de Leon, the great city which the Spaniards founded fifteen years ago.'

'Is it a rich place?' asked Cary.

'Very, they say.'

'Is it a strong place?' asked Amyas.

'No forts to it at all, they say. The Spaniards boast, that Heaven has made such good walls to it already, that man need make none.'

'I don't know,' quoth Amyas. 'Lads, could you climb those hills, do you think?'

'Rather higher than Harty Point, sir: but it depends pretty much on what's behind them.'

And now the last point is rounded, and they are full in sight of the spot in quest of which they have sailed four thousand miles of sea. A low black cliff, crowned by a wall; a battery at either end. Within, a few narrow streets of white houses, running parallel with the sea, upon a strip of flat, which seemed not two hundred yards in breadth, and behind, the mountain wall, covering the whole in deepest shade. How that wall was ever ascended to the inland seemed the puzzle, but Drew, who had been off the place before, pointed out to them a narrow path, which wound upwards through a glen, seemingly sheer perpendicular. That was the road to the capital, if any man dare try it. In spite of the shadow of the mountain, the whole place wore a dusty and glaring look. The breaths of air which came off the land were utterly stifling, and no wonder, for La Guayra, owing to the radiation of that vast fire brick of heated rock, is one of the hottest spots upon the face of the whole earth.

Where was the harbour? There was none. Only an open roadstead, wherein lay toasting at anchor five vessels. The two outer ones were small merchant caravels. Behind them lay two long, low, ugly-looking craft, at sight of which Yeo gave a long whew.

'Galleys, as I'm a sinful saint! And what's that big one inside of them, Robert Drew? She has more than horseholes in her idolatrous black sides, I think.'

'We shall open her astern of the galleys in another minute,' said Amyas. 'Look out, Cary, your eyes are better than mine.'

'Six round portholes on the main deck,' quoth Will.

'And I can see the brass pataroes glittering on her poop,' quoth Amyas. 'Will, we're in for it.'

'In for it we are, captain.'

'Farewell, farewell, my parents dear, I never shall see you more, I fear.'

Let's go in, nevertheless, and pound the Don's ribs, my old lad of Sowerwick. Eh? Three to one is very fair odds.'

'Not underneath those fort guns, I beg leave to say,' quoth Yeo. 'If the Philistines will but come out unto us, we will make them like unto Zeba and Zalmunna.'

'Quite true,' said Amyas. 'Game cocks are game cocks, but reason's reason.'

'If the Philistines are not coming out, they are going to send a messenger instead,' quoth Cary. 'Look out, all thou skulls!'

And as he spoke, a puff of white smoke rolled from the eastern fort, and a heavy ball plunged into the water between it and the ship.

'I don't altogether like this,' quoth Amyas. 'What do they mean by firing on us without warning? And what are these ships of war doing here? Drew, you told me the armadas never lay here.'

'No more, I believe, they do, sir, on account of the anchorage being so bad, as you may see.'

I'm mortal afraid that rascal's story was true, and that the Dons have got wind of our coming.'

'Run up a white flag, at all events. If they do expect us, they must have known some time since, or how could they have got their craft hither!'

'True, sir. They must have come from Santa Martha, at the least, perhaps from Carthagena. And that would take a month at least going and coming.'

Amyas suddenly recollected Enstace's threat in the wayside inn. Could he have betrayed their purpose? Impossible!

'Let us hold a council of war, at all events, Frank.'

Frank was absorbed in a very different matter. A half mile to the eastward of the town, two or three hundred feet up the steep mountain side, stood a large, low, white house embosomed in trees and gardens. There was no other house of similar size near; no place for one. And was not that the royal flag of Spain which flanneted before it? That must be the governor's house, that must be the abode of the Rose of Torridge! And Frank stood devouring it with wild eyes, till he had persuaded himself that he could see a woman's figure walking upon the terrace in front, and that the figure was none other than hers whom he sought. Amyas could hardly tear him away to a council of war, which was a sad, and only not a peevish one.

The three adventurers, with Brimblecombe, Yeo, and Drew, went apart upon the poop, and each looked the other in the face awhile. For what was to be done? The plans and hopes of months were brought to nought in an hour.

'It is impossible, you see,' said Amyas at last, 'to surprise the town by land, while these ships are here, for if we land our men, we leave our ship without defence.'

'As impossible as to challenge Don Guzman while he is not here,' said Cary.

'I wonder why the ships have not opened on us already,' said Drew.

'Perhaps they respect our flag of truce,' said Cary. 'Why not send in a boat to treat with them, and to inquire for—'

'For her!' interrupted Frank. 'If we show that we are aware of her existence, her name is blasted in the eyes of those jealous Spaniards.'

'And as for respecting our flag of truce, gentlemen,' said Yeo, 'if you will take an old man's advice, trust them not. They will keep the same faith with us as they kept with Captain Hawkins at San Juan d'Ulloa, in that accursed business which was the beginning of all the wars; when we might have taken the whole Plate-fleet, with two hundred thousand pounds' worth of gold on board, and did not, but only asked licence to trade like honest men. And yet, after they had granted us licence, and deceived us by fair speech into landing ourselves and our ordinance, the governor and all the fleet set upon us, five to one, and gave no quarter to any soul whom he took. No, sir; I expect the

only reason why they don't attack us is, because their crews are not on board.'

'They will be, soon enough, then,' said Amyas. 'I can see soldiers coming down the landing-stairs.'

And, in fact, boats full of armed men began to push off to the ships.

'We may thank Heaven,' said Drew, 'that we were not here two hours ago.' The sun will be down before they are ready for sea, and the fellows will have no stomach to go looking for us by night.'

'So much the worse for us. If they will but do that, we may give them the ship, and back again to the town, and there try our luck, for I cannot find it in my heart to leave the place without having one dash at it.'

Yeo shook his head. 'There are plenty more towns along the coast more worth trying than this, sir. But Heaven's will be done.'

And as they spoke, the sun plunged into the sea, and all was dark.

At last it was agreed to anchor, and wait till midnight. If the ships of war came out, they were to try to run in past them, and, desperate as the attempt might be, attempt their original plan of landing to the westward of the town, taking it in flank, plundering the government storehouses, which they saw close to the landing-place, and then fighting their way back to their boats, and out of the roadstead. Two hours would suffice if the armada and the galleys were but once out of the way.

Amyas went forward, called the men together, and told them the plan. It was not very cheerfully received, but what else was there to be done!

They ran down about a mile and a half to the westward, and anchored.

The night wore on, and there was no sign of stir among the shipping, for though they could not see the vessels themselves, yet their lights (easily distinguished by their relative height from those in the town above) remained motionless, and the men fretted and fumed for weary hours at thus seeing a rich prize (for of course the town was paved with gold) within arm's reach, and yet impossible.

Let Amyas and his men have patience. Some short five years more, and the great Armada will have come and gone, and then that avenging storm, of which they, like Oxenham, Hawkins, and Drake, are but the avant couriers, will burst upon every Spanish port from Corunna to Cadix, from the Canaries to Havanna, and La Guayra and St. Yago de Leon will not escape their share. Captain Amyas Preston and Captain Sommers, the colonist of the Bermudas, or Sommers' Islands, will land, with a force tiny enough, though larger far than Leigh's, where Leigh dare not land, and taking the fort of Guayra, will find, as Leigh found, that their coming has been expected, and that the Pass of the Venta, three thousand feet above, has been fortified with huge barricades, abatis, and cannon, making the capital, amid its ring of

mountain-walls, impregnable—to all but Englishmen or Zouaves. For up that seven thousand feet of precipice, which rises stair on stair behind the town, those fierce adventurers will climb hand over hand, through rain and fog, while men lie down, and beg their officers to kill them, for no farther can they go. Yet farther they will go, hewing a path with their swords through woods of wild plantain, and rhododendron thickets, over (so it seems, however incredible) the very saddle of the Silla,¹ down upon the astonished 'Mantuanos' of St Jago, driving all before them, and having burnt the city in default of ransom, will return triumphant by the right road, and pass along the coast, the masters of the deep.

I know not whether any men still live who count their descent from those two valiant captains, but if such there be, let them be sure that the history of the English navy tells no more Titanic victory over nature and man than that now forgotten raid of Amiyas Preston and his comrade, in the year of grace 1595.

But though a venture on the town was impossible, yet there was another venture which Frank was unwilling to let slip. A light which now shone brightly in one of the windows of the governor's house was the lodestar to which all his thoughts were turned, and as he sat in the cabin with Amiyas, Cary, and Dick, he opened his heart to them.

'And are we, then,' asked he mournfully, 'to go without doing the very thing for which we came?'

All were silent awhile. At last John Brimblecombe spoke.

'Show me the way to do it, Mr Frank, and I will go.'

'My dearest man,' said Amiyas, 'what would you have? Any attempt to see her, even if she be here, would be all but certain death.'

'And what if it were? What if it were, say brother Amiyas? Listen to me. I have long ceased to shrink from Death, but till I came into these magic climes, I never knew the beauty of life's full.'

'Of death?' said Cary. 'I should have said, of life. God forgive me! but man might wish to live for ever, if he had such a world as this wherein to live.'

'And do you forget, Cary, that the more fair this passing world of time, by so much the more fair is that eternal world, whereof all here is but a shadow and a dream, by so much the more fair is He before whose throne the four mystic² ceasts, the substantial ideas of Nature and her powers, stand day and night, crying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, Thou hast made all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created!" My friends, if He be so prodigal of His own glory as to have decked these lonely shores, all but unknown since the foundation of

the world, with splendours beyond all our dreams, what must be the glory of His face itself! I have done with vain shadows. It is better to depart and to be with Him, where shall be neither desire nor anger, self-deception nor pretence, but the eternal fullness of reality and truth. One thing I have to do before I die, for God has laid it on me. Let that be done to-night, and then, farewell!'

'Frank! Frank! remember our mother!'

'I do remember her. I have talked over these things with her many a time, and where I would fain be, she would fain be also. She sent me out with my virgin honour, as the Spartan mother did her boy with the shield, saying, "Come back either with this, or upon this," and one or the other I must do, if I would meet her either in this life or in the next. But in the meanwhile do not mistake me, my life is God's, and I promise not to cast it away rashly.'

'What would you do, then?'

'Go up to that house, Amiyas, and speak with her, if Heaven gives me an opportunity, as Heaven, I feel assured, will give.'

'And do you call that no rashness?'

'Is any duty rashness? Is it rash to stand amid the flying bullets, if your Queen has sent you? Is it more rash to go to seek Christ's lost lamb, if God and your own oath hath sent you? John Brimblecombe answered that question for us long ago.'

'If you go, I go with you!' said all three at once.

'No, Amiyas, you owe a duty to our mother, and to your ship. Cary, you are heir to great estates, and are bound thereby to your country and to your tenants. John Brimblecombe—'

'Ay!' squeaked Jack. 'And what have you to say, Mr Frank, against my going?—I, who have neither ship nor estates—except, I suppose, that I am not worthy to travel in such good company?'

'Think of your old parents, John, and all your sisters.'

'I thought of them before I started, sir, as Mr Cary knows, and you know too. I came here to keep my vow, and I am not going to turn renegade at the very foot of the cross.'

'Some one must go with you, Frank,' said Amiyas, 'if it were only to bring back the boat's crew in case—' and he faltered.

'In case I fall,' replied Frank, with a smile. 'I will hush your sentence for you, lad. I am not afraid of it, though you may be for me. Yet some one, I fear, must go. Unhappily me! that I cannot risk my own worthless life without risking your more precious lives!'

'Not so, Mr Frank! Your oath is our oath, and your duty ours!' said John. 'I will tell you what we will do, gentlemen all. We three will draw cuts for the honour of going with him.'

'Lots!' said Amiyas. 'I don't like leaving such grave matters to chance, friend John.'

'Chance, sir! When you have used all your

¹ Humboldt says that there is a path from Caravellada to St Jago, between the peaks, used by smugglers. This is probably the 'unknown way of the Indians,' which Preston used.

own wit, and find it fail you, then what is drawing lots but taking the matter out of your own weak hands, and laying it in God's strong hands?' "

'Right, John!' said Frank. 'So did the apostles choose their successor, and so did holy men of old decide controversies too subtle for them, and we will not be ashamed to follow their example. For my part, I have often said to Sidney and to Spenser, when we have babbled together of Utopian governments in days which are now dreams to me, that I would have all officers of state chosen by lot out of the wisest and most fit; so making sure that they should be called by God, and not by man alone. Gentlemen, do you agree to Sir John's advice?'

They agreed, seeing no better counsel, and John put three slips of paper into Frank's hand, with the simple old apostolic prayer—'Show which of us three Thou hast chosen.'

The lot fell upon Amvas Leigh.

Frank shuddered, and clasped his hands over his face.

'Well,' said Cary, 'I have ill-luck to-night, but Frank goes at least in good company.'

'Ah, that it had been I!' said Jack, 'though I suppose I was too poor a body to have such an honour fall on me. And yet it is hard for flesh and blood, hard indeed to have come all this way, and not to see her after all!'

'Jack,' said Frank, 'you are kept to do better work than this, doubt not. But if the lot had fallen on you—ay, if it had fallen on a three years' child, I would have gone up as cheerfully with that child to lead me, as I do now with this my brother! Amvas, can we have a lantern and a row? It is near midnight already.'

Amvas went on deck, and asked for six volunteers. Whosoever would come, Amvas would double out of his own purse any prize-money which might fall to that man's share.

One of the old *Pelican's* crew, Simon Evans of Clovelly, stepped out at once.

'Why six only, captain? Give the word, and any and all of us will go up with you, sack the house, and bring off the treasure and the lady, before two hours are out.'

'No, no, my brave lads! As for treasure, if there be any, it is sure to have been put all safe into the forts, or hidden in the mountains, and as for the lady, God forbid that we should force her a step without her own will.'

The honest sailor did not quite understand this punctilio, but—

'Well, captain,' quoth he, 'as you like; but no man shall say that you asked for a volunteer, were it to jump down a shark's throat, but what you had me first of all the crew.'

After this sort of temper had been exhibited, three or four more came forward—Yeo was very anxious to go, but Amvas forbade him.

'I'll volunteer, sir, without reward, for this or anything; though' (added he in a lower tone) 'I would to Heaven that the thought had never entered your head.'

'And so would I have volunteered,' said Simon

Evans, 'if it were the ship's quarrel, or the Queen's, but being it's a private matter of the captain's, and I've a wife and children at home, why, I take no shame to myself for asking money for my life.'

So the crew was made up; but ere they pushed off, Amvas called Cary aside—

'If I perish, Will—'

'Don't talk of such things, dear old lad.'

'I must. Then you are captain. Do nothing without Yeo and Drew. But if they approve, go right north away for San Domingo and Cuba, and try the ports, they can have no news of us there, and there is booty without end. Tell my mother that I died like a gentleman; and mind—mind, dear lad, to keep your temper with the men, let the poor fellows grumble as they may. Mind but that, and fear God, and all will go well.'

The tears were glistening in Cary's eyes as he pressed Amvas's hand, and watched the two brothers down over the side upon their desperate errand.

They reached the pebbly beach. There seemed no difficulty about finding the path to the house—so bright was the moon, and so careful a survey of the place had Frank taken. Leaving the men with the boat (Amvas had taken care that they should be well armed), they started up the beach, with their swords only. Frank assured Amvas that they would find a path leading from the beach up to the house, and he was not mistaken. They found it easily, for it was made of white shell sand, and following it struck into a 'funal,' or belt of tall thorny cuttuses. Through this the path wound in zig-zags up a steep rocky slope, and ended at a wicket-gate. They tried it, and found it open.

'She may expect us,' whispered Frank.

'Impossible!'

'Why not? She must have seen our ship, and if, as seems, the townsfolk know who we are, how much more must she! Yes, doubt it not, she still longs to hear news of her own land, and some secret sympathy will draw her down towards the sea to-night. See! the light is in the window still!'

'But if not,' said Amvas, who had no such expectation, 'what is your plan?'

'I have none.'

'None?'

'I have imagined twenty different ones in the last hour, but all are equally uncertain, impossible. I have ceased to struggle—I go where I am called, love's willing victim. If Heaven accept the sacrifice, it will provide the altar and the knife.'

Amvas was at his wits' end. Judging of his brother by himself, he had taken for granted that Frank had some well-concocted scheme for gaining admittance to the Rose; and as the wiles of love were altogether out of his province, he had followed in full faith such a sans-pépé as he held Frank to be. But now he almost doubted of his brother's sanity, though Frank's

manner was perfectly collected and his voice firm. Amyas, honest fellow, had no understanding of that intense devotion, which so many in those days (not content with looking on it as a lofty virtue, and yet one to be duly kept in its place by other duties) prided themselves on painpering into the most fantastic and self-willed excesses.

Beautiful folly! the death-song of which two great geniuses were composing at that very moment, each according to his light. For, while Spenser was embalming in immortal verse all that it contained of noble and Christian elements, Cervantes sat, perhaps, in his dungeon, writing with his left hand Don Quixote, saddest of books, in spite of all its wit; the story of a pure and noble soul, who mistakes this actual life for that ideal one which he fancies (and not so wrongly either) eternal in the heavens and finding instead of a battlefield for heroes in God's cause, nothing but frivolity, heartlessness, and gullibility, becomes a laughing-stock,—and dies. One of the saddest books, I say again, which man can read.

Amyas hardly dare trust himself to speak, for fear of saying too much, but he could not help saying—

'You are going to certain death, Frank.'

'Did I not entreat,' answered he very quietly, 'to go alone?'

Amyas had half a mind to compel him to return, but he feared Frank's obstinacy, and feared, too, the shame of returning on board without having done anything; so they went up through the wicket-gate, along a smooth turf walk, into what seemed a pleasure-garden, formed by the hand of man, or rather of woman. For by the light, not only of the moon, but of the innumerable fireflies, which flitted to and fro round the award like fiery wings sent to light the brothers on their way, they could see that the bushes on either side, and the trees above their heads, were decked with flowers of such strangeness and beauty, that, as Frank once said of Barbados, 'even the gardens of Waton were a desert in comparison.' All around were orange and lemon-trees (probably the only addition which man had made to Nature's prodigality), the fruit of which, in that strange coloured light of the fireflies, flashed in their eyes like balls of burnished gold and emerald, while great white tassels swinging from every tree in the breeze which swept down the glade, tossed in their faces a fragrant snow of blossoms, and glittering drops of perfumed dew.

'What a paradise!' said Amyas to Frank, 'with the serpent in it, as of old. Look!'

And as he spoke, there dropped slowly down from a bough, right before them, what seemed a living chain of gold, ruby, and sapphire. Both stopped, and another glance showed the small head and bright eyes of a snake, hissing and glaring full in their faces.

'See!' said Frank. 'And he comes, as of old, in the likeness of an angel of light. Do not strike it. There are worse devils to be

fought with to night than that poor beast.' And stepping aside, they passed the snake safely, and arrived in front of the house.

It was, as I have said, a long low house, with balconies along the upper story, and the under part mostly open to the wind. The light was still burning in the window.

'Whither now?' said Amyas, in a tone of desperate resignation.

'Thither! Where else on earth?' and Frank pointed to the light, trembling from head to foot, and pushed on.

'For Heaven's sake! Look at the negroes on the barbeque!'

It was indeed time to stop, for on the barbeque, or terrace of white plaster, which ran all round the front, lay sleeping full twenty black figures.

'What will you do now? You must step over them to gain an entrance.'

'Wait here, and I will go up gently towards the window. She may see me. She will see me as I step into the moonlight.' At least I know an air by which she will recognise me, if I do but humbly stave.

'Why, you do not even know that that light is hers!—Down, for your life!'

And Amyas dragged him down into the bushes on his left hand, for one of the negroes, wakening suddenly with a cry, had sat up, and began crossing himself four or five times, in fear of 'Duppy,' and mumbling various charms, avers, or what not.

The light above was extinguished instantly.

'Did you see her?' whispered Frank.

'No!'

'I did—the shadow of the face, and the neck! Can I be mistaken?' And then, covering his face with his hands, he murmured to himself, 'Misery! misery! So near and yet impossible!'

'Would it be the less impossible were you face to face! Let us go back. We cannot go up without detection, even if our going were of use. Come back, for God's sake, ere all is lost! If you have seen her, as you say, you know at least that she is alive, and safe in his house—'

'As his mistress! or as his wife? Do I know that yet, Amyas, and can I depart until I know?'

There was a few minutes' silence, and then Amyas, making one last attempt to awaken Frank to the absurdity of the whole thing, and to laugh him, if possible, out of it, as argument had no effect—

'My dear fellow, I am very hungry and sleepy, and this bush is very prickly, and my boots are full of ants—'

'So are mine!—Look!'

And Frank caught Amyas's arm, and clenched it tight. For round the farther corner of the house a dark cloaked figure stole gently, turning a look now and then upon the sleeping negroes, and came on right toward them.

'Did I not tell you she would come?' whispered Frank, in a triumphant tone.

Amyas was quite bewildered, and to his mind the apparition seemed magical, and Frank pro-

phetic, for as the figure came nearer, incredulous as he tried to be, there was no denying that the shape and the walk were exactly those of her, to find whom they had crossed the Atlantic. True, the figure was somewhat taller, but then, 'she must be grown since I saw her,' thought Amyas, and his heart for the moment beat as fiercely as Frank's.

But what was that behind her! Her shadow against the white wall of the house! Not so. Another figure, cloaked likewise, but taller far, was following on her steps. It was a man's. They could see that he wore a broad sombrero. It could not be Don Guzman, for he was at sea. Who then? Here was a mystery; perhaps a tragedy. And both brothers held their breaths, while Amyas felt whether his sword was loose in the sheath.

The Rose (if indeed it was she) was within ten yards of them, when she perceived that she was followed. She gave a little shriek. The cavalier sprang forward, lifted his hat courteously, and joined her, bowing low. The moonlight was full upon his face.

'It is Eustace, our cousin! How came he here, in the name of all the heads?'

'Eustace! Then that is she after all!' said Frank, forgetting everything else in her.

And now flashed across Amyas all that had passed between him and Eustace in the moorland inn, and Parracombe's story, too, of the suspicious gipsy. Eustace had been beforehand with them, and warned Don Guzman! All was explained now—but how had he got hither?

'The devil, his master, sent him hither on a broomstick, I suppose or what matter how! Here he is, and here we are, worse luck!' And, setting his teeth, Amyas awaited the end.

The two came on, talking earnestly, and walking at a slow pace, so that the brothers could hear every word.

'What shall we do now?' said Frank. 'We have no right to be eavesdroppers.'

'But we must be right or none.' And Amyas held him down firmly by the arm.

'But whither are you going, then, my dear madam?' they heard Eustace say in a wheedling tone. 'Can you wonder if such strange conduct should cause at least sorrow to your admirable and faithful husband?'

'Husband!' whispered Frank faintly to Amyas. 'Thank God, thank God! I am content. Let us go.'

But to go was impossible; for, as fate would have it, the two had stopped just opposite them.

'The estimable Señor Don Guzman—' began Eustace again.

'What do you mean by praising him to me in this fulsome way, sir? Do you suppose that I do not know his virtues better than you?'

'If you do, madam' (this was spoken in a harder tone), 'it were wise for you to try them less severely, than by wandering down towards the beach on the very night that you know his most deadly enemies are lying in wait to slay

him, plunder his house, and most probably to carry you off from him.'

'Carry me off! I will die first!'

'Who can prove that to him? Appearances are at least against you.'

'My love to him, and his trust for me, sir!'

'His trust! Have you forgotten, madam, what passed last week, and why he sailed yesterday?'

The only answer was a burst of tears. Eustace stood watching her with a terrible eye, but they could see his face writhing in the moonlight.

'Oh!' sobbed she at last. 'And if I have been imprudent, was it not natural to wish to look once more upon an English ship? Are you not English as well as I? Have you no longing recollections of the dear old land at home?'

Eustace was silent, but his face worked more fiercely than ever.

'How can he ever know it?'

'Why should he not know it?'

'Ah!' she burst out passionately, 'why not, indeed, while you are here? You, sir, the tempter, you the eavesdropper, you the murderer of loving hearts! You, serpent, who found our home a paradise, and see it now a hell!'

'Do you dare to accuse me thus, madam, without a shadow of evidence?'

'Dare? I dare anything, for I know all! I have watched you, sir, and I have borne with you too long.'

'Me, madam, whose only sin towards you, as you should know by now, is to have loved you too well! Rose! Rose! have you not blighted my life for me—broken my heart? And how have I repaid you? How but by sacrificing myself to seek you over land and sea, that I might complete your conversion to the bosom of that Church where a Virgin Mother stands stretching forth soft arms to embrace her wandering daughter, and cries to you all day long, "Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" And this is my reward!'

'Depart with your Virgin Mother, sir, and tempt me no more! You have asked me what I dare; and I dare this, upon my own ground, and in my own garden, I, Donna Rosa de Soto, to bid you leave this place now and for ever, after having insulted me by talking of your love, and tempted me to give up that faith which my husband promised me he would respect and protect. Go, sir!'

The brothers listened breathless with surprise as much as with rage. Love and conscience, and perhaps, too, the pride of her lofty alliance, had converted the once gentle and dreamy Rose into a very Roxana, but it was only the impulse of a moment. The words had hardly passed her lips, when, terrified at what she had said, she burst into a fresh flood of tears, while Eustace answered calmly—

'I go, madam: but how know you that I may not have orders, and that, after your last

strange speech, my conscience may compel me to obey those orders, to take you with me!

'Me! with you!

'My heart has bled for you, madam, for many a year. It longs now that it had bled itself to death, and never known the last worst agony of telling you—'

And drawing close to her he whispered in her ear—what, the brothers heard not—but her answer was a shriek which rang through the woods, and sent the night birds fluttering up from every bough above their heads.

'By Heaven!' said Amyas, 'I can stand this no longer. Cut that devil's throat I must—'

'She is lost if his dead body is found by her.'

'We are lost if we stay here, then,' said Amyas, 'for those negroes will hurry down at her cry, and then to find we must be.'

'Are you mad, madam, to betray yourself by your own cries? The negroes will be here in a moment. I give you one last chance for life, then,' and Eustace shouted in Spanish at the top of his voice, 'Help, help, servants! Your mistress is being carried off by bandits!'

'What do you mean, sir?'

'Let your woman's wit supply the rest, and forget not him who thus saves you from disgrace.'

Whether the brothers heard the last words or not, I know not, but taking for granted that Eustace had discovered them, they sprang to their feet at once, determined to make one last appeal, and then to sell their lives as dearly as they could.

Eustace started back at the unexpected apparition, but a second glance showed him Amyas's mighty bulk; and he spoke calmly—

'You see, madam, I did not call without need. Welcome, good cousins. My charity, as you perceive, has found means to outstrip your craft; while the fair lady, as was but natural, has been true to her assignation.'

'Liar!' cried Frank. 'She never knew of our being—'

'*Verdud Judicus*!' answered Eustace, but, as he spoke, Amyas burst through the bushes at him. There was no time to be lost, and ere the giant could disentangle himself from the boughs and shrubs, Eustace had slipped off his long cloak, thrown it over Amyas's head, and run up the alley, shouting for help.

Mad with rage, Amyas gave chase, but in two minutes more Eustace was safe among the ranks of the negroes, who came shouting and jabbering down the path.

He rushed back. Frank was just ending some wild appeal to Rose—

'Your conscience! your religion!—'

'No, never! I can face the chance of death, but not the loss of him. Go! for God's sake leave me!'

'You are lost, then,—and I have ruined you!'

'Come off, now or never,' cried Amyas, clutching him by the arm, and dragging him away like a child.

'You forgive me!' cried he.

'Forgive you!' and she burst into tears again.

Frank burst into tears also.

'Let me go back, and die with her—Amyas!—my oath!—my honour!' and he struggled to turn back.

Amyas looked back too, and saw her standing calmly, with her hands folded across her breast, awaiting Eustace and the servants, and he half turned to go back also. Both saw how fearfully appearances had put her into Eustace's power. Had he not a right to suspect that they were there by her appointment, that she was going to escape with them? And would not Eustace use his power? The thought of the Inquisition crowded their minds. 'Was that the threat which Eustace had whispered?' asked he of Frank.

'It was,' groaned Frank in answer.

For the first and last time in his life, Amyas Leigh stood irresolute.

'Back, and stab her to the heart first!' said Frank, struggling to escape from him.

Oh, if Amyas were but alone, and Frank safe home in England! To charge the whole mob, kill her, kill Eustace, and then cut his way back again to the ship, or die,—what matter! as he must die some day,—sword in hand! But Frank!—and then flashed before his eyes his mother's hopeless face, then rang in his ears his mother's last bequest to him of that frail treasure. Let Rose, let honour, let the whole world perish, he must save Frank. See! the negroes were up with her now—past her—away for life! and once more he dragged his brother down the hill, and through the wicket, only just in time, for the whole gang of negroes were within ten yards of them in full pursuit.

'Frank,' said he sharply, 'if you ever hope to see your mother again, rouse yourself, man, and fight!' And, without waiting for an answer, he turned, and charged uphill upon his pursuers, who saw the long bright blade, and fled instantly.

Again he hurried Frank down the hill, the path wound in zigzags, and he feared that the negroes would come straight over the cliff, and so cut off his retreat, but the prickly cactuses were too much for them, and they were forced to follow by the path, while the brothers (Frank having somewhat regained his senses) turned every now and then to menace them, but once on the rocky path, stones began to fly fast, small ones fortunately, and wide and wild for want of light—but when they reached the pebble-beach! Both were too proud to run, but, if ever Amyas prayed in his life, he prayed for the last twenty yards before he reached the water-mark.

'Now, Frank! down to the boat as hard as you can run, while I keep the curs back.'

'Amyas! what do you take me for? My madness brought you hither, your devotion shall not bring me back without you.'

'Together, then!'

And putting Frank's arm through his, they hurried down, shouting to their men.

The boat was not fifty yards off, but fast travelling over the pebbles was impossible, and long ere half the distance was crossed, the negroes were on the beach, and the storm burst. A volley of great quartz pebbles whistled round their heads.

'Come on, Frank! for life's sake! Men, to the rescue! Ah! what was that!'

The dull crash of a pebble against Frank's fair head! Drooping like *Ilyacinthus* beneath the blow of the quoit, he sank on Amyas's arm. The giant threw him over his shoulder, and plunged blindly on,—himself struck again and again.

'Fire, men! Give it the black villains!'

The arquebuses crackled from the boat in front. What were those dull *thuds* which answered from behind? Echoes? No! Over his head the caliver-balls went screeching. The governor's guards have turned out, followed them to the beach, fixed their calivers, and are firing over the negroes' heads, as the savages rush down upon the hapless brothers.

If, as all say, there are moments which are hours, how many hours was Amyas Leigh in reaching that boat's bow? Alas! the negroes are there as soon as he, and the guard, having lost their calivers, are close behind them, sword in hand. Amyas is up to his knees in water—battered with stones—blinded with blood. The boat is swaying off and on against the steep pebble-bank he clutches at it—misses—falls headlong—rises half-choked with water—but Frank is still in his arms. Another heavy blow—a confused roar of shouts, shots, curses—a confused mass of negroes and English, from and pebbles—and he recollects no more.

He is lying in the stern-sheets of the boat, stiff, weak, half blind with blood. He looks up, the moon is still bright overhead but they are away from the shore now, for the wave-crests are dancing white before the land-breeze, high above the boat's side. The boat seems strangely empty. Two men are pulling instead of six. And what is this lying heavy across his chest? He pushes, and is answered by a groan. He puts his hand down to rise, and is answered by another groan.

'What's this!'

'All that are left of us,' says Simon Evans of Clovelly.

'All! The bottom of the boat seemed paved with human bodies. 'O God! O God!' moans Amyas, trying to rise. 'And where—where is Frank? Frank!'

'Mr Frank!' cries Evans. 'There is no answer.'

'Dead!' shrieks Amyas. 'Look for him, for God's sake, look!' and struggling from under his living load, he peers into each pale and bleeding face.

'Where is he? Why don't you speak; forward there!'

'Because we have nought to say, sir,' answers Evans, almost surlily.

Frank was not there.

'Put the boat about! To the shore!' roars Amyas.

'Look over the gunwale, and judge for yourself, sir!'

The waves are leaping fierce and high before a furious land breeze. Return is impossible.

'Cowards! villains! traitors! hounds! to have left him behind!'

'Listen you to me, Captain Amyas Leigh,' says Simon Evans, resting on his oar, 'and hang me for mutiny, if you will, when we're aboard, if we ever get there. Isn't it enough to bring us out to death (as you knew yourself, sir, for you're prudent enough) to please that poor young gentleman's fancy about a wench, but you must call coward an honest man that have saved your life this night, and not a one of us but has his wound to show!'

Amyas was silent, the rebuke was just.

'I tell you, sir, if we've hove a stone out of this boat since we got off, we've hove two hundredweight, and, if the Lord had not fought for us, she'd have been beat to noggin-staves there on the beach.'

'How did I come here, then?'

'Tom Hart dragged you in out of five feet water, and then thrust the boat off, and had his brains beat out for reward. All were knocked down but us two. So help me God, we thought that you had hove Mr Frank on board just as you were knocked down, and saw William Frost drag him in.'

But William Frost was lying senseless in the bottom of the boat. There was no explanation. After all, none was needed.

'And I have three wounds from stones, and this man behind me as many more, beside a shot through his shoulder. Now, sir, be ye cowards!'

'You have done your duty,' said Amyas, and sank down in the boat, and cried as if his heart would break, and then sprang up, and, wounded as he was, took the oar from Evans's hands. With weary work they made the ship, but so exhausted that another boat had to be lowered to get them alongside.

The alarm being now given, it was hardly safe to remain where they were, and after a stormy and sad argument, it was agreed to weigh anchor and stand off and on till morning, for Amyas refused to leave the spot till he was compelled, though he had no hope (how could he have?) that Frank might still be alive. And perhaps it was well for them, as will appear in the next chapter, that morning did not find them at anchor close to the town.

However that may be, so ended that fatal venture of mistaken chivalry.

CHAPTER XX

SPANISH BLOODHOUNDS AND ENGLISH MASTIFFS

- ' Full seven long hours in all men's sight
This fight endured sore,
Until our men so feeble grew,
That they could fight no more.
And then upon dead horses
Full savourily they fed,
And drank the puddle water,
They could no better get.
- ' When they had fed so freely
They kneeled on the ground,
And gave God thanks devoutly for
The favour they had found,
Then beating up their voices,
The fight they did renew,
And turning to the Spaniards,
A thousand more they slew.
- The brave Lord Willoughby 1586.*

WHEN the sun leaped up the next morning, and the tropic light flashed suddenly into the tropic day, Amyas was pacing the deck, with dishevelled hair and torn clothes, his eyes red with rage and weeping, his heart full—how can I describe it? Picture it to yourselves, picture it to yourselves, you who have ever lost a brother, and you who have not, thank God that you know nothing of his agony. Full of impossible projects, he strode and staggered up and down, as the ship thrashed close hauled through the rolling seas. He would go back and burn the villa. He would take Guayra, and have the life of every man in it in return for his brother's. 'We can do it, lads!' he shouted. 'If Drake took Nombre de Dios, we can take la Guayra.' And every voice shouted, 'Yea.'

'We will have it, Amyas, and have Frank too, yet,' cried Cary, but Amyas shook his head. He knew, and knew not why he knew, that all the ports in New Spain would never restore to him that one beloved face.

'Yea, he shall be well avenged. And look there! There is the first crop of our vengeance.' And he pointed toward the shore, where between them and the now distant peaks of the Silla, three sails appeared, not five miles to windward.

'There are the Spanish bloodhounds on our heels, the same ships which we saw yesterday off Guayra. Back, lads, and welcome them, if they were a dozen.'

There was a murmur of applause from all around, and if any young heart sank for a moment at the prospect of fighting three ships at once, it was awed into silence by the cheer which rose from all the older men, and by Salvation Yeo's stentorian voice.

'If there were a dozen, the Lord is with us, who has said, "One of you shall chase a thousand." Clear away, lads, and see the glory of the Lord this day.'

'Amen!' cried Cary; and the ship was kept still closer to the wind.

Amyas had revived at the sight of battle. He no longer felt his wounds, or his great sorrow, even Frank's last angel's look grew dimmer every moment as he bustled about the deck, and ere

a quarter of an hour had passed, his voice cried firmly and cheerfully as of old—

'Now, my masters, let us serve God, and then to breakfast, and after that clear for action.'

Jack Brimblecombe read the daily prayers, and the prayers before a fight at sea, and his honest voice trembled, as, in the Prayer for all Conditions of Men (in spite of Amyas's despair), he added, 'and especially for our dear brother Mr Francis Leigh, perhaps captive among the idolaters,' and so they rose.

'Now, then,' said Amyas, 'to breakfast. A Frenchman fights best fasting, a Dutchman drunk, an Englishman full, and a Spaniard when the devil is in him, and that's always.'

'And good beef and the good cause are a match for the devil,' said Cary. 'Come down, captain, you must eat too.'

Amyas shook his head, took the tiller from the steersman, and bade him go below and fill himself. Will Cary went down, and returned in five minutes, with a plate of bread and beef, and a great jack of ale, coaxed them down Amyas's throat as a nurse does with a child, and then scuttled below again with tears hopping down his face.

Amyas stood still staring. His face was grown seven years older in the last night. A terrible set calm was on him. 'Woe to the man who came across him that day!'

'There are three of them, you see, my masters,' said he, as the crew came on deck again. 'A big ship forward, and two galleys astern of her. The big ship may keep, she is a race ship, and if we can but recover the wind of her, we will see whether our height is not a match for her length. We must give her the ship, and take the galleys first.'

'I thank the Lord,' said Yeo, 'who has given so wise a heart to so young a general, a very David and Daniel, saving his presence, lads, and if any dare not follow him, let him be as the men of Meroz and of Succoth. Amen.' Silas Staveley, smite me that boy over the head, the young monkey, why is he not down at the powder-room floor?'

And Yeo went about his gunnery, as one who knew how to do it, and had the most terrible mind to do it thoroughly, and the most terrible faith that it was God's work.

So all fell to, and though there was comparatively little to be done, the ship having been kept as far as could be in fighting order all night, yet there was 'clearing of decks, lying of mottings, making of bulwarks, fitting of waist cloths, arming of tops, fallowing of pikes, slugging of yards, doubling of sheets and tacks,' enough to satisfy even the pedantic soul of Richard Hawkins himself. Amyas took charge of the poop, Cary of the fore-castle, and Yeo, as gunner, of the main-deck, while Drew, as master, sat himself in the waist, and all was ready, and more than ready, before the great ship was within two miles of them.

And now, while the mastiffs of England and the bloodhounds of Spain are nearing and near-

ing over the rolling surges, thirsting for each other's blood, let us spend a few minutes at least in looking at them both, and considering the causes which in those days enabled the English to face and conquer armaments immensely superior in size and number of ships, and to boast, that in the whole Spanish war, but one Queen's ship, the *Revenge*, and (if I recollect right) but one private man-of-war, Sir Richard Hawkins's *Dunty*, had ever struck their colours to the enemy.

What was it which enabled Sir Richard Grenville's *Revenge*, in his last fearful fight off the Azores, to endure, for twelve hours before she struck, the attack of eight Spanish armadas, of which two (three times her own burden) sank at her side, and after all her masts were gone, and she had been boarded three times without success, to defy to the last the whole fleet of fifty-four sail, which lay around her, waiting for her to sink, 'like dogs around the dying forest king'?

What enabled young Richard Hawkins's *Dunty*, though half her guns were useless through the carelessness or treachery of the gunner, to maintain for three days a running fight with two Spaniards of equal size with her, double the weight of metal, and ten times the number of men?

What enabled Sir George Cary's illustrious ship, the *Content*, to fight single-handed, from seven in the morning till eleven at night, with four great armadas and two galleys, though her heaviest gun was but one nine-pounder, and for many hours she had but thirteen men fit for service?

What enabled, in the very year of which I write, those two 'valiant Turkey Merchantmen' of London, the *Merchant Royal* and the *Tobac*, with their three small consorts, to cripple, off Pantellaria in the Mediterranean, the whole fleet of Spanish galleys sent to intercept them, and return triumphant through the Straits of Gibraltar?

And lastly, what in the fight of 1588, whereof more hereafter, enabled the English fleet to capture, destroy, and scatter that Great Armada, with the loss (but not the capture) of one prisoner, and one gentleman of note?

There were more causes than one. The first seems to have lain in the build of the English ships, the second in their superior gunnery and weight of metal, the third (without which the first would have been useless) in the hearts of the English men.

The English ship was much shorter than the Spanish, and this (with the rig of those days) gave them an ease in manœuvring, which utterly confounded their Spanish foes. 'The English ships in the fight of 1588,' says Camden, 'charged the enemy with marvellous agility, and having discharged their broadsides, flew forth presently into the deep, and levelled their shot directly, without missing, at those great ships of the Spaniards, which were altogether heavy and unwieldy.' Moreover, the Spanish fashion, in the

West Indies at least, though not in the ships of the Great Armada, was, for the sake of carrying merchandise, to build their men-of-war flush-decked, or, as it was called, 'races' (razées), which left those on deck exposed and open; while the English fashion was to heighten the ship as much as possible at stem and stern, both by the sweep of her hulls, and also by stockades ('close lights and cage-works') on the poop and fore-castle, thus giving to the men a shelter, which was further increased by strong bulkheads ('cross-boards') across the main deck below, dividing the ship thus into a number of separate forts, fitted with swivels ('bases, fowlers, and murderers') and loop-holes for musketry and arrows.

But the great source of superiority was, after all, in the men themselves. The English sailor was then, as now, a quite amphibious and all-embracing animal, capable of turning his hand to everything, from needlework and carpentry to gunnery or hand-to-hand blows, and he was, moreover, one of a nation, every citizen of which was not merely permitted to carry arms, but compelled by law to practise from childhood the use of the bow, and accustomed to consider sword-play and quarter-staff as a necessary part and parcel of education, and the pastime of every leisure hour. The 'fiercest nation upon earth,' as they were then called, and the freest also, each man of them taught for himself with the self-help and self-respect of a Yankee farmer, and once bidden to do his work was trusted to carry it out by his own wit as best he could. In one word, he was a free man.

The English officers, too, as now, lived on terms of sympathy with their men unknown to the Spaniards, who raised between the commander and the commanded absurd barriers of rank and blood, which forbade to his pride any labour but that of fighting. The English officers, on the other hand, brought up to the same athletic sports, the same martial exercises, as their men, were not ashamed to care for them, to win their friendship, even on emergency to consult their judgment, and need their rank, not to differ from their men, but to inspire them, not merely to command and be obeyed, but, like Homer's heroes, or the old Norse Vikings, to lead and be followed. Drake touched the true springs of English success when he once (in his voyage round the world) indignantly rebuked some cockcomb gentlemen-adventurers with—'I should like to see the gentleman that will refuse to set his hand to a rope. I must have the gentlemen to hale and draw with the mariners.' But those were days in which her Majesty's service was as little overruled by absurd rules of seniority, as by that etiquette which is at once the counterfeit and the ruin of true discipline. Under Elizabeth and her ministers, a brave and a shrewd man was certain of promotion, let his rank or his age be what they might. The true honour of knighthood covered ome and for all any lowliness of birth, and the merchant service (in which all the best sea-captains, even

those of noble blood, were more or less engaged) was then a nursery, not only for seamen, but for warriors, in days when Spanish and Portuguese traders (whenever they had a chance) got rid of English competition by salvos of cannon-shot.

Hence, as I have said, that strong fellow-feeling between officers and men, and hence mutinies (as Sir Richard Hawkins tells us) were all but unknown in the English ships, while in the Spanish they broke out on every slight occasion. For the Spaniards, by some suicidal pedantry, had allowed their navy to be crippled by the same despotism, etiquette, and official routine, by which the whole nation was gradually frozen to death in the course of the next century or two, forgetting that, fifty years before, Cortez, Pizarro, and the early Conquistadores of America had achieved their marvellous triumphs on the exactly opposite method, by that very fellow feeling between commander and commanded by which the English were now conquering them in their turn.

Their navy was organised on a plan complete enough, but on one which was, as the event proved, utterly fatal to their prowess and unanimity, and which made even their courage and honour useless against the assaults of free men. They do, in their armadas at sea, divide themselves into three bodies, to wit, soldiers, mariners, and gunners. The soldiers and officers watch and ward as if on shore, and this is the only duty they undergo, except cleaning their arms, wherein they are not over curious. The gunners are exempted from all labour and care, except about the artillery, and these are either Abnanes, Flemings, or strangers, for the Spaniards are but indifferently practised in this art. The mariners are but as slaves to the rest, to toil and to toil day and night, and those but few and bad, and not suffered to sleep or hubear under the decks. For in fair or foul weather, in storms, sun, or rain, they must pass void of covert or shelter.

This is the account of one who was long prisoner on board their ships, let it explain itself, while I return to my tale. For the great ship is now within two musket-shots of the *Rose*, with the golden flag of Spain floating at her poop, and her trumpets are shouting defiance up the breeze, from a dozen brazen throats, which two or three answer lustily from the *Rose*, from whose poop flies the flag of England, and from her fore the arms of Leitch and Cary wave by side, and over them the ship and bridge of the good town of Boleford. And then Amyas calls—

'Now, silence trumpets, wait, play up! "Fortune my foe!" and God and the Queen be with us!'

Whereon (laugh not, reader, for it was the fashion of those musical, as well as valiant days) up rose that noble old favourite of good Queen Bess, from cornet and snicket, his and drum, while Parson Jack, who had taken his stand with the musicians on the poop, worked away

lustily at his violin, and like Volker of the *Nibelungen Lied*.

'Well played, Jack; thy elbow flies like a lamb's tail,' said Amyas, forming a jest.

'It shall fly to a better middle-bow presently, sir, an I have the luck—'

'Steady, helm!' said Amyas. 'What is he after now?'

The Spaniard, who had been tacking upon them right down the wind under a press of sail, took in his light canvas.

'He don't know what to make of our waiting for him so bold,' said the helmsman.

'He does though, and means to fight us,' cried another. 'See, he is hauling up the foot of his mainsail but he wants to keep the wind of us.'

'Let him try, then,' quoth Amyas. 'Keep her closer still. Let no one fire till we are about Man the starboard guns, to starboard, and wait, all small armament. Pass the order down to the gunner, and bid all fire high, and take the rigging.'

Long went one of the Spaniard's bow guns and the shot went a mile. Then another and another, while the men hedged about, looking at the priming of their muskets, and loosened their arrows in the sheaf.

'Lie down, men, and sing a psalm. When I want you, I'll call you. Close still, if you can, helmsman, and we will try a short ship against a long one. We can sail two points nearer the wind than he.'

As Amyas had calculated, the Spaniard would gladly enough have stood across the *Rose's* bows, but, knowing the English readiness, dare not for fear of being taken, so her only plan, if she did not intend to shoot past her foe down to leeward, was to put her head close to the wind, and wait for her on the same tack.

Amyas laughed to himself. 'Hold on yet awhile. More ways of killing a cat than choking her with cream. Now, there, are your men ready?'

'Ay, ay, sir!' and on they went, closing fast with the Spaniard, till within a pistol-shot.

'Ready about!' and about she went like an eel, and ran upon the opposite tack right under the Spaniard's stern. The Spaniard, astounded at the quickness of the manœuvre, hesitated a moment, and then tried to get about also, as his only chance, but it was too late, and while his lumbering length was still hanging in the wind's eye, Amyas's bowsprit had all but scraped his quarter, and the *Rose* passed slowly across his stern at ten yards' distance.

'Now, then!' roared Amyas. 'Fire, and with a will! Give at her, archers have at her, muskets all!' and in an instant a storm of bar and chain-shot, round and canister, swept the proud Don from stem to stern, while through the white cloud of smoke the musket-balls, and the still deadlier cloth-yard arrows, whistled and rushed upon their venomous errand. Down went the steersman, and every soul who manned the poop. Down went the mizen-topmast, in

went the stern-windows and quarter-galleries; and as the smoke cleared away, the gorgeous painting of the *Madre Dolorosa*, with her heart full of seven swords, which, in a gilded frame, bedizened the Spanish stern, was shivered in splinters, while, most glorious of all, the golden flag of Spain, which the last moment flaunted above their heads, hung trailing in the water. The ship, her tiller shot away, and her helmsman killed, staggered helplessly a moment, and then fell up into the wind.

'Well done, men of Devon!' shouted Amyas, as cheers rent the welkin.

'She has struck,' cried some, as the deafening hurrahs died away.

'Not a bit,' said Amyas. 'Hold on, helmsman, and leave her to patch her tackle while we settle the galleys.'

On they shot merrily, and long ere the armada could get herself to rights again, were two good miles to windward, with the galleys swooping down fast upon them.

And two venomous looking craft they were, as they shot through the short churning sea upon some forty oars apiece, stretching their long sword-fish snouts over the water, as if sniffing for their prey. Behind this lung snout, a strong square fore-castle was crammed with soldiers, and the muzzles of cannon grined out through port-holes, not only in the sides of the fore-castle, but forward in the hue of the galley's course, thus enabling her to keep up a continual fire on a ship right ahead.

The long low waist was packed full of the slaves, some five or six to each oar, and down the centre, between the two banks, the English could see the slave-drivers walking up and down a long gangway, whip in hand. A raised quarter-deck at the stern held more soldiers, the sunlight flashing merrily upon their armour and their gun barrels, as they neared, the English could hear plainly the cracks of the whips, and the yells as of wild beasts which answered them, the roll and rattle of the oars, and the loud 'Ha!' of the slaves which accompanied every stroke, and the oaths and curses of the drivers, while a sickening musky smell, as of a pack of kennelled hounds, came down the wind from off those dens of misery. No wonder if many a young heart shuddered as it faced, for the first time, the horrible reality of those floating hells, the cruelties whereof had rung so often in English ears, from the stories of their own countenances, who had passed them, fought them, and now and then passed years of misery on board of them. Who knew but what there might be English among those sun-browned half-naked masses of panting wretches?

'Must we fire upon the slaves?' asked more than one, as the thought crossed him.

Amyas sighed.

'Spare them all you can, in God's name; but if they try to run us down, rake them we must, and God forgive us.'

The two galleys came on abreast of each other, some forty yards apart. To outmanoeuvre their

oars as he had done the ship's sails, Amyas knew was impossible. To run from them, was to be caught between them and the ship.

He made up his mind, as usual, to the desperate game.

'Lay her head up in the wind, helmsman, and we will wait for them.'

They were now within musket-shot, and opened fire from their bow-guns, but, owing to the churning sea, their aim was wild. Amyas, as usual, withheld his fire.

The men stood at quarters with compressed lips, not knowing what was to come next. Amyas, towering motionless on the quarter-deck, gave his orders calmly and decisively. The men saw that he trusted himself, and trusted him accordingly.

The Spaniards, seeing him wait for them, gave a shout of joy—was the Englishman mad? And the two galleys converged rapidly, intending to strike him full, one on each bow.

They were within forty yards—another minute, and the shock would come. The Englishman's helm went up, his yards craked round, and gathering way, he plunged upon the larboard galley.

'A dozen gold nobles to him who brings down the steersman!' shouted Cory, who had his ear.

And a flight of arrows from the fore-castle rattled upon the galley's quarter-deck.

Hit or not hit, the steersman, lost his nerve, and shrank from the coming shock. The galley's helm went up to port, and her break shud all but harmless along Amyas's bow, a long dull grind, and then loud crack on crack, as the *Rose* saw'd slowly through the bank of oars from stern to stern, hurling the wretched slaves in heaps upon each other, and ere her mate on the other side could swing round, to strike him in his new position, Amyas's whole broadside, great and small, had been poured into her at point-blank, answered by a yell which rent their ears and hearts.

'Spare the slaves! Fire at the soldiers!' cried Amyas, but the work was too hot for much discrimination, for the larboard galley, crippled but not undaunted, swung round across his stern, and hooked herself venomously on to him.

It was a move more brave than wise; for it prevented the other galley from returning to the attack without exposing herself a second time to the English broadside, and a desperate attempt of the Spaniards to board at once through the stern-ports and up the quarter was met with such a demurrer of shot and steel, that they found themselves in three minutes again upon the galley's poop, accompanied, to their intense disgust, by Amyas's light and twenty English swords.

Five minutes' hard cutting, hawl to hawl, and the poop was clear. The soldiers in the fore-castle had been able to give them no assistance, open as they lay to the arrows and musketry from the *Rose's* lofty stern. Amyas rushed along the central gangway, shouting in

Spanish, 'Freedom to the slaves! death to the masters!' clambered into the fore-castle, followed close by his swarm of wasps, and set them so good an example how to use their stings, that in three minutes more there was not a Spaniard on board who was not dead or dying.

'Let the slaves free!' shouted he. 'Throw us a hammer down, men. Hark! there's an English voice!'

There is indeed. From amid the wreck of broken oars and writhing limbs, a voice is shrieking in broadest Devon to the master, who is looking over the side.

'Oh Robert Drew! Robert Drew! Come down, and take me out of hell!'

'Who be you, in the name of the Lord?'

'Don't you mind William Priest, that Captain Hawkins left behind in the Honduras, years and years ago! There's nine of us aboard, if your shot hasn't put 'em out of their misery. Come down, if you've a Christian heart, come down!'

Utterly forgetful of all discipline, Drew leaps down, hammer in hand, and the two old comrades rush into each other's arms.

Why make a long story of what took but five minutes to do! The nine men (luckily none of them wounded) are freed, and helped on board, to be hugged and kissed by old comrades and young kinsmen, while the remaining slaves, furnished with a couple of hammers, are told to free themselves and help the English. The wretches answer by a shout, and Anyas, once more safe on board again, dashes after the other galley, which has been hovering out of reach of his guns; but there is no need to trouble himself about her, so keened with what she has got, she is struggling right up wind, leaning over to one side, and seemingly ready to sink.

'Are there any English on board of her?' asks Anyas, loth to lose the chance of freeing a countryman.

'Never a one, sir, thank God!'

So they set to work to repair damages; while the liberated slaves, having shifted some of the galley's oars, pull away after their comrade, and that with such a will, that in ten minutes they have caught her up, and careless of the Spaniards' fire, boarded her en masse, with yells as of a thousand wolves. There will be fearful vengeance taken on those tyrants, unless they play the man this day.

And in the meanwhile half the crew are clothing, feeding, questioning, caressing those nine poor fellows thus snatched from living death; and Yeo, hearing the news, has rushed up on deck to welcome his old comrades, and—

'Is Michael Heard, my cousin, here among you?'

Yes, Michael Heard is there, white-headed rather from misery than age, and the embracings and questionings begin afresh.

'Where is my wife, Salvation Yeo?'

'With the Lord!'

'Amen!' says the old man, with a short shudder.

'I thought so much; and my two boys!'

W. E.

'With the Lord!'

The old man catches Yeo by the arm.

'How, then? It is Yeo's turn to shudder now.

'Killed in Panama, fighting the Spaniards, sailing with Mr Oxenham, and 'twas I led 'em into it. May God and you forgive me!'

'They couldn't die better, cousin Yeo. Where's my girl Grace?'

'Died in childbed.'

'Any childer?'

'No.'

The old man covers his face with his hands for a while.

'Well, I've been alone with the Lord these fifteen years, so I must not whine at being alone a while longer—'t won't be long.'

'Put this coat on your back, uncle,' says some one.

'No, no coats for me. Naked came I into the world, and naked I go out of it this day, if I have a chance. You're better to go to your work, lads, or the big one will have the wind of you yet.'

'So she will,' said Anyas, who has overheard, but so great is the curiosity on all hands, that he has some trouble in getting the men to quarters again, indeed, they only go on condition of parting among themselves with them the newcomers, each to tell his sad and strange story. How after Captain Hawkins, constrained by famine, had put them ashore, they wandered in misery till the Spaniards took them, how, instead of hanging them (as they at first intended), the Dons fed and clothed them, and allotted them as servants to various gentlemen about Mexico, where they thrived, turned their hands (like true sailors) to all manner of trades, and made much money, and some of them were married, even to women of wealth, so that all went well, until the fatal year 1574, when, 'much against the minds of many of the Spaniards themselves, that cruel and bloody Inquisition was established for the first time in the Indies', and how, from that moment, their lives were one long tragedy, how they were all imprisoned for a year and a half, not for prosecuting, but simply for not believing in transubstantiation, racked again and again, and at last adjudged to receive publicly, on Good Friday 1575, some three hundred, some one hundred stripes, and to serve in the galleys for six or ten years each, while, as the crowning atrocity of the Moloch sacrifice, three of them were burnt alive in the market place of Mexico, a story no less hideous than true, the details whereof whose list may read in Hakluyt's third volume, as told by Philip Miles, one of that hapless crew, as well as the adventures of Jol Hootop, a messmate of his, who after being sent to Spain, and seeing two more of his companions burnt alive at Seville, was sentenced to row in the galleys ten years, and after that to go to the 'everlasting prison remediless', from which doom, after twenty-three years of slavery he was delivered by the galleon *Dudley*, and came safely home to Redriff.

The fate of Hortop and his comrades was, of course, still unknown to the rescued men; but the history even of their party was not likely to improve the good feeling of the crew toward the Spanish ship which was two miles to leeward of them, and which must be fought with, or fled from, before a quarter of an hour was past. So, kneeling down upon the deck, as many a brave crew in those days did in like case, they 'gave God thanks devoutly for the favour they had found', and then with one accord, at Jack's leading, sang one and all the ninety-fourth Psalm.¹

'Oh, Lord, thou dost revenge all wrong;
Vengeance belongs to thee, etc.

And then again to quarters, for half the day's work, or more than half, still remained to be done, and hardly were the decks cleared afresh, and the damage repaired as best it could be, when she came ranging up to leeward, as close-hauled as she could.

She was, as I said, a long flush-decked ship of full five hundred tons, more than double the size, in fact, of the *Rose*, though not so lofty in proportion, and many a bold heart beat loud, and no shame to them, as she began firing away merrily, determined, as all well knew, to wipe out in English blood the disgrace of her late foil.

'Never mind, my merry masters,' said Amyas, 'she has quantity and we quality.'
'That's true,' said one, 'for one honest man is worth two rogues.'

'And one culverin three of their footy little ordnance,' said another. 'So when you will, captain, and have at her.'

'Let her come abreast of us, and don't burn powder. We have the wind, and can do what we like with her. Serve the men out a horn of ale all round to leeward, and all take your time.'

So they waited for five minutes more, and then set to work quietly, after the fashion of English mastiffs, though like those mastiffs, they waxed right mad before three rounds were fired, and the white splinters (sight beloved) began to crackle and fly.

Amyas, having, as he had said, the wind, and being able to go nearer it than the Spaniard, kept his place at easy point-blank range for his two eighteen-pounder culverins, which Yeo and his mate worked with terrible effect.

'We are lacking her through and through every shot,' said he. 'Leave the small ordnance alone yet awhile, and we shall sink her without them.'

'Whing, whing,' went the Spaniard's shot, like so many humming-bugs, through the rigging far above their heads; for the ill-constructed ports of those days prevented the guns from killing an enemy who was to windward, unless close alongside.

'Blow, jolly breeze,' cried one, 'and lay the

¹ The crew of the *Tobie*, cast away on the Barbary coast a few years after, began with heavy hearts to sing the 12th Psalm, 'Help, Lord, for good and godly men,' etc. Howbeit, ere we had finished four verses, the waves of the sea had stopped the breaths of most.

Don over all thou canst.—What the murrain is gone, aloft there!'

Alas! a crack, a flap, a rattle; and blank dismay! An unlucky shot had cut the foremast (already wounded) in two, and all forward was a mass of dangling wreck.

'Forward, and cut away the wreck!' said Amyas, unmoved. 'Small-arm men, be ready. He will be aboard of us in five minutes!'

It was too true. The *Rose*, unmanageable from the loss of her head-sail, lay at the mercy of the Spaniard, and the archers and musketeers had hardly time to range themselves to leeward, when the *Madre Dolorosa's* chains were grinding against the *Rose's*, and grapples tossed on board from stern to stern.

'Don't cut them loose!' roared Amyas. 'Let them stay and see the fun! Now, dogs of Devon, show your teeth, and hurrah for God and the Queen!'

And then began a fight most fierce and fell: the Spaniards, according to their fashion, attempting to board, the English, amid fierce shouts of 'God and the Queen!' 'God and St. George for England!' sweeping them back by showers of arrows and musquet balls, thrusting them down with pikes, hurling grenades and stink-pots from the tops; while the swivels on both sides poured their grape, and bar, and chain, and the great main-deck guns, thundering muzzle to muzzle, made both ships quiver and recoil, as they smashed the round shot through and through each other.

So they roared and flashed, fast clenched to each other in that devil's wedlock, under a cloud of smoke beneath the cloudless troyne sky; while all around the dolphins gambolled, and the flying-fish shot on from swell to swell, and the rainbow-hued jellies opened and shut their cups of living crystal to the sun, as merrily as if man had never fallen, and hell had never broken loose on earth.

So it raged for an hour or more, till all arms were weary, and all tongues clove to the mouth. And sick then, rotting with scurvy, scrambled up on deck, and fought with the strength of madness: and tiny powder-boys, handing up cartridges from the hold, laughed and cheered as the shots ran past their ears, and old Salvation Yeo, a text upon his lips, and a fury in his heart as of Joshua or Elijah in old time, worked on, calm and grim, but with the energy of a boy at play. And now and then an opening in the smoke showed the Spanish captain, in his suit of black steel armour, standing cool and proud, guiding and pointing, careless of the iron hail, but too lofty a gentleman to soil his glove with aught but a knightly sword-hilt: while Amyas and Will, after the fashion of the English gentlemen, had stripped themselves nearly as bare as their own sailors, and were cheering, thrusting, hewing, and hauling, here, there, and everywhere, like any common mariner, and filling them with a spirit of self-respect, fellow-feeling, and personal daring, which the discipline of the Spaniards, more perfect mechanically, but cold

and tyrannous, and crushing spiritually, never could bestow. The black-plumed Señor was obeyed; but the golden-locked Amyas was followed; and would have been followed through the jaws of hell.

The Spaniards, ere five minutes had passed, poured en masse into the *Rose's* waist: but only to their destruction. Between the poop and fore-castle (as was then the fashion) the upper-deck beams were left open and unplanked, with the exception of a narrow gangway on either side, and off that fatal ledge the boarders, thrust on by those behind, fell headlong between the beams to the main-deck below, to be slaughtered helplessly in that pit of destruction, by the double fire from the bulwarks fore and aft, while the few who kept their footing on the gangway, after vain attempts to force the stockades on poop and fore-castle, leaped overboard again amid a shower of shot and arrows. The fire of the English was as steady as it was quick, and though three-fourths of the crew had never smelt powder before, they proved well the truth of the old chronicler's saying (since proved again more gloriously than ever, at Alma, Balaklava, and Lukermann), that 'the English never fight better than in their first battle.'

Thrice the Spaniards clambered on board, and thrice as good back before that deadly hail. The decks on both sides were very shambles; and Jack Bumblecombe, who had fought as long as his conscience would allow him, found, when he turned to a more clerical occupation, enough to do in carrying poor wretches to the surgeon, without giving that spiritual consolation which he longed to give, and they to receive. At last there was a lull in that wild storm. No shot was heard from the Spaniard's upper deck.

Amyas leaped into the mizzen rigging, and looked through the smoke. Dead men he could descrie through the blinding veil, rolled in heaps, laid flat; dead men and dying—but no man upon his feet. The last volley had swept the deck clear; none by one had dropped below to escape that fiery shower: and alone at the helm, grinding his teeth with rage, his mustachios curling up to his very eyes, stood the Spanish captain.

Now was the moment for a counter-stroke. Amyas shouted for the boarders, and in two minutes more he was over the side, and clutching at the Spaniard's mizzen rigging.

What was this? The distance between him and the enemy's side was widening. Was she sheering off? Yes—and rising too, growing bodily higher every moment, as if by magic. Amyas looked up in astonishment and saw what it was. The Spaniard was heeling fast over to leeward away from him. Her masts were all sloping forward, swifter and swifter—the end was come, then!

'Back! in God's name back, men! She is sinking by the head!' And with much ado some were dragged back, some leaped back—all but old Michael Heard.

With hair and beard floating in the wind, the bronzed naked figure, like some weird old Indian fakir, still climbed on steadfastly up the mizzen chains of the Spaniard, hatchet in hand.

'Come back, Michael! Leap while you may!' shouted a dozen voices. Michael turned—

'And what should I come back for, then, to go home where no one knoweth me? I'll die like an Englishman this day, or I'll know the reason why!' and turning, he sprang in over the bulwarks, as the huge ship rolled up more and more, like a dying whale, exposing all her long black bulk almost down to the keel, and one of her lower-deck guns, as if in defiance, exploded upright into the air, hurling the ball to the very heavens.

In an instant it was answered from the *Rose* by a column of smoke, and the eighteen-pound ball crashed through the bottom of the defenceless Spaniard.

'Who fired? Shame to fire on a sinking ship!'

'Gunner Yeo, sir,' shouted a voice up from the main-deck. 'He's like a madman down here.'

'Tell him if he fires again, I'll put him in irons, if he were my own brother! Cut away the grapples aloft, men! Don't you see how she drags us over? Cut away, or we shall sink with her!'

They cut away, and the *Rose*, released from the strain, shook her feathers on the wave-crest like a freed seagull, while all men held their breaths.

Suddenly the glorious creature righted herself, and rose again, as if in noble shame, for one last struggle with her doom. Her bows were deep in the water, but her after-deck still dry. Righted—but only for a moment, long enough to let her crew come pouring with a rush up on deck, with cries and prayers, and rush aft to the poop, where, under the flag of Spain, stood the tall captain, his left hand on the standard-staff, his sword pointed in his right.

'Back, men!' they heard him cry, 'and die like valiant mariners.'

Some of them ran to the bulwarks, and shouted 'Mercy! We surrender!' and the English broke into a cheer and called to them to run her along-side.

'Silence!' shouted Amyas. 'I take no surrender from mutineers. Señor,' cried he to the captain, springing into the rigging and taking off his hat, 'for the love of God and these men, strike! and surrender a buena guerra.'

The Spaniard lifted his hat and bowed courteously, and answered, 'Impossible, Señor. No guerra is good which stains my honour.'

'God have mercy on you, then!'

'Amen!' said the Spaniard, crossing himself.

She gave one awful lunge forward, and dived under the coming swell, hurling her crew into the eddies. Nothing but the point of her poop remained, and there stood the stern anchor-plate fast Don, cap-à-plô in his glistening black armour, immovable as a man of iron, while over

him the flag, which claimed the empire of both worlds, flaunted its gold aloft and upwards in the glare of the tropic noon.

'He shall not carry that flag to the devil with him, I will have it yet, if I die for it!' said Will Cary, and rushed to the side to leap overboard, but Anyas stopped him.

'Let him die as he has lived, with honour.'

A wild figure sprang out of the mass of sailors who struggled and shrieked amid the foam, and rushed upward at the Spaniard. It was Michael Heard. The Don, who stood above him, plunged his sword into the old man's body, but the hatchet gleamed, nevertheless, down went the blade through headpiece and through head, and as Heard sprang onward, bleeding, but alive, the steel-clad corpse rattled down the deck into the surge. Two more strokes, struck with the fury of a dying man, and the standard-staff was hewn through. Old Michael collected all his strength, hurled the flag far from the sinking ship, and then stood erect one moment and shouted, 'God save Queen Bess!' and the English answered with a 'Hurrah!' which rent the welkin.

Another moment and the gulf had swallowed his victim, and the poop, and him, and nothing remained of the *Madre Dolorosa* but a few floating spars and struggling wretches, while a great awe fell upon all men, and a solemn silence, broken only by the cry

'Of some strong swimmer in his agony.'

And then, suddenly collecting themselves, as men awakened from a dream, half a dozen desperate gallants, reckless of sharks and eddies, leaped overboard, swam towards the flag, and towed it alongside in triumph.

'Ah!' said Salvation Yeo, as he helped the trophy up over the side, 'ah! it was not for nothing that we found poor Michael! He was always a good comrade—nigh as good as one as William Penberthy of Marazion, whom the Lord grant I meet in bliss! And now, then, my masters, shall we ashore again and burn La Guayra?'

'Art thou never glutted with Spanish blood, thou old wolf?' asked Will Cary.

'Never, sir,' answered Yeo.

'To St. Jago be it,' said Anyas, 'if we can get there: but—God help us!'

And he looked round sadly enough, while no one needed that he should finish his sentence, or explain his 'but.'

The foremast was gone, the mainyard sprung, the rigging hanging in elf-locks, the hull shot through and through in twenty places, the deck strewn with the bodies of nine good men, beside sixteen wounded down below; while the pitiless sun, right above their heads, poured down a flood of fire upon a sea of glass.

And it would have been well if faintness and weariness had been all that was the matter; but now that the excitement was over, the collapse came; and the men sat down listlessly and sulkily by twos and threes upon the deck,

starting and wining when they heard some poor fellow below cry out under the surgeon's knife, or murmuring to each other that all was lost. Drew tried in vain to rouse them, telling them that all depended on rigging a jury-mast forward as soon as possible. They answered only by growls, and at last broke into open reproaches. Even Will Cary's volatile nature, which had kept him up during the fight, gave way, when Yeo and the carpenter came aft, and told Anyas in a low voice—

'We are hit somewhere forward, below the water line, sir. She leaks a terrible deal, and the Lord will not vouchsafe to us to lay our hands on the place, for all our warning.'

'What are we to do now, Anyas, in the devil's name?' asked Cary peevishly.

'What are we to do, in God's name, rather,' answered Anyas in a low voice. 'Will, Will, what did God make you a gentleman for, but to know better than these poor slyle fellows forward, who blow hot and cold at every change of weather!'

'I wish you'd come forward and speak to them, sir,' said Yeo, who had overheard the last words, 'or we shall get nought done.'

Anyas went forward instantly.

'Now then, my brave lads, what's the matter here, that you are all sitting on your tails like monkeys?'

'Ugh!' grunts one. 'Don't you think our day's work has been long enough yet, captain?'

'You don't want us to go in to La Guayra again, sir! There are enough of us thrown away already, I reckon, about that wench then.'

'Beat it here, and sink quietly. There's no getting home again, that's plain.'

'Why were we brought out here to be killed?'

'For shame, men!' cries Yeo, 'you're no better than a set of stiff-necked Hebrew Jews, murmuring against Moses the very minute after the Lord has delivered you from the Egyptians.'

Now I do not wish to set Anyas up as a perfect man; for he had his faults, like every one else; nor as better, thank God, than many and many a brave and virtuous captain in her Majesty's service at this very day. But certainly he behaved admirably under that trial. Drake had trained him, as he trained many another excellent officer, to be as stout in discipline, and as dogged of purpose, as he himself was. But he had trained him also to feel with and for his men, to make allowances for them, and to keep his temper with them, as he did this day. True, he had seen Drake in a rage, he had seen him hang one man for a mutiny (and that man his dearest friend), and threaten to hang thirty more; but Anyas remembered well that that explosion took place when having, as Drake said publicly himself, 'taken in hand that I know not in the world how to go through with, it passeth my capacity, it hath even bereaved me of my wits to think of it.' . . . and having 'now set together by the ears three mighty princes, her Majesty and the kings of Spain and Portugal,' he found his whole voyage ready to

come to nought, 'by mutinies and discords, controversy between the sailors and gentlemen, and stomaching between the gentlemen and sailors.' 'But, my masters' (quoth the self-trained hero, and Amyas never forgot his words), 'I must have it left, for I must have the gentleman to haul and draw with the mariner, and the mariner with the gentlemen. I would like to know him that would refuse to set his hand to a rope!'

And now Amyas's conscience smote him (and his simple and pious soul took the loss of his brother as God's verdict on his conduct), because he had set his own private affliction, even his own private revenge, before the safety of his ship's company and the good of his country.

'Ah,' said he to himself, as he listened to his men's reproaches, 'if I had been thinking, like a loyal soldier, of serving my Queen, and crippling the Spaniard, I should have taken that great bark three days ago, and in it the very man I sought!'

So 'choking down his old man,' as Yeo used to say, he made answer cheerfully.—

'Poo! poo! brave lads! For shame, for shame! You were lions half an hour ago, you are not surely turned sheep already! Why, but yesterday evening you were grumbling because I would not run in and fight those three ships under the batteries of La Guayra, and now you think it too much to have fought them fairly out at sea! What has happened but the chances of war, which might have happened anywhere! Nothing venture, nothing win, and nobody goes birdnesting without a fall at times. If any one wants to be safe in this life, he'd best stay at home and keep his bed, though even there, who knows but the roof might fall through on him?'

'Ah, it's all very well for you, captain,' said some grumbling youngster, with a vague notion that Amyas must be better off than he, because he was a gentleman. Amyas's blood rose.

'Yes sirrah! it is very well for me, as long as God is with me. But He is with every man in this world, I would have you to know, as much as He is with me. Do you fancy that I have nothing to lose? I who have adventured in this voyage all I am worth, and more, who, if I fail, must return to beggary and scorn? And if I have ventured rashly, sinfully, if you will, the lives of any of you in my own private quarrel, am I not punished? Have I not lost——?'

His voice trembled and stopped there, but he recovered himself in a moment.

'Fish! I can't stand here chattering. Carpenter! an axe! and help me to cast these spars loose. Get out of my way, there! lumbering the snappers up like so many moulting fowls! Here, all old friends, lend a hand! *Pelican's* men, stand by your captain! Did we sail round the world for nothing?'

This last appeal struck home, and up leaped half a dozen of the old *Pelicans*, and set to work at his side manfully to rig the jury-mast.

'Come along!' cried Cary to the malcontents,

'we're raw longshore fellows, but we won't be outdone by any old sea-dog of them all.' And setting to work himself, he was soon followed by one and another, till order and work went on well enough.

'And where are we going, when the mast's up?' shouted some saucy hand from behind.

'Where you daren't follow us alone by yourself, so you had better keep us company,' replied Yeo.

'I'll tell you where we are going, lads,' said Amyas, rising from his work. 'Take it or leave it as you will, I have no secrets from my crew. We are going inshore there to find a harbour, and earn the ship.'

There was a start and a murmur.

'Inshore? Into the Spaniards' mouths?'

'All in the Inquisition in a week's time.'

'Better stay here, and be drowned.'

'You're right in that last,' shouts Cary. 'That's the right death for blind puppies. Look you? I don't know in the least where we are, and I hardly know stem from stern aboard ship, and the captain may be right or wrong—that's nothing to me, but this I know, that I am a soldier, and will obey orders, and where he goes, I go, and whosoever hinders me must walk up my sword to do it.'

Amyas pressed Cary's hand, and then—

'And here's my broadside next, men. I'll go nowhere, and do nothing without the advice of Salvation Yeo and Robert Drew, and if any man in the ship knows better than these two, let him up, and we'll give him a hearing. Eh, *Pelicans*!'

There was a grunt of approbation from the *Pelicans*, and Amyas returned to the charge.

'We have five shot between wind and water, and one somewhere below. Can we face a gale of wind in that state, or can we not?'

Silence.

'Can we get home with a leak in our bottom?'

Silence.

'Then what can we do but run inshore, and take our chance? Speak! It's a coward's trick to do nothing because what we must do is not pleasant. Will you be like children, that would sooner die than take nasty physic, or will you not?'

Silence still.

'Come along now! Here's the wind again round with the sun, and up to the north-west. In with her!'

Sulkily enough, but unable to deny the necessity, the men set to work, and the vessel's head was put toward the land, but when she began to slip through the water, the leak increased so fast that they were kept hard at work at the pumps for the rest of the afternoon.

The current had by this time brought them abreast of the bay of Higuerote, and, luckily for them, safe out of the short heavy swell which it causes round Cape Codera. Looking inland, they had now to the south-west that noble headland, backed by the Caracca mountains, range

on range, up to the Silla and the Neguter, whils, right ahead of them to the south, the shore sank suddenly into a low line of mangrove-wood, backed by primeval forest. As they ran inward, all eyes were strained greedily to find some opening in the mangrove belt but none was to be seen for some time. The lead was kept going, and every fresh heave announced shallower water.

'We shall have very shoal work off these mangroves, Yeo,' said Amyas, 'I doubt whether we shall do aught now, unless we find a river's mouth.'

'If the Lord thinks a river good for us, sir, He'll show us one.' So on they went, keeping a south-east course, and at last an opening in the mangrove belt was hailed with a cheer from the older hands, though the majority shrugged their shoulders, as men going open-eyed to destruction.

Off the mouth they sent in, Drew and Cary with a boat, and watched anxiously for an hour. The boat returned with a good report of two fathoms of water over the bar, impenetrable forests for two miles up, the river sixty yards broad, and no sign of man. The river's banks were soft and sloping mud, fit for carcaning.

'Safe quarters, sir,' said Yeo privately, 'as far as Spaniards go. I hope in God it may be as safe from calentures and fevers.'

'Beggars must not be choosers,' said Amyas. So in they went.

They towed the ship up about half a mile to a point where she could not be seen from the seaward, and there moored her to the mangrove stems. Amyas ordered a boat out, and went up the river himself to reconnoitre. He rowed some three miles, till the river narrowed suddenly, and was all but covered in by the interlacing boughs of mighty trees. There was no sign that man had been there since the making of the world.

He dropped down the stream again, thoughtfully and sadly. How many years ago was it that he passed this river's mouth? Three days. And yet how much had passed in them! Don (furnace found and lost—Rose found and lost—a great victory gained, and yet lost—perhaps his ship lost—above all, his brother lost.

'Lost! O God, how should he find his brother?

Some strange bird out of the woods made mournful answer—'Never, never, never!'

How should he face his mother?

'Never, never, never!' wailed the bird again, and Amyas smiled bitterly, and said 'Never!' likewise.

The nightmist began to steam and wreaths upon the foul beer-coloured stream. The loathy floor of liquid mud lay bare beneath the mangrove forest. Upon the endless web of interlacing roots great purple crabs were crawling up and down. They would have supped with pleasure upon Amyas's corpse; perhaps they might sup on him after all, for a heavy sickening graveyard smell made his heart sink within him, and his stomach heave; and his weary

body, and more weary soul, gave themselves up helplessly to the depressing influence of that doleful place. The black bank of dingy leathern leaves above his head, the endless labyrinth of stems and withes (for every bough had lowered its own living cord, to take fresh hold of the foul soil below); the web of roots, which stretched away inland till it was lost in the shades of evening—all seemed one horrid complicated trap for him and his, and even where, here and there, he passed the mouth of a lagoon, there was no opening, no relief—nothing but the dark ring of mangroves, and here and there an isolated group of large and small, parrots and children, breeding and spreading, as if in hideous haste to choke out air and sky. Wailing, sadly, sad-coloured mangrove-hens ran off across the mud into the dreary dark. The hoarse night-raven, hid among the roots, startled the voyagers with a sudden shout, and then all was again silent as a grave. The loathly alligators, lounging in the slims, lifted their horny eyelids lazily, and leered upon him as he passed, with stupid savageness. Lines of tall herons stood dimly in the growing gloom, like white fantastic ghosts, watching the passage of the doomed boat. All was foul, sullen, weird as witches' dream. If Amyas had seen a crew of skeletons glide down the stream behind him, with Satan standing at the helm, he would have scarcely been surprised. What fitter craft could haunt that Stygian flood!

That night every man of the boat's crew, save Amyas, was down with raging fever, before ten the next morning, five more men were taken, and others sickening fast.

CHAPTER XXI

HOW THEY TOOK THE COMMUNION UNDER THE TREE AT HIGUEROTE

'Follow thee? Follow thee? Who wadna follow thee? Lang hast thou loed and trusted us fair!'

AMYAS would have certainly taken the yellow fever, but for one reason, which he himself gave to Cary. He had no time to be sick while his men were sick, a valid and sufficient reason (as many a noble soul in the Crimea has known too well), as long as the excitement of work is present. But too apt to fail the hero, and to let him sink into the pit which he has so often overleapt, the moment that his work is done.

He called a council of war, or rather a sanitary commission, the next morning; for he was fairly at his wit's end. The men were panic-stricken, ready to mutiny: Amyas told them that he could not see any possible good which could accrue to them by killing him, or—(for there were two sides to every question)—being killed by him: and then went below to consult. The doctor talked mere science, or non-sense, about humours, complexions, and animal spirits. Jack Brimblecombe, mere pulpit, about its being the

visitation of God. Cary, mere despair, though he jested over it with a smile. Yeo, mere stoic fatalism, though he quoted Scripture to back the same. Drew, the master, had nothing to say. His 'business was to sail the ship, and not to cure calenturas.'

Whereon Amyas clutched his locks, according to custom, and at last broke forth—

'Doctor! a fig for your humours and complexions! Can you cure a man's humours, or change his complexion? Can an Ethiopian change his skin, or a leopard his spots? Don't shove off your ignorance on God, sir. I ask you what's the reason of this sickness, and you don't know. Jack Brimblecombe, don't talk to me about God's visitation, this looks much more like the devil's visitation, to my mind. We are doing God's work, Sir John, and He is not likely to hinder us. So down with the devil, say I. Cary, laughing killed the cat, but it won't cure a Christian. Yeo, when an angel tells me that it's God's will that we should all die like dogs in a ditch, I'll call this God's will, but not before Drew, you say your business is to sail the ship, then sail her out of this infernal poison-trap this very morning, if you can, which you can't. The mischief's in the air, and nowhere else. I felt it run through me coming down last night, and smelt it like any sewer. And if it was not in the air, why was my boat's crew taken first, tell me that!'

There was no answer.

'Then I'll tell you why they were taken first: because the mist, when we came through it, only rose five or six feet above the stream, and we were in it, while you on board were above it. And those that were taken on board this morning, every one of them, slept on the main-deck, and every one of them, too, was in fear of the fever, which I judge two things,—Keep as high as you can, and fear nothing but God, and we're all safe yet.'

'But the fog was up to our round-tops at sunrise this morning,' said Cary.

'I know it. But we who were on the half-deck were not in it so long as those below, and that may have made the difference, let alone our having free air. Beside, I suspect the heat in the evening draws the poison out more, and that when it gets cold toward morning, the venom of it goes off somehow.'

How it went off Amyas could not tell (right in his facts as he was), for nobody on earth knew, I suppose, at that day, and it was not till nearly two centuries of fatal experience that the settlers in America discovered the simple laws of these epidemics which now every child knows, or ought to know. But common sense was on his side, and Yeo rose and spoke—

'As I have said before, many a time, the Lord has sent us a very young Daniel for judge. I remember now to have heard the Spaniards say, how these calentures lay always in the low ground, and never came more than a few hundred feet above the sea.'

'Let us go up those few hundred feet, then.'

Every man looked at Amyas, and then at his neighbour.

'Gentlemen, "Look the devil straight in the face, if you would hit him in the right place." We cannot get the ship to sea as she is, and if we could, we cannot go home empty-handed; and we surely cannot stay here to die of fever.—We must leave the ship and go inland.'

'Inland?' answered every voice but Yeo's.

'Up those hundred feet which Yeo talks of. Up to the mountains, stockade a camp, and get our sick and provisions thither.'

'And what next?'

'And when we are recruited, march over the mountains, and surprise St. Yago de Leon.'

Cary swore a great oath. 'Amyas! you are a daring fellow.'

'Not a bit. It's the plain path of prudence.'

'So it is, sir,' said old Yeo, 'and I follow you in it.'

'And so do I,' squeaked Jack Brimblecombe.

'Nay, then, Jack, thou shalt not outrun me. So I say yes too,' quoth Cary.

Mr. Drew?

'At your service, sir, to live or die. I know nought about stockading; but Sir Francis would have given the same counsel, I verily believe, if he had been in your place.'

'Then tell the men that we start in an hour's time. Win over the *Pelicans*, Yeo and Drew, and the rest must follow, like sheep over a hedge.'

The *Pelicans*, and the liberated galley-slaves, joined the project at once. But the rest gave Amyas a stormy hour. The great question was, where were the hills? In that dense mangrove thicket they could not see fifty yards before them.

'The hills are not three miles to the south-west of you at this moment,' said Amyas. 'I marked every shoulder of them as we ran in.'

'I suppose you meant to take us there?'

The question set a light to a train—and angry suspicions were blazing up one after another, but Amyas silenced them with a counter-mine.

'Fools! if I had not wit enough to look a little farther than you do, where would you be? Are you mad as well as reckless, to rise against your own captain because he has two strings to his bow? Go my way, I say, or, as I live, I'll blow up the ship and every soul on board, and save you the pain of rotting here by inches.'

The men knew that Amyas never said what he did not intend to do, not that Amyas intended to do this, because he knew that the threat would be enough. So they agreed to go, and were reassured by seeing that the old *Pelican's* men turned to the work heartily and cheerfully.

There is no use keeping the reader for five or six weary hours, under a broiling (or rather stewing) sun, stumbling over mangrove roots, hewing his way through thorny thickets, dragging sick men and provisions up mountain steeps, amid disappointment, fatigue, murmurs, curses, snakes,

mosquitoes, false alarms of Spaniards, and every misery, save cold, which flesh is heir to. Suffice it that by sunset that evening they had gained a level spot, a full thousand feet above the sea, backed by an inaccessible cliff which formed the upper shoulder of a mighty mountain, defended below by steep wooded slopes, and needing but the felling of a few trees to make it impregnable.

Amyas settled the sick under the arched roots of an enormous cottonwood tree, and made a second journey to the ship, to bring up hammocks and blankets for them, while Yeo's wisdom and courage were of inestimable value. He, as pioneer, had found the little brook up which they forced their way, he had encouraged them to climb the cliffs over which it fell, arguing rightly that on its course they were sure to find some ground fit for encampment within the reach of water, he had supported Amyas, when again and again the weary crew entreated to be dragged no farther, and had gone back again a dozen times to cheer them upward, while Cary, who brought up the rear, bullied and cheered on the stragglers who sat down and refused to move, drove back at the sword's point more than one who was beating a retreat, carried their burdens for them, sang them songs on the halt, in all things approving himself the gallant and hopeful soul which he had always been. till Amyas, beside himself with joy at finding that the two men on whom he had counted most were utterly worthy of his trust, went so far as to whisper to them both, in confidence, that very night—

'Cortes burnt his ships when he landed. Why should not we?'

Yeo leapt upright, and then sat down again, and whispered—

'Do you say that, captain? 'Tis from above, then, that's certain, for it's been hanging on my mind too all day.'

'There's no hurry,' quoth Amyas, 'we must clear her out first, you know,' while Cary sat silent and musing. Amyas had evidently more schemes in his head than he chose to tell.

The men were too tired that evening to do much, but ere the sun rose next morning Amyas had them hard at work fortifying their position. It was, as I said, strong enough by nature; for though it was commanded by high cliffs on three sides, yet there was no chance of an enemy coming over the enormous mountain range behind them, and still less chance that, if he came, he would discover them through the dense mass of trees which crowned the cliff, and clothed the hills for a thousand feet above. The attack, if it took place, would come from below, and against that Amyas guarded by felling the smaller trees, and laying them with their boughs outward over the crest of the slope, thus forming an abatis (as every one who has shot in thick cover knows to his cost) warranted to bring up in two steps, horse, dog, or man. The trunks were sawn into logs, laid lengthwise and studded by stakes and moulds; and three

or four hours' hard work finished a stockade which would defy anything but artillery. The work done, Amyas scrambled up into the boughs of the enormous ceiba-tree, and there sat unsuspecting his own handiwork, looking out far and wide over the forest-covered plains and the blue sea beyond, and thinking, in his simple straightforward way, of what was to be done next.

To stay there long was impossible, to avenge himself upon La Guayra was impossible; to go until he had found out whether Frank was alive or dead seemed at first equally impossible. But were Brimblecombe, Cary, and those eighty men to be sacrificed a second time to his private interest? Amyas wept with rage, and then wept again with earnest, honest prayer, before he could make up his mind. But he made it up. There were a hundred chances to one that Frank was dead, and if not, he was equally past their help, for he was—Amyas knew that too well—by this time in the hands of the Inquisition. Who could lift him from that pit? Not Amyas, at least! And crying aloud in his agony, 'God help him! for I cannot!' Amyas made up his mind to move. But whither? Many an hour he thought and thought alone, there in his airy nest, and at last he went down, calm and cheerful, and drew Cary and Yeo aside. They could not, he said, quit the ship without dying of fever during the process, an assertion which neither of his hearers was bold enough to deny. Even if they refitted her, they would be pretty certain to have to fight the Spaniards again, for it was impossible to doubt the Indian's story, that they had been forewarned of the *Ree's* coming, or to doubt, either, that Estace had been the traitor.

'Let us try St. Yago, then, sack it, come down on La Guayra in the rear, take a ship there, and so get home.'

'Nay, Will. If they have strengthened themselves against us at La Guayra, where they had little to lose, surely they have done so at St. Yago, where they have much. I hear the town is large, though in w, and besides, how can we get over these mountains without a guide?'

'Or with one?' said Cary, with a sigh, looking up at the vast walls of wood and rock which rose range on range for miles. 'But it is strange to find you, at least, throwing cold water on a daring plot.'

'What if I had still more daring one? Did you ever hear of the golden city of Manoa?'

Yeo laughed a grim but joyful laugh. 'I have, sir, and so have the old hands from the *Pelican* and the *Jesus of Lubec*, I don't not.'

'So much the better,' and Amyas began to tell Cary all which he had learned from the Spaniard, while Yeo capped every word thereof with rumours and traditions of his own gathering. Cary sat half aghast as the huge phantasmagoria unfolded itself before his dazzled eyes; and at last—

'So that was why you wanted to burn the ship! Well, after all, nobody needs me at

home, and one less at table won't be missed. So you want to play Cortes, eh?

'We shall never need to play Cortes (who was not such a bad fellow after all, Will), because we shall have no such cannibal fiends' tyranny to rid the earth of, as he had. And I trust we shall fear God enough not to play Pizarro.'

So the conversation dropped for the time, but none of them forgot it.

In that mountain-nook the party spent some ten days and more. Several of the sick men died, some from the fever superadded to their wounds, some, probably, from having been bled by the surgeon, the others mended steadily, by the help of certain herbs which Yeo administered, much to the disgust of the doctor, who, of course, wanted to bleed the poor fellows all round, and was all but mutinous when Amyas tied his hand. In the meanwhile, by dint of daily trips to the ship, provisions were plentiful enough,—beside the racoons, monkeys, and other small animals, which Yeo and the veterans of Hawkins's crew knew how to catch, and the fruit and vegetables, above all, the delicious mountain cabbage of the Araca palm, and the fresh milk of the cow-tree, which they brought in daily, paying well thereby for the hospitality they received.

All day long a careful watch was kept among the branches of the mighty ceiba-tree. And what a tree that was! The hugest English oak would have seemed a stunted bush beside it. Here up on roots, or rather walls, of twisted board, some twelve feet high, between which the whole crew, their ammunitions, and provisions, were housed roomily, rose the enormous trunk full forty feet in girth, towering like some tall lighthouse, smooth for a hundred feet, then crowned with boughs, each of which was a stately tree, whose topmost twigs were full two hundred and fifty feet from the ground. And yet it was easy for the sailors to ascend, so many natural ropes had kind Nature lowered for their use, in the smooth lanes which hung to the very earth, often without a knot or leaf. Once in the tree, you were within a new world, suspended between heaven and earth, and as Ciry said, no wonder if, like Jack when he climbed the magic beanstalk, you had found a castle, a giant, and a few acres of well-stocked park, packed away somewhere amid that labyrinth of timber. Flower-gardens at least were there in plenty; for every limb was covered with pendent cactuses, gorgeous orchises, and wild junes, and while one half the tree was clothed in rich foliage, the other half, utterly leafless, bore on every twig brilliant yellow flowers, around which humming-birds whirled all day long. Parrots peeped in and out of every cranny, while, within the airy woodland, brilliant lizards basked like living gems upon the bark, gaudy finches flitted and chirruped, butterflies of every size and colour hovered over the topmost twigs, innumerable insects hummed from morn till eve; and when the sun went down, tree-toads came out to snore and croak

till dawn. There was more life round that one tree than in a whole square mile of English soil.

And Amyas, as he lounged among the branches, felt at moments as if he would be content to stay there for ever, and feed his eyes and ears with all its wonders—and then started sighing from his dream, as he recollected that a few days must bring the foe upon them, and force him to decide upon some scheme at which the bravest heart might falter without shame. So there he sat (for he often took the scout's place himself), looking out over the fantastic tropic forest at his feet, and the flat mangrove-swamps below, and the white sheet of foam-flecked blue, and yet no sail appeared, and the men, as their fear of fever subsided, began to ask when they would go down and refit the ship, and Amyas put them off as best he could, till one noon he saw slipping along the shore from the westwards a large ship under easy sail, and recognised in her, or thought he did so, the ship which they had passed upon their way.

If it was she, she must have run past them to La Guayra in the night, and have now returned, perhaps, to search for them along the coast.

She crept along slowly. He was in hopes that she might pass the river's mouth—but no. She lay too close to the shore, and, after a while, Amyas saw two boats pull in from her, and vanish behind the mangroves.

Sliding down a lane, he told what he had seen. The men, tired of inactivity, received the news with a shout of joy, and set to work to make all ready for their guests. Four brass swivels, which they had brought up, were mounted, fixed in logs so as to command the path, the musketeers and archers clustered round them with their tackle ready, and half a dozen good marksmen volunteered into the cotton-twe with their arquebuses, as a post whence 'a man might have very pretty shooting.' Prayers followed as a matter of course, and dinner as a matter of course also, but two weary hours passed before there was any sign of the Spaniards.

Presently a wreath of white smoke curled up from the swamp, and then the report of a caliver. Then, amid the growls of the English, the Spanish flag ran up above the trees, and floated—horrible to behold—at the mast-head of the *Rose*. They were signalling the ship for more hamls, and, in effect, a third boat such rushed off and vanished into the forest.

Another hour, during which the men had thoroughly lost their temper, but not their hearts, by waiting, and talked so loud, and strode up and down so waddy, that Amyas had to warn them that there was no need to betray themselves, that the Spaniards might not find them after all, that they might pass the stockade close without seeing it, that, unless they hit off the track at once, they would probably return to their ship for the present, and expect a promise from them that they would be perfectly silent till he gave the word to fire.

Which wise commands had scarcely passed his lips, when, in the path below, glanced the head-piece of a Spanish soldier, and then another and another.

'Fools!' whispered Amyas to Cary, 'they are coming up in single file, rushing on their own death. Lie close, men!'

The path was so narrow that two could seldom come up abreast, and so steep that the enemy had much ado to struggle and stumble upwards. The men seemed half unwilling to proceed, and hung back more than once, but Amyas could hear an authoritative voice behind, and presently there emerged to the front, sword in hand, a figure at which Amyas and Cary both started.

'Is it he!'

Surely I know those legs among a thousand, though they are in armour.

'It is my turn for him, now, Cary, remember! Silence, silence, men!'

The Spaniards seemed to feel that they were leading a forlorn hope. Don Guzman (for there was little doubt that it was he) had much ado to get them on at all.

'The fellows have heard how gently we handled the Guayra squadron,' whispers Cary, 'and have no wish to become fellow-martyrs with the captain of the *Madre Dolorosa*.'

At last the Spaniards get up the steep slope to within forty yards of the stockade, and pause, suspecting a trap, and puzzled by the complete silence. Amyas leaps on the top of it, a white flag in his hand, but his heart beats so fiercely at the sight of that hated figure, that he can hardly get out the words—

'Don Guzman, the quarrel is between you and me, not between your men and mine. I would have sent in a challenge to you at La Guayra, but you were away, I challenge you now to single combat.'

'Lutheran dog, I have a halter for you, but no sword! As you served us at Smerwick, we will serve you now. Pirate and ravisher, you and yours shall share Oxenham's fate, as you have copied his crimes, and learn what it is to set foot unbidden on the dominions of the King of Spain.'

'The devil take you and the King of Spain together!' shouts Amyas, laughing loudly. 'This ground belongs to him no more than it does to me, but to the Queen Elizabeth, in whose name I have taken as lawful possession of it as you ever did of Caracacas. Fire, men! and God defend the fight!'

Both parties obeyed the order; Amyas dropped down behind the stockade in time to let a caliver bullet whistle over his head; and the Spaniards recoiled at the narrow face of the stockade burst into one blaze of musketry and savels, raking their long array from front to rear.

The front ranks fell over each other in heaps; the rear ones turned and ran, overtaken, nevertheless, by the English bullets and arrows, which tumbled them headlong down the steep path.

'Ont, men, and charge them. See! the Don is running like the rest!' And scrambling over the abattis, Amyas and about thirty followed them fast, for he had hope of learning from some prisoner his brother's fate.

Amyas was unjust in his last words. Don Guzman, as if by miracle, had been only slightly wounded, and seeing his men run, had rushed back and tried to rally them, but was borne away by the fugitives.

However, the Spaniards were out of sight among the thick bushes before the English could overtake them, and Amyas, afraid lest they should rally and surround his small party, withdrew sorely against his will, and found in the pathway fourteen Spaniards, but all dead. For one of the wounded, with more courage than wisdom, had fired on the English as he lay, and Amyas's men, whose blood was maddened both by their desperate situation, and the frightful stories of the rescued galley-slaves, had killed them all before their captain could stop them.

'Are you mad?' cries Amyas, as he strikes up one fellow's sword. 'Will you kill an Indian?'

And he drags out of the bushes an Indian lad of sixteen, who, slightly wounded, is crawling away like a copper snake along the ground.

'The black vermin has sent an arrow through my leg, and poisoned too, most like.'

'God grant not! but an Indian is worth his weight in gold to us now,' said Amyas, tucking his prize under his arm like a bundle. The lad, as soon as he saw there was no escape, resigned himself to his fate with true Indian stoicism, was brought in, and treated kindly enough, but refused to eat. For which, after much questioning, he gave as a reason, that he would make them kill him at once, for fat him they should not, and gradually gave them to understand that the English always (so at least the Spaniards said) fatted and ate their prisoners like the Caribs, and till he saw them go out and bury the bodies of the Spaniards, nothing would persuade him that the corpses were not to be cooked for supper.

However, kind words, kind looks, and the present of that inestimable treasure—a knife—brought him to reason, and he told Amyas that he belonged to a Spaniard who had an 'encomienda' of Indians some fifteen miles to the south-west, that he had fled from his master, and lived by hunting for some months past; and having seen the ship where she lay moored, and boarded her in hope of plunder, had been surprised therein by the Spaniards, and forced by threats to go with them as a guide in their search for the English. But now came a part of his story which filled the soul of Amyas with delight. He was an Indian of the Llano, or great savannah which lay to the southward beyond the mountains, and had actually been upon the Orinoco. He had been stolen as a boy by some Spaniards, who had gone down, as was the fashion of the Jesuits even as late as 1790) for the pious purpose of converting the savages

by the simple process of catching, baptizing, and making servants of those whom they could carry off, and murdering those who resisted their gentle method of salvation. Did he know the way back again? Who could ask such a question of an Indian? And the lad's black eyes flashed fire, as Amyas offered him liberty, and iron enough for a dozen Indians, if he would lead them through the passes of the mountains, and southward to the mighty river, where lay their golden hopes. Hernando de Serpa, Amyas knew, had tried the same course, which was supposed to be about one hundred and twenty leagues, and failed, being overthrown utterly by the Wikiri Indians, but Amyas knew enough of the Spaniards' brutal method of treating those Indians, to be pretty sure that they had brought that catastrophe upon themselves, and that he might avoid it well enough by that common justice and mercy toward the savages which he had learned from his incomparable tutor, Francis Drake.

Now was the time to speak; and, assembling his men around him, Amyas opened his whole heart, simply and manfully. This was their only hope of safety. Some of them had murmured that they should perish like John Oxenham's crew. This plan was rather the only way to avoid perishing like them. Don Guzman would certainly return to seek them, and not only he, but land-forces from St. Jago. Even if the stockade was not forced, they would be soon starved out, why not move at once, ere the Spaniards could return, and begin a blockade? As for taking St. Jago, it was impossible. The treasure would all be safely hidden, and the town well prepared to meet them. If they wanted gold and glory, they must seek it elsewhere. Neither was there any use in marching along the coast, and trying the ports: ships could outstrip them, and the country was already warned. There was but this one chance, and on it Amyas, the first and last time in his life, waxed eloquent, and set forth the glory of the enterprise, the service to the Queen, the salvation of heathens, and the certainty that, if successful, they should win honour and wealth, and everlasting fame, beyond that of Cortes or Pizarro, till the men, sulky at first, warmed every moment; and one old *Pelican* broke out with—

'Yes, sir! we didn't go round the world with you for nought, and watched your works and ways, which was always those of a gentleman, as you are—who spoke a word for a poor fellow when he was in a scrape, and saw all you ought to see, and nought that you ought not. And we'll follow you, sir, all alone to ourselves; and let those that know you worse follow after when they're come to their right mind.'

Man after man capped this brave speech, the minority, who, if they liked little to go, liked still less to be left behind, gave in their consent perforce; and, to make a long story short, Amyas conquered, and the plan was accepted.

'This,' said Amyas, 'is indeed the proudest day of my life! I have lost one brother, but I have gained fourscore. God do so to me and more also, if I do not deal with you according to the trust which you have put in me this day!'

We, I suppose, are to believe that we have a right to laugh at Amyas's scheme as frantic and chimerical. It is easy to amuse ourselves with the premisses, after the conclusion has been found for us. We know, now, that he was mistaken but we have not discovered his mistake for ourselves, and have no right to plume ourselves on other men's discoveries. Had we lived in Amyas's days, we should have belonged either to the many wise men who believed as he did, or to the many foolish men, who not only sneered at the story of Manoa, but at a hundred other stories which we now know to be true. Columbus was laughed at but he found a new world, nevertheless. Cortes was laughed at but he found Mexico. Pizarro: but he found Peru. I ask any fair reader of those two charming books, Mr. Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* and his *Conquest of Peru*, whether the true wonders in them described do not outdo all the false wonders of Manoa.

But what reason was there to think them false? One quarter, perhaps, of America had been explored, and yet in that quarter two empires had been already found, in a state of mechanical, military, and agricultural civilization superior, in many things, to any nation of Europe. Was it not most rational to suppose that in the remaining three quarters similar empires existed? If a second Mexico had been discovered in the mountains of Parima, and a second Peru in those of Brazil, what right would any man have had to wonder? As for the gold legends, nothing was told of Manoa which had not been seen in Peru and Mexico by the bodily eyes of men then living. Why should not the rocks of Guiana have been as full of the precious metals (we do not know yet that they are not) as the rocks of Peru and Mexico were known to be? Even the details of the story, its standing on a lake, for instance, bore a probability with them. Mexico actually stood in the centre of a lake—why should not Manoa? The Peruvian worship centred round a sacred lake—why not that of Manoa? Pizarro and Cortes, again, were led on to their desperate enterprises by the sight of small quantities of gold among savages, who told them of a civilized gold-country near at hand; and they found that those savages spoke truth. Why was the unanimous report of the Carib tribes of the Orinoco to be disbelieved, when they told a similar tale? Sir Richard Schomburgk's admirable preface to Raleigh's *Guiana* proves, surely, that the Indians themselves were deceived, as well as deceivers. It was known, again, that vast quantities of the Peruvian treasure had been concealed by the priests, and that members of the Inca family had fled across the Andes, and held out against the Spaniards. Barely

fifty years had elapsed since then,—what more probable than that this remnant of the Peruvian dynasty and treasure still existed! Even the story of the Amazona, though it may serve Hume as a point for his ungenerous and untruthful attempt to make Raleigh out either fool or villain, has come from Spaniards, who had with their own eyes seen the Indian women fighting by their husbands' sides, and from Indians, who asserted the existence of an Amazonian tribe. What right had Amyas, or any man, to disbelieve the story! The existence of the Amazons in ancient Asia, and of their intercourse with Alexander the Great, was then an accredited part of history, which it would have been gratuitous impertinence to deny. And what if some stories connected these warlike women with the Emperor of Manoa, and the capital itself! This generation ought surely to be the last to laugh at such a story, at least as long as the Amazonian guards of the King of Dahomey continue to outvie the men in their relentless ferocity, with which they have subdued every neighbouring tribe, save the Christians of Abbeokuta. In this case, as in a hundred more, fact not only outdoes, but justifies imagination, and Amyas spoke common sense when he said to his men that day—

'Let fools laugh and stay at home. Wise men dare and win. Saul went to look for his father's asses, and found a kingdom, and Columbus, my men, was called a madman for only going to seek China, and never knew, they say, until his dying day, that he had found a whole new world instead of it. Find Manoa! God only, who made all things, knows what we may find beside!'

So underneath that giant ceiba-tree, those valiant men, reduced by battle and sickness to some eighty, swore a great oath, and kept that oath like men. To search for the golden city for two full years to come, whatever might befall, to stand to each other for weal or woe, to obey their officers to the death, to murmur privately against no man, but bring all complaints to a council of war, to use no profane oaths, but serve God daily with prayer, to take by violence from no man, save from their natural enemies the Spaniards; to be civil and merciful to all savages, and chaste and courteous to all women; to bring all booty and all food into the common stock, and observe to the utmost their faith with the adventurers who had fitted out the ship, and finally, to march at sunrise the next morning toward the south, trusting in God to be their guide.

'It is a great oath, and a hard one,' said Bramblecombe; 'but God will give us strength to keep it.' And they knelt all together and received the Holy Communion, and then rose to pack provisions and ammunition, and lay down again to sleep and to dream that they were sailing home up Torridge stream—as Cavendish, returning from round the world, did actually sail home up Thames but five years afterwards—with mariners and soldiers clothed

in silk, with sails of damask, and topsails of cloth of gold, and the richest prize which ever was brought at one time unto English shores.'

The Cross stands upright in the southern sky. It is the middle of the night. Cary and Yoo glide silently up the hill and into the camp, and whisper to Amyas that they have done the deed. The sleepers are awakened, and the train sets forth.

Upward and southward over but whither, who can tell! They hardly think of the whither, but go like sleep-walkers, shaken out of one land of dreams, only to find themselves in another and stranger one. All around is fantastic and unearthly, now each man starts as he sees the figures of his fellows, clothed from head to foot in golden higgree, looks up, and sees the yellow moonlight through the fronds of the huge tree-ferns overhead, as through a cloud of glittering lace. Now they are hewing their way through a thicket of enormous flags, now through bamboos forty feet high, now they are stumbling over boulders, waist-deep in cushions of club-moss, now they are struggling through shrubberies of hatts and rhododendrons, and woolly incense-trees, where every leaf, as they brush past, dashes some fresh scent into their faces, and

'The winds, with musky wing,
About the cedar alleys sing
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.

Now they open upon some craggy brow, from whence they can see far below an ocean of soft cloud, whose silver billows, grided by the mountain sides, hide the lowland from their sight. And from beneath the cloud strange voices rise, the screams of thousand night-birds, and wild howls, which they used at first to fancy were the cries of ravenous beasts, till they found them to proceed from nothing hereof than an ape. But what is that deeper note, like a series of unfiled explosions—arquebuses fired within some subterranean cavern—the heavy pulse of which rolls up through the depths of the unseen forest? They hear it now for the first time, but they will hear it many a time again, and the Indian lad is hushed, and cowers close to them, and then takes heart, as he looks upon their swords and arquebuses, for that is the roar of the jaguar, seeking his meat from God.

But what is that glare away to the northward? The yellow moon is ringed with gay rainbows, but that light is far too red to be the reflection of any beams of hers. Now through the cloud rises a column of black and lurid smoke; the fog clears away right and left around it, and shows beneath, a mighty fire.

The men look at each other with questioning eyes, each half suspecting, and yet not daring to confess their own suspicions, and Amyas whispers to Yoo—

'You took care to flood the powder!'

'Ay, ay, sir, and to unload the ordnance too. No use in making a noise to tell the Spaniards our whereabouts.'

Yes; that glare rises from the good ship *Rose*. Amyas, like Cortes of old, has burnt his ship, and retreat is now impossible. Forward into the unknown abyss of the New World, and God be with them as they go!

The Indian knows a cunning path. It winds along the highest ridges of the mountains, but the travelling is far more open and easy.

They have passed the head of a valley which leads down to St. Yago. Beneath that long shining river of mist, which ends at the foot of the great Silla, lies (so says the Indian lad) the rich capital of Venezuela, and beyond, the gold mines of Los Teques and Baruta, which have attracted the fomder Diego de Losada, and many a longing eye is turned towards it as they pass the saddle at the valley head, but the attempt is hopeless, they turn again to the left, and so down towards the rancho, taking care (so the prudent Amyas had commanded) to break down, after crossing, the frail rope bridge which spans each torrent and ravine.

They are at the rancho long before daybreak, and have secured there, not only fourteen mules, but eight or nine Indians stolen from off the Llanos, like their guide, who are glad enough to escape from their tyrants by taking service with them. And now southward and away, with lightened shoulders and hearts, for they are all but safe from pursuit. The broken bridges prevent the news of their raid reaching St. Yago until nightfall, and in the meanwhile, Don Guzman returns to the river mouth the next day to find the ship a blackened wreck, and the camp empty, follows their trail over the hills till he is stopped by a broken bridge, surmounts that difficulty, and meets a second, his men are worn out with heat, and a little afraid of stumbling on the heretic desperadoes, and he returns by land to St. Yago, and when he arrives there, has news from home which gives him other things to think of than following those mad Englishmen, who have vanished into the wilderness. 'What need, after all, to follow them?' asked the Spaniards of each other. 'Blinded by the devil, whom they serve, they rush on in search of certain death, as many a larger company has before them, and they will find it, and will trouble La Mayra no more for ever.' 'Latherman dogs and enemies of God,' said Don Guzman to his soldiers, 'they will leave their bones to whiten on the Llanos, as may every heretic who sets foot on Spanish soil!'

Will they do so, Don Guzman? Or wilt thou and Amyas meet again upon a mightier battlefield, to learn a lesson which neither of you yet has learned?

CHAPTER XXII

THE INQUISITION IN THE INDIES

My next chapter is perhaps too sad; it shall be at least as short as I can make it, but it was

needful to be written, that readers may judge fairly for themselves what sort of enemies the English nation had to face in those stern days.

Three weeks have passed, and the scene is shifted to a long, low range of cells in a dark corridor in the city of Cartagena. The door of one is open, and within stand two cloaked figures, one of whom we know. It is Eustace Leigh. The other is a familiar of the Holy Office.

He holds in his hand a lamp, from which the light falls on a bed of straw, and on the sleeping figure of a man. The high white brow, the pale and delicate features—they too we know, for they are those of Frank. Saved half-dead from the fury of the savage negroes, he has been reserved for the more delicate cruelty of civilized and Christian men. He underwent the question but this afternoon, and now Eustace, his betrayer, is come to persuade him—or to entrap him? Eustace himself hardly knows whether of the two.

And yet he would give his life to save his cousin. His life? He has long since ceased to care for that. He has done what he has done, because it is his duty, and now he is to do his duty once more, and wake the sleeper, and argue, coax, threaten him into recantation while 'his heart is still tender from the torture,' so Eustace's employers phrase it.

And yet how calmly he is sleeping! Is it but a freak of the lamplight, or is there a smile upon his lips? Eustace takes the lamp and bends over him to see, and as he bends he hears Frank whispering in his dreams his mother's name, and a name higher and holier still.

Eustace cannot find the heart to wake him.

'Let him rest,' whispers he to his companion. 'After all, I fear my words will be of little use.'

'I fear so too, sir. Never did I behold a more obdurate heretic. He did not scruple to scoff openly at their holinesses.'

'Ah!' said Eustace, 'great is the gravity of the human heart, and the power of Satan! Let us go for the present.'

'Where is she?'

'The elder sorceress, or the younger?'

'The younger—the—'

'The Señora de Soto? Ah, poor thing! One could be sorry for her, were she not a heretic.' And the man eyed Eustace keenly, and then quietly added, 'She is at present with the notary; to the benefit of her soul, I trust—'

Eustace half stopped, shuddering. He could hardly collect himself enough to gasp out an 'Amen.'

'Within there,' said the man, pointing carelessly to a door as they went down the corridor. 'We can listen a moment, if you like, but don't betray me, Señor.'

Eustace knows well enough that the fellow is probably on the watch to betray him, if he shows any signs of compunction, at least to report faithfully to his superiors the slightest expression of sympathy with a heretic; but a

horrible curiosity prevails over fear, and he pauses close to the fatal door. His face is all of a flame, his knees knock together, his ears are ringing, his heart bursting through his ribs, as he supports himself against the wall, hiding his convulsed face as well as he can from his companion.

A man's voice is plainly audible within, low, but distinct. The notary is trying that old charge of witchcraft, which the Inquisitors, whether to justify themselves to their own consciences, or to whiten their villainy somewhat in the eyes of the mob, so often brought against their victims. And then Eustace's heart sinks within him as he hears a woman's voice reply, sharpened by indignation and agony—

'Witchcraft against Don Guzman! What need of that, oh, God! what need!'

'You deny it then, Señora! we are sorry for you; but—'

A confused choking murmur from the victim, mingled with words which might mean anything or nothing.

'She has confessed!' whispered Eustace; 'sañta, I thank you!—ah—'

A wail which rings through Eustace's ears, and brain, and heart! He would have torn at the door to open it, but his companion forces him away. Another, and another wail, while the wretched man hurries off, stopping his ears in vain against those piercing cries, which follow him, like avenging angels, through the dreadful vaults.

He escaped into the fragrant open air, and the golden tropic moonlight, and a garden which might have served as a model for Eden, but man's hell followed into God's heaven, and still those wails seemed to ring through his ears.

'Oh, misery, misery, misery!' murmured he to himself through grinding teeth, 'and I have brought her to this! I have had to bring her to it! What else could I! Who dare blame me! And yet what devilish sin can I have committed, that requires to be punished thus! Was there no one to be found but me! No one! And yet it may save her soul. It may bring her to repentance!'

'It may, indeed; for she is delicate, and cannot endure much. You ought to know as well as I, Señor, the merciful disposition of the Holy Office.'

'I know it, I know it,' interrupted poor Eustace, trembling now for himself. 'All in love—all in love.—A paternal chastisement—'

'And the proofs of heresy are patent, beside the strong suspicion of enchantment, and the known character of the elder sorceress. You yourself, you must remember, Señor, told us that she had been a notorious witch in England, before the Señora brought her hither as her attendant.'

'Of course she was; of course. Yes; there was no other course open. And though the flesh may be weak, sir, in my case, yet none can have proved better to the Holy Office how willing is the spirit!'

And so Eustace departed; and ere another sun had set, he had gone to the principal of the Jesuits; told him his whole heart, or as much of it, poor wretch, as he dare tell to himself; and entreated to be allowed to finish his novitiate, and enter the order, on the understanding that he was to be sent at once back to Europe, or anywhere else; 'Otherwise,' as he said frankly, 'he should go mad, even if he were not mad already.' The Jesuit, who was a kindly man enough, went to the Holy Office, and settled all with the Inquisitors, recounting to them, to set him above all suspicion, Eustace's past valiant services to the Church. His testimony was no longer needed, he left Cartagena for Nombre that very night, and sailed the next week. I know not whither.

I say, I know not whither. Eustace Leigh vanishes henceforth from these pages. He may have ended as General of his Order. He may have worn out his years in some tropic forest, 'conquering the souls' (including, of course, the bodies) of Indians; he may have gone back to his old work in England, and been the very Ballard who was hanged and quartered three years afterwards for his share in Babington's villainous conspiracy. I know not. This book is a history of men; of men's virtues and sins, victories and defeats, and Eustace is a man no longer, he is become a thing, a tool, a Jesuit, which goes only where it is sent and does good or evil indifferently as it is bid; which, by an act of moral suicide, has lost its soul, in the hope of saving it, without a will, a conscience, responsibility (as it fancies), to God or man, but only to 'The Society.' In a word, Eustace, as he says himself, is 'dead.' Twice dead, I fear. Let the dead bury their dead. We have no more concern with Eustace Leigh.

CHAPTER XXIII

'THE BANKS OF THE MPTA'

'My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought
with me—

Death closes all, but something we are end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods!'

Tennyson's Ulysses.

NEARLY three years are past and gone since that little band had knelt at evensong beneath the giant tree of Guayra—years of seeming blank, through which they are to be tracked only by scattered notes and mis-spelt names. Through untrodden hills and forests, over a space of some eight hundred miles in length by four hundred in breadth, they had been seeking for the Golden City, and they had sought in vain. They had sought it along the wooded banks of the Orinoco, and beyond the roaring foam-world of Maypures, and on the upper waters of the mighty Amazon. They had gone up the streams even into Peru itself, and had trodden the

cinchona groves of Loja, ignorant as all the world was then, of their healing virtues. They had seen the virgin snows of Chimborazo towering white above the thunder-cloud, and the giant cone of Cotopaxi blackening in its silent wrath, before the fiery streams rolled down its sides. Foiled in their search at the back of the Andes, they had turned eastward once more, and plunged from the Alpine cliffs into 'the green and misty ocean of the Montana.' Slowly and painfully they had worked their way northward again, along the eastern foot of the inland Cordillera, and now they were bivouacking, as it seems, upon one of the many feeders of the Meka, which flow down from the Snma Pas into the forest-covered plains. There they sat, their watch fire glittering on the stream, beneath the shadow of enormous trees, Anyas and Cary, Brimblecombe, Yeo, and the Indian lad, who has followed them in all their wanderings, alive and well—but as far as ever from Manoa, and its fairy lake, and golden palaces, and all the wonders of the Indian's tale. Again and again in their wanderings they had heard faint rumours of its existence, and started off in some fresh direction, to meet only a fresh disappointment, and hope deferred, which maketh sick the heart.

There they sit at last—four-and-forty men out of the eighty-four who left the tree of Guayra.—where are the rest?

'Their bones are scatter'd far and wide,
By mount, by stream, and sea.'

Drew, the master, lies on the banks of the Rio Negro, and five brave fellows by him, slain in fight by the poisoned arrows of the Indians, in a vain attempt to penetrate the mountain-gorges of the Parima. Two more he and the valleys of the Andes, frozen to death by the fierce slaty hail which sweeps down from the condor's eyrie, four more were drowned at one of the rapids of the Orinoco, five or six more wounded men are left behind at another rapid among friendly Indians, to be recovered when they can be: perhaps never. Fever, snakes, jaguars, alligators, cannibal fish, electric eels, have thinned their ranks month by month, and of their march through the primeval wilderness no track remains, except those lonely graves.

And there the survivors sit, beside the silent stream, beneath the tropic moon, sun-dried and lean, but strong and bold as ever, with the quiet fire of English courage burning undimmed in every eye, and the genial smile of English mirth fresh on every lip; making a jest of danger and a sport of toil, as cheerily as when they sailed over the bar of Bideford, in days which seem to belong to some antenatal life. Their beards have grown down upon their breasts; their long hair is knotted on their heads, like women's, to keep off the burning sunshine; their leggings are of the skin of the delicate Guana-puti deer; their shirts are patched with Indian cotton web; the spoils of jaguar, puma, and ape hang from their shoulders. Their

ammunition is long since spent, their muskets, spoilt by the perpetual vapour-bath of the steaming woods, are left behind as useless in a cave by some cataract of the Orinoco: but their swords are bright and terrible as ever; and they carry bows of a strength which no Indian arm can bend, and arrows pointed with the remnants of their armour; many of them, too, are armed with the pocuna or blow-gun of the Indians—more deadly, because more silent, than the fire-arms which they have left behind them. So they have wandered, and so they will wander still, the lords of the forest and its beasts, terrible to all hostile Indians, but kindly, just, and generous to all who will deal faithfully with them, and many a smooth-chinned Carib and Ature, Solimo and Gnabih, recounts with wonder and admiration the righteousness of the bearded heroes, who proclaimed themselves the deadly foes of the faithless and murderous Spaniard, and spoke to them of the great and good queen beyond the seas, who would send her warriors to deliver and avenge the oppressed Indian.

The men are sleeping among the trees, some on the ground, and some in grass-hammocks slung between the stems. All is silent, save the heavy plunge of the taper in the river, as he tears up the water-weeds for his night's repast. Sometimes, indeed, the jaguar, as he climbs from one tree-top to another after his prey, wakens the monkeys clustered on the boughs, and they again arouse the birds, and ten minutes of unearthly roars, howls, shrieks, and cacklings make the forest ring as if all Pandemonium had broke loose, but that soon dies away again, and, even while it lasts, it is too common a matter to awaken the sleepers, much less to interrupt the council of war which is going on beside the watch-fire between the three adventurers and the faithful Yeo. A hundred times have they held such a council, and in vain; and, for aught they know, this one will be as fruitless as those which have gone before it. Nevertheless, it is a more solemn one than usual; for the two years during which they had agreed to search for Manoa are long past, and some new place must be determined on, unless they intend to spend the rest of their lives in that green wilderness.

'Well,' says Will Cary, taking his cigar out of his mouth, 'at least we have got something out of those last Indians. It is a comfort to have a puff at tobacco once more after three weeks' fasting.'

'For me,' said Jack Brimblecombe, 'Heaven forgive me! but when I get the magical leaf between my teeth again, I feel tempted to sit as still as a chimney, and smoke till my dying day, without stirring hand or foot.'

'Then I shall forbid you tobacco, Master Parson,' said Anyas; 'for we must be up and away again to-morrow. We have been idling here three mortal days, and nothing done.'

'Shall we ever do anything? I think the gold of Manoa is like the gold which lies where

the rainbow touches the ground, always a field beyond you.

Anyas was silent a while, and so were the rest. There was no denying that their hopes were all but gone. In the immense circuit which they had made, they had met with nothing but disappointment.

'There is but one more chance,' said he at length, 'and that is, the mountains to the east of the Orinoco, where we failed the first time. The Incas may have moved on to them when they escaped.'

'Why not?' said Cary, 'they would so put all the forests, beside the Llanos and half a dozen great rivers, between them and those dogs of Spaniards.'

'Shall we try it once more?' said Anyas. 'This river ought to run into the Orinoco, and once there, we are again at the very foot of the mountains. What say you, Yeo?'

'I cannot but mind, your worship, that when we came up the Orinoco, the Indians told us terrible stories of those mountains, how far they stretched, and how difficult they were to cross, by reason of the cliffs aloft, and the thick forests in the valleys. And have we not lost five good men there already?'

'What care we? No forests can be thicker than those we have bored through already, why, if one had had but a tail, like a monkey, for an extra warp, one might have gone a hundred miles on end along the tree-tops, and found it far pleasanter walking than tripping in withes, and being eaten up with creeping things, from morn till night.'

'But remember, too,' said Jack, 'how they told us to beware of the Amazons.'

'What, Jack, afraid of a parcel of women?'

'Why not?' said Jack, 'I wouldn't run from a man, as you know, but a woman—it's not natural like. They must be witches or devils. See how the Caribs feared them. And there were men there without necks, and with their eyes in their breasts, they said. Now how could a Christian tackle such customers as them?'

'He couldn't cut off their heads, that's certain, but, I suppose, a poke in the ribs will do as much for them as for their neighbours.'

'Well,' said Jack, 'if I fight, let me fight honest flesh and blood, that's all, and none of these outlandish monsters. How do you know but that they are invulnerable by Art-magic?'

'How do you know that they are? And as for the Amazons,' said Cary, 'woman's woman, all the world over I'll bet that you may wheedle them round with a compliment or two, just as if they were so many burghers' wives. Pity I have not a court-suit and a Spanish hat. I would have taken an orange in one hand and a handkerchief in the other, gone all alone to them as ambassador, and been in a week as great with Queen Blackfacealinda as ever Raleigh is at Whitehall.'

'Gentlemen!' said Yeo, 'where you go, I go; and not only I, but every man of us, I doubt not; but we have lost now half our company,

and spent our ammunition, so we are no better men, were it not for our swords, than these naked heathens round us. Now it was, as you all know, by the wonder and noise of their ordnance (let alone their horses, which is a breakneck beast I put no faith in) that both Cortes and Pizarro, those imps of Satan, made their golden conquests, with which, if we could have astounded the people of Manoa—'

'Having first found the said people,' laughed Anyas. 'It is like the old fable. Every craftsman thinks his own trade the one pillar of the commonweal.'

'Well! your worship,' quoth Yeo, 'it may be that being a gunner, I overprize guns. But it don't need slate and pencil to do this sum—Are forty men without shot as good as eighty with?'

'Thou art right, old fellow, right enough, and I was only jesting for very sorrow, and must needs laugh about it lest I weep about it. Our chance is over, I believe, though I dare not confess as much to the men.'

'Sir,' said Yeo, 'I have a feeling on me that the Lord's hand is against us in this matter. Whether He means to keep this wealth for worthier men than us, or whether it is His will to lude this great city in the secret place of His presence from the strife of tongues, and so to spare them from sinful man's covetousness, and England from that six and seven which I have seen gold beget among the Spaniards, I know not, sir, for who knoweth the counsels of the Lord? But I have long had a voice within which saith, "Salvation Yeo, thou shalt never behold the Golden City which is on earth, where heathens worship sun and moon and the hosts of heaven, be content, therefore, to see that Golden City which is above, where is neither sun nor moon, but the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof."'

There was a simple majesty about old Yeo when he broke forth in utterances like these which made his comrades, and even Anyas and Cary, look on him as Mussulmans look on madmen, as possessed of mysterious knowledge and flashes of inspiration, and Brumcombe, whose pious soul looked up to the old hero with a reverence which had overcome all his Churchman's prejudices against Anabaptists, answered gently,—

'Amen! amen! my masters all: and it has been on my mind, too, this long time, that there is a providence against our going east; for see how this two years past, whenever we have pushed eastward, we have fallen into trouble, and lost good men, and whenever we went Westward-ho, we have prospered, and do prosper to this day.'

'And what is more, gentlemen,' said Yeo, 'if, as Scripture says, dreams are from the Lord, I verily believe mine last night came from Him; for as I lay by the fire, sir, I heard my little maid's voice calling of me, as plain as ever I heard in my life, and the very same words, sir, which she learned from me and my good comrade William Penberthy to say, "Westward-

ho! jolly mariners all!" a bit of an ungodly song, my masters, which we sang in our wild days, but she stood and called it as plain as ever mortal ears heard, and called again till I answered, "Coming! my maid, coming!" and after that the dear chuck called no more—God grant I find her yet!—and so I woke.

Cary had long since given up laughing at Yeo about the 'little maid'; and Amyas answered—

'So let it be, Yeo, if the rest agree. but what shall we do to the westward?'

'Do!' said Cary, 'there's plenty to do, for there's plenty of gold, and plenty of Spaniards, too, they say, on the one or side of these mountains so that our swords will not rust for lack of adventures, my gay knights-errant all.'

So they chatted on; and before night was half through a plan was matured, desperate enough—but what cared those brave hearts for that? They would cross the Cordillera to Santa Fé de Bogotá, of the wealth whereof both Yeo and Amyas had often heard in the Pacific try to seize either the town or some convoy of gold going from it, make for the nearest river (there was said to be a large one which ran northward thence), build canoes, and try to reach the Northern Sea once more, and then, if Heaven prospered them, they might seize a Spanish ship, and make their way home to England, not, indeed, with the wealth of Manoa, but with a fair booty of Spanish gold. This was their new dream. It was a wild one but hardly more wild than the one which Drake had fulfilled, and not as wild as the one which Oxenham might have fulfilled, but for his own fatal folly.

Amyas sat watching late that night, sad of heart. To give up the cherished dream of years was hard, to face his mother, harder still, but it must be done, for the men's sake. So the new plan was proposed next day, and accepted joyfully. They would go up to the mountains and rest a while; if possible, bring up the wounded whom they had left behind, and then, try a new venture, with new hopes, perhaps new dangers; they were inured to the latter.

They started next morning cheerfully enough, and for three hours or more paddled easily up the glassy and windless reaches, between two green flower-bespangled walls of forest, gay with innumerable birds and insects, who dived from the branches which overhung the stream long trailers hung to the water's edge, and seemed admiring in the clear mirror the images of their own gorgeous flowers. River, trees, flowers, birds, insects,—it was all a fairy-land but it was a colossal one, and yet the voyagers took little note of it. It was now to them an every day occurrence, to see trees full two hundred feet high one mass of yellow or purple blossom to the highest twigs, and every branch and stem one hanging garden of crimson and orange orchids or vanillas. Common to them were all the fantastic and enormous shapes with which Nature bedecks her robes beneath the fierce

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sons and fattening rains of the tropic forest. Common were forms and colours of bird, and fish, and butterfly, more strange and bright than ever opium-eater dreamed. The long processions of menkeys, who kept pace with them along the tree-tops, and proclaimed their wonder in every imaginable whistle, and grunt, and howl, had ceased to move their laughter, as much as the roar of the jaguar and the rustle of the boa had ceased to move their fear, and when a brilliant green and rose-coloured fish, flat bodied like a bream, flab-finned like a salmon, and saw-toothed like a shark, leapt clean on board of the canoe to escape the rush of the huge alligator (whose loathsome snout, ere he could stop, actually rattled against the canoe within a foot of Jack Brimblecombe's hand), Jack, instead of turning pale, as he had done at the sharks upon a certain memorable occasion, coolly picked up the fish, and said, 'He's four pound weight.' If you can catch "pirai" for us like that, old fellow, just keep in our wake, and we'll give you the cleanings for wages.'

Yes. The mind of man is not so 'infinite,' in the vulgar sense of that word, as people fancy, and however greedily the appetite for wonder may be, while it remains unsatisfied in everyday European life, it is as easily satiated as any other appetite, and then leaves the senses of its possessor as dull as those of a city gourmand after a Lord Mayor's feast. Only the highest minds—our Humboldts, and Bonplands, and Schomburgks (and they only when quickened to an almost unhealthy activity by civilisation)—can go on long appreciating where Nature is insatiable, imperious, maddening, in her demands on our admiration. The very power of observing wears out under the rush of ever new objects, and the dizzy spectator is fain at last to shut the eyes of his soul, and take refuge (as West Indian Spaniards do) in torpor and stupidity. The man, too, who has not only eyes but utterance—what shall he do where all words fail him? Superlatives are but inarticulate, after all, and give no pictures even of size any more than do numbers of feet and yards and yet what else can we do, but heap superlative on superlative, and cry, 'Wonderful, wonderful' and after that wonderful, past all whooping? What Humboldt's self cannot paint, we will not try to daub. The voyagers were in a South American forest, readers. Fill up the meaning of those words, each as your knowledge enables you, for I cannot do it for you.

Certainly those adventurers could not. The absence of any attempt at word painting, even of admiration at the glorious things which they saw, is most remarkable in all early voyagers, both Spanish and English. The only two exceptions which I recollect are Columbus—(but then all was new, and he was bound to tell what he had seen)—and Raleigh, the two most gifted men, perhaps, with the exception of Humboldt, who ever set foot in tropical America, but even they dare nothing but a few feeble hints in passing. Their souls had been dazzled and stunned

by a great glory. Coming out of our European Nature into that tropic one, they had felt like Plato's men, brod in the twilight cavern, and then suddenly turned round to the broad blaze of day, they had seen things awful and un-
 speakable. why talk of them, except to say with the Turks, 'God is great!'

So it was with these men. Among the lugher-hearted of them, the grandeur and the glory around had attuned their spirits to itself, and kept up in them a lofty, herical, reverent frame of mind, but they knew as little about the trees and animals in an 'artistic' or 'critical' point of view as in a scientific one. This tree the Indians called one unpronounceable name, and it made good bows, that, some other name, and it made good canoes, of that, you could eat the fruit, that, produced the caoutchouc gum, useful for a hundred matters, that, was what the Indians (and they likewise) used to poison their arrows with, from the ashes of those palm-nuts you could make good salt, that tree, again, was full of good milk if you bored the stem they drank it, and gave God thanks, and were not astonished. God was great but that they had discovered long before they came into the tropics. Noble old child hearted heroes, with just romance and superstition enough about them to keep them from that prurient hysterical wonder and enthusiasm, which is simply, one often fears, a product of our scepticism! We do not trust enough in God, we do not really believe His power enough, to be ready, as they were, as every one ought to be on a God-made earth, for anything and everything being possible, and then, when a wonder is discovered, we go into ecstasies and shrieks over it, and take to ourselves credit for being susceptible of so lofty a feeling, true indeed, forsooth, of a refined and cultivated mind.

They paddled onward hour after hour, sheltering themselves as best they could under the shadow of the southern bank, while on their right hand the full sun-glare lay upon the enormous wall of mimosa, figs, and laurels, which formed the northern forest, broken by the slender shafts of bamboo tufts, and decked with a thousand gaily parasols, bank upon bank of gorgeous bloom piled upward to the sky, till where its outline cut the blue, flowers and leaves, too lofty to be distinguished by the eye, formed a broken rainbow of all hues quivering in the ascending streams of azure mist, until they seemed to melt and mingle with the very heavens.

And as the sun rose higher and higher, a great stillness fell upon the forest. The jaguars and the monkeys had hidden themselves in the darkest depths of the woods. The birds' notes died out one by one, the very butterflies ceased their flitting over the tree-tops, and slept with outspread wings upon the glossy leaves, undistinguishable from the flowers around them. Now and then a colibri whirled downward toward the water, hummed for a moment around some pendent flower, and then the living gem

was lost in the deep blackness of the inner wood, among tree-trunks as huge and dark as the pillars of some Hindoo shrine, or a parrot swung and screamed at them from an overhanging bough, or a thirsty monkey slid lazily down a liana to the surface of the stream, dipped up the water in his tiny hand, and started chattering back, as his eyes met those of some foul alligator peering upward through the clear depths below. In shaded nooks beneath the boughs, the capybaras, rabbits as large as sheep, went paddling sleepily round and round, thrusting up their unwieldy heads among the blooms of the blue water-lilies, while black and purple water-lilies ran up and down upon the rafts of floating leaves. The shaggy snout of a fresh-water dolphin rose slowly to the surface, a jet of spray whirled up, a rainbow hung upon it for a moment, and the black snout sank lazily again. Here and there, too, upon some shallow pebbly shore, scarlet flamingoes stood dreaming knee-deep, on one leg, crested cranes pranced up and down, admiring their own finery, and ibises and egrets dipped their bills under water in search of prey but before noon even those had slipped away, and there reigned a stillness which might be heard—such a stillness (to compare small things with great) as broods beneath the rich shadows of Amyas's own Devon woods, or among the lonely sheep of Exmoor, when the heather is in flower—a stillness in which, as Humboldt says, 'If beyond the silence we listen for the faintest undertones, we detect a stifled, continuous hum of insects, which crowd the air close to the earth, a confused swarming murmur which hangs round every laish, in the cracked bark of trees, in the soil undermined by larvae, millepedes, and bees, a voice proclaiming to us that all Nature breathes, that under a thousand different forms life swarms in the gaping and dusty earth, as much as in the bosom of the waters, and the air which breathes around.'

At last a soft and distant murmur, increasing gradually to a heavy roar, announced that they were nearing some cataract, till turning a point, where the deep alluvial soil rose into a low cliff fringed with delicate ferns, they came full in sight of a scene at which all paused, not with astonishment, but with something very like disgust.

'Rapids again!' grumbled one. 'I thought we had had enough of them on the Omoro.'

'We shall have to get out, and draw the canoes overland, I suppose. Three hours will be lost, and in the very hottest of the day, too.'

'There's worse behind, don't you see the spray behind the palms?'

'Stop grumbling, my masters, and don't cry out before you are hurt. Paddle right up to the largest of those islands, and let us look about us.'

In front of them was a snow-white bar of raging foam, some ten feet high, along which were ranged three or four islands of black rock.

Each was crested with a knot of lofty palms, whose green tops stood out clear against the bright sky, while the lower half of their stems seemed hazy through a luminous veil of rain-owed mist. The banks right and left of the all were so densely fringed with a low hedge of shrubs, that landing seemed all but impossible, and their Indian guide, suddenly looking round him and whispering, bade them beware of swages, and pointed to a canoe which lay swinging in the eddies under the largest island, moored apparently to the root of some tree.

'Silence all!' cried Amiyas, 'and paddle up hither and seize the canoe. If there be an Indian on the island, we will have speech of him—but mind and treat him friendly; and on our way, neither strike nor shoot, even if he starts to fight.'

So, choosing a line of smooth backwater just to the west of the island, they drove their mores up by main force, and fastened themselves by the side of the Indian's, while Amiyas, always the foremost, sprang boldly on shore, whispering to the Indian boy to follow him.

Once on the island, Amiyas felt sure enough, that if its wild tenant had not seen them approach, he certainly had not heard them, so entering was the noise which filled his brain, and seemed to make the very leaves upon the bushes quiver, and the solid stone beneath his feet to reel and ring. For two hundred yards and more above the fall nothing met his eye but one white waste of raging foam, with here and there a transverse dyke of rock, which curled columns of spray and surges of beaded water high into the air,—strangely contrasting with the still and silent cliffs of green leaves which walled the river right and left, and more trimly still with the knots of enormous palms upon the islets, which reared their polished shafts a hundred feet into the air, straight and bright as masts, while their broad plumies and golden-clustered fruit slept in the sunshine far below, the image of the statest repose amid the wildest wrath of Nature.

He looked round anxiously for the expected Indian—but he was nowhere to be seen, and, in the meanwhile, as he stepped cautiously along the island, which was some fifty yards in length and breadth, his senses, accustomed as they were to such sights, could not help dwelling on the exquisite beauty of the scene, on the garden of grey flowers, of every imaginable form and hue, which fringed every boulder at his feet, creeping out amid delicate fern fans and luxuriant cushions of moss, on the chequered shade of the palms, and the cool air, which wafted down from the cataracts above the scents of a hundred flowers. Gradually his ear became accustomed to the roar, and, above its mighty undertone, he could hear the whisper of the wind among the shrubs, and the hum of myriad insects, while the rock manakin, with its saffron plumage, flitted before him from stone to stone, calling cheerily, and seeming to lead him on suddenly, scrambling over the rocky flower-beds

to the other side of the isle, he came upon a little shady beach, which, beneath a bank of stone some six feet high, fringed the edge of a perfectly still and glassy bay. Ten yards farther, the cataract fell sheer in thunder, but a high fern-fringed rock turned its force away from that quiet nook. In it the water swung slowly round and round in glassy dark-green rings, among which dimpled a hundred gaudy fish, waiting for every fly and worm which spun and quivered on the eddy. Here, if anywhere, was the place to find the owner of the canoe. He kept down upon the pebbles, and as he did so, a figure rose from behind a neighbouring rock, and met him face to face.

It was an Indian girl, and yet, when he looked again,—was it an Indian girl? Amiyas had seen hundreds of those delicate dark-skinned daughters of the forest, but never such a one as this. Her stature was taller, her limbs were fuller and more rounded, her complexion, though tanned by light, was fairer by far than his own sunburnt face, her hair, crowned with a garland of white flowers, was not black, and straight, and black, like an Indian's, but of a rich, glossy brown, and curling richly and crisply from her very temples to her knees. Her forehead, though low, was upright and ample, her nose was straight and small, her lips, the lips of a European, her whole face of the highest and richest type of Spanish beauty, a collar of gold mingled with green beads hung round her neck, and golden bracelets were on her wrists. All the strange and dim legends of white Indians, and of nations of a higher race than Carib, or Arrowak, or Sohmo, which Amiyas had ever heard, rose up in his memory. She must be the daughter of some great cacique, perhaps of the lost Lucas themselves—why not? And full of simple wonder, he gazed upon that fairy vision, while she, unabashed in her free innocence, gazed fearlessly in return, as Eve might have done in Paradise, upon the mighty stature, and the strange garments, and above all, on the bushy beard and flowing yellow locks, of the Englishman.

He spoke first, in some Indian tongue, gently and smilingly, and made a half-step forward, but quick as light she caught up from the ground a bow, and held it fiercely toward him, fitted with the long arrow, with which, as he could see, she had been striking fish, for a hue of twisted grass hung from its barbed head. Amiyas stopped, laid down his own bow and sword, and made another step in advance, smiling still, and making all Indian signs of amity, but the arrow was still pointed straight at his breast, and he knew the mettle and strength of the forest nymphs well enough to stand still and call for the Indian boy, too proud to retreat, but in the uncomfortable expectation of feeling every moment the shaft quivering between his ribs.

The boy, who had been peering from above, leaped down to them in a moment, and began, as the safest method, grovelling on his nose

upon the pebbles, while he tried two or three dialects, one of which at last she seemed to understand, and answered in a tone of evident suspicion and anger.

'What does she say?'

'That you are a Spaniard and a robber, because you have a board.'

'Tell her that we are no Spaniards, but that we hate them, and are come across the great waters to help the Indians to kill them.'

The boy translated his speech. The nymph answered by a contemptuous shake of the head.

'Tell her, that if she will send her tribe to us, we will do them no harm. We are going over the mountains to fight the Spaniards, and we want them to show us the way.'

The boy had no sooner spoken, than, nimbly as a deer, the nymph had sprung up the rocks, and darted between the palm-stems to her canoe. Suddenly she caught sight of the English boat, and stopped with a cry of fear and rage.

'Let her pass!' shouted Amyas, who had followed her close. 'Push your boat off, and let her pass. Boy, tell her to go on, they will not come near her.'

But she hesitated still, and with arrow drawn to the head, faced first on the boat's crew, and then on Amyas, till the Englishmen had shoved off full twenty yards.

Then, leaping into her tiny pragua, she darted into the wildest whirl of the eddies, shooting along with vigorous strokes, while the English trembled as they saw the frail bark spinning and leaping amid the muzzles of the alligators, and the huge dog-toothed trout. But with the swiftness of an arrow she reached the northern bank, drove her canoe among the bushes, and leaping from it, darted through some narrow opening in the bush, and vanished like a dream.

'What fair virago have you unearthed?' cried Cary, as they toiled up again to the landing-place.

'Behrew me,' quoth Jack, 'but we are in the very land of the nymphs, and I shall expect to see Diana herself next, with the moon on her forehead.'

'Take care, then, where you wander hereabouts, Sir John. lest you end as Acteon did, by turning into a stag, and being eaten by a jaguar.'

'Acteon was eaten by his own hounds, Mr Cary, so the parallel don't hold. But surely she was a very wonder of beauty!'

Why was it that Amyas did not like this harmless talk? There had come over him the strangest new feeling, as if that fair vision was his property, and the men had no right to talk about her, no right to have even seen her. And he spoke quite surily as he said -

'You may leave the women to themselves, my masters, you'll have to deal with the men ere long, so get your canoes upon the rock, and keep good watch.'

'Hillo!' shouted one in a few minutes, 'here's fresh fish enough to feed us all round. I suppose that young cat-a-mountain left it behind her in her hurry. I wish she had left her golden chains and ouches into the bargain.'

'Well,' said another, 'we'll take it as fair payment, for having made us drop down the current again to let her ladyship pass.'

'Leave that fish alone,' said Amyas; 'it is none of yours.'

'Why, sir?' quoth the finder in a tone of sulky depreciation.

'If we are to make good friends with the heathens, we had better not begin by stealing their goods. There are plenty more fish in the river; go and catch them, and let the Indians have their own.'

The men were accustomed enough to strict and stern justice in their dealings with the savages: but they could not help looking slyly at each other, and hunting, when out of sight, that the captain seemed in a mighty fuss about his new acquaintance.

However, they were expert by this time in all the Indian's fishing methods, and so abundant was the animal life which swarmed around every rock, that in an hour fish enough lay on the beach to feed them all, whose forms and colours, names and families, I must leave the reader to guess from the wondrous pages of Sir Richard Schomburgk, for I know too little of them to speak without the fear of making mistakes.

A full hour passed before they saw anything more of their Indian neighbours, and then from under the bushes shot out a canoe, on which all eyes were fixed in expectation.

Amyas, who expected to find there some remnant of a higher race, was disappointed enough at seeing on board only the usual half dozen of low-browed, dirty Orsons, painted red with arnotto, but a gray-headed elder at the stern seemed, by his feathers and gold ornaments, to be some man of note in the little woodland community.

The canoe came close up to the island; Amyas saw that they were unarmed, and, laying down his weapons, advanced alone to the bank, making all signs of amity. They were returned with interest by the old man, and Amyas's next care was to bring forward the fish which the fair nymph had left behind, and, through the medium of the Indian lad, to give the cacique (for so he seemed to be) to understand that he wished to render every one his own. This offer was received, as Amyas expected, with great applause, and the canoe came alongside, but the crew still seemed afraid to land. Amyas bade his men throw the fish out by one into the boat, and then proclaimed by the boy's mouth, as was his custom with all Indians, that he and his were enemies of the Spaniards, and on their way to make war against them, - and that all which they desired was a peaceable and safe passage through the dominions of the mighty potentate and renowned warrior whom they beheld before them; for Amyas argued rightly enough, that even if the old fellow at was not the cacique, he would be none the less pleased at being mistaken for him.

Whereon the ancient worthy, rising in the canoe, pointed to heaven, earth, and the things

under, and commenced a long sermon, in tone, manner, and articulation, very like one of those which the great black-bearded apes were in the habit of preaching every evening when they could get together a congregation of little monkeys to listen, to the great scandal of Jack, who would have it that some evil spirit set them on to mimic him, which sermon, being partly interpreted by the Indian lad, seemed to signify that the valour and justice of the white men had already reached the ears of the speaker, and that he was sent to welcome them into those regions by the Daughter of the Sun.

'The Daughter of the Sun' quoth Amyas, 'then we have found the lost Inca after all.'

'We have found something,' said Cary, 'I only hope it may not be a mare's nest, like many another of our findings.'

'Or an adder's,' said Yeu. 'We must beware of treachery.'

'We must beware of no such thing,' said Amyas, pretty sharply. 'Have I not told you fifty times, that if they see that we trust them, they will trust us, and if they see that we suspect them they will suspect us? And when two parties are watching to see who strikes the first blow, they are sure to come to fist-cuffs from mere dirty fear of each other.'

Amyas spoke truth, for almost every atrocity against savages which had been committed by the Spaniards, and which was in later and worse times committed by the English, was wont to be excused in that same base fear of treachery. Amyas's plan, like that of Drake, and Cook, and all great English voyagers, had been all along to inspire at once awe and confidence, by a frank and fearless carriage, and he was not disappointed here. He bade the men step boldly into their canoes and follow the old Indian whither he would. The simple children of the forest bowed themselves reverently before the mighty strangers, and then led them smilingly across the stream, and through a narrow passage in the covert, to a hidden lagoon, on the banks of which stood, not Manoa, but a tiny Indian village.

CHAPTER XXIV

HOW AMYAS WAS TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL

'Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In always climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence, ripen, fall, and cease
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.'

TERKYNOW

HUMBOLDT has somewhere a curious passage; in which, looking on some wretched group of Indians, squatting stupidly round their fires, besmeared with grease and paint, and devouring ants and clay, he somewhat naively remarks, that were it not for science, which teaches us that such is the crude material of humanity,

and thus the state from which we all have risen, he should have been tempted rather to look upon those hapless beings as the last degraded remnants of some fallen and dying race. One wishes that the great traveller had been bold enough to yield to that temptation, which his own reason and common sense presented to him as the real explanation of the sad sight, instead of following the dogmas of a so-called science, which has not a fact whereon to base its wild notion, and must ignore a thousand facts in asserting it. His own good sense, it seems, coincided instinctively with the Bible doctrine, that man in a state of nature is a fallen being, doomed to death—a view which may be a sad one, but still one more honourable to poor humanity than the theory that we all began as some sort of two-handed apes. It is surely more hopeful to believe that those poor Otomacs or Guahibos were not what they ought to be, than to believe that they were. It is certainly more complimentary to them to think that they had been somewhat nobler and more prudent in centuries gone by, than that they were such blockheads as to have dragged on, the son after the father, for all the thousands of years which have elapsed since man was made, without having had wit enough to discover any better food than ants and clay.

Our voyagers, however, like those of their time, troubled their heads with no such questions. Taking the Bible story as they found it, they agreed with Humboldt's reason, and not with his science, or, to speak correctly, agreed with Humboldt's self, and not with the shallow anthropologic theories which happened to be in vogue fifty years ago, and their new hosts were in their eyes immortal souls like themselves, 'captivated by the devil at his will,' lost then in the pathless forests, likely to be lost here after.

And certainly facts seemed to bear out their old-fashioned theories, although these Indians had sunk by no means so low as the Guahibos whom they had met upon the lower waters of the same river.

They beheld, on landing, a scattered village of palm-leaf sheds, under which, as usual, the hammocks were slung from tree to tree. Here and there, in openings in the forest, patches of cassava and indigo appeared; and there was a look of neatness and comfort about the little settlement superior to the average.

But now, for the signs of the evil spirit. Certainly it was no good spirit who had inspired them with the art of music, or else (as Cary said) Apollo and Mercury (if they ever visited America) had played their forefathers a shabby trick, and put them off with very poor instruments, and still poorer taste. For on either side of the landing-place were arranged four or five stout fellows, each with a tall drum, or long earthen trumpet, swelling out in the course of its length into several hollow balls, from which arose, the moment the strangers set foot on shore, so degenerating a cacophony of howls, and

groans, and thumps, as fully to justify Yeo's remark, 'They are calling upon their devil, sir'. To which Cary answered, with some show of reason, that 'they were the less likely to be disappointed, for none but Sir Urian would ever come to listen to such a noise.'

'And you mark, sirs,' said Yeo, 'there's some feast or sacrifice toward I'm not over-confident of them yet.'

'Nonsense!' said Amyas, 'we could kill every soul of them in half an hour, and they know that as well as me.'

But some great demonstration was plainly toward, for the children of the forest were arrayed in two lines, right and left of the open space, the men in front, and the women behind, and all bedizened, to the best of their power, with arnatto, indigo, and feathers.

Next, with a hideous yell, leapt into the centre of the space a personage who certainly could not have complained if any one had taken him for the devil, for he had dressed himself up carefully for that very intent, in a jaguar skin with a long tail, grinning teeth, a pair of horns, a plume of black and yellow feathers, and a huge rattle.

'Here's the Piache, the rascal,' says Amyas.

'Ay,' says Yeo, 'in Satan's livery, and I've no doubt his works are according, trust him for it.'

'Don't be frightened, Jack,' says Cary, backing up Brimblecombe from behind. 'It's your business to tackle him, you know. At him boldly, and he'll run.'

Whereat all the men laughed, and the Piache, who had intended to produce a very solemn impression, hung fire a little. However, being accustomed to get his bread by his impudence, he soon recovered himself, advanced, snote one of the musicians over the head with his rattle to procure silence, and then began a harangue, to which Amyas listened patiently, cigar in mouth.

'What's it all about, boy?'

'He wants to know whether you have seen Amahvaca on the other shore of the great water!'

Amyas was accustomed to this inquiry after the mythic civiliser of the forest Indians, who, after carving the mysterious sculptures which appear upon so many inland cliffs of that region, returned again whence he came, beyond the ocean. He answered, as usual, by setting forth the praises of Queen Elizabeth.

To which the Piache replied, that she must be one of Amahvaca's seven daughters, some of whom he took back with him, while he broke the legs of the rest to prevent their running away, and left them to peopple the forests.

To which Amyas replied, that his Queen's legs were certainly not broken, for she was a very model of grace and activity, and the best dancer in all her dominions, but that it was more important to him to know whether the tribe would give him cassava bread, and let them stay peaceably on that island, to rest a while before

they went on to fight the clothed men (the Spaniards), on the other side of the mountains.

On which the Piache, after capering and turning head over heels with much howling, beckoned Amyas and his party to follow him, they did so, seeing that the Indians were all unarmed, and evidently in the highest good humour.

The Piache went toward the door of a carefully closed hut, and crawling up to it on all fours in most abject fashion, began whining to some one within.

'Ask what he is about, boy.'

The lad asked the old rascque, who had accompanied them, and received for answer, that he was consulting the Daughter of the Sun.

'Here is our man's nest at last,' quoth Cary, as the Piache from whines rose to screams and gesticulations, and then to violent convulsions, foaming at the mouth, and rolling of the eyeballs, till he suddenly sank exhausted, and lay for dead.

'As good as a stage play.'

'The devil has played his part,' says Jack; 'and now by the rules of all plays Vice should come on.'

'And a very fair Vice it will be, I suspect, a right sweet iniquity, my Jack! Listen.'

And from the interior of the hut rose a low sweet song, at which all the simple Indians bowed their heads in reverence, and the English were hushed in astonishment, for the voice was not shrill or guttural, like that of an Indian, but round, clear, and rich, like a European's, and as it swelled and rose louder and louder, showed a compass and power which would have been extraordinary anywhere (and many a man of the party, as was usual in musical old England, was a good judge enough of such a matter, and could hold his part right well in glee, and catch, and roundelay, and psalm). And as it leaped, and ran, and sank again, and rose once more to fall once more, all but marvellous, yet perfect in melody, like the voice of bird on bough, the wild wanderers were rapt in new delight, and did not yonder at the Indians as they bowed their heads, and welcomed the notes as messengers from some higher world. At last one triumphant burst, so shrill that all ears rang again, and then dead silence. The Piache, suddenly restored to life, jumped upright, and recommenced preaching at Amyas.

'Tell the howling villain to make short work of it, lad! His tune won't do after that last one.'

The lad, grinning, informed Amyas that the Piache signified their acceptance as friends by the Daughter of the Sun; that her friends were theirs, and her foes theirs. Whereon the Indians set up a scream of delight, and Amyas rolling another tobacco leaf up in another strip of plantain, answered—

'Then let her give us some cassava,' and lighted a fresh cigar.

Whereon the door of the hut opened, and the Indians prostrated themselves to the earth, as

there came forth the same fair apparition which they had encountered upon the island, but decked now in feather-robcs, and plumes of every imaginable hue.

Slowly and stately, as one accustomed to command, she walked up to Amyas, glancing proudly round on her prostrate adorers, and pointing with graceful arms to the trees, the gardens, and the huts, gave him to understand by signs (so expressive were her looks, that no words were needed) that all was at his service, after which, taking his hand, she lifted it gently to her forehead.

At that sign of submission a shout of rapture arose from the crowd, and as the mysterious maiden retired again to her hut, they pressed round the English, expressing and admiring, pointing with equal surprise to their swords, to their Indian bows and blow guns, and to the trophies of wild beasts with which they were clothed, while women hastened off to bring fruit, flowers, and cassava, and (to Amyas's great anxiety) calabashes of intoxicating drink, and, to make a long story short, the English sat down beneath the trees, and feasted merrily, while the drums and trumpets made hideous music, and little young girls and lads danced uncouth dances, which so scandalised both Brulhecombe and Yeo, that they persuaded Amyas to leave in early retreat. He was willing enough to get back to the island while the men were still sober, so there were many leave-takings and promises of return on the morrow, and the party paddled back to their island-fortress, rucking their wits as to who or what the mysterious maid could be.

Amyas, however, had settled in his mind that she was one of the lost Inca race, perhaps a descendant of that very fair girl, wife of the Inca Manco, whom Pizarro, forty years before, had, merely to torture the fugitive king's heart, as his body was safe from the tyrant's reach, stripped, scourged, and shot to death with arrows, uncomplaining to the last.

They all assembled for the evening service (hardly a day had passed since they left England on which they had not done the same), and after it was over, they must needs sing a psalm, and then a catch or two, ere they went to sleep, and till the moon was high in heaven, twenty mellow voices rang out above the roar of the cataract, in many a good old tune. Once or twice they thought they heard an echo to their song, but they took no note of it, till Cary, who had gone apart for a few minutes, returned, and whispered Amyas away.

'The sweet Iniquity is mimicking us, lad.'

They went to the brink of the river; and there (for their ears were by this time dead to the noise of the torrent) they could hear plainly the same voice which had so surprised them in the hut, repeating clear and true, snatches of the airs which they had sung. Strange and solemn enough was the effect of the men's deep voices on the island, answered out of the dark forest by those sweet treble notes, and the two young

men stood a long while listening and looking out across the eddies, which swirled down golden in the moonlight but they could see nothing beyond save the black wall of treas. After a while the voice ceased, and the two returned to dream of Incas and nightingales.

They visited the village again next day, and every day for a week or more but the maiden appeared but rarely, and when she did, kept her distance as haughtily as a queen.

Amyas, of course, as soon as he could converse somewhat better with his new friends, was not long before he questioned the cacique about her. But the old man made an owl's face at her name, and intimidated by mysterious shakes of the head, that she was a very strange personage, and the less said about her the better. She was 'a child of the Sun,' and that was enough.

'Tell him, boy,' quoth Cary, 'that we are the children of the Sun by his first wife, and have orders from him to inquire how the Indians have behaved to our step-sister for he cannot see all their tricks down here, the trees are so thick. So let him tell us, or all the cassava plants shall be blighted.'

'Will, Will, don't play with lying!' said Amyas but the threat was enough for the cacique, and taking them in his canoe a full mile down the stream, as if in fear that the wonderful maiden should overhear him, he told them, in a sort of rhythmic chant, how, many moons ago (he could not tell how many), his tribe was a mighty nation, and dwelt in Tapa-mune, till the Spaniards drove them forth. And how, as they wandered northward, far away upon the mountain spurs beneath the flaming cone of Cotopaxi, they had found this fair creature wandering in the forest, about the likeness of a seven years' child. Wondering at her white skin and her delicate beauty, the simple Indians worshipped her as a god, and led her home with them. And when they found that she was human like themselves, their wonder scarcely lessened. How could so tender a being have sustained life in those forests, and escaped the jaguar and the snake? She must be under some Divine protection she must be a daughter of the Sun, one of that mighty Inca race, the news of whose fearful fall had reached even those lonely wildernesses, who had, many of them, haunted for years as exiles the eastern slopes of the Andes, about the Ucalay and the Marañon, who would, as all Indians knew, see again some day to power, when bearded white men should come across the seas to restore them to their ancient throne.

So, as the girl grew up among them, she was tended with royal honours, by command of the coojnor of the tribe, that so her forefather of the Sun might be propitious to them, and the Incas might show favour to the poor ruined Onaguas, in the day of their coming glory. And as she grew, she had become, it seemed, somewhat of a prophetess among them, as well as an object of fetish-worship, for she was more prudent in council, valiant in war, and cunning

in the chase, than all the elders of the tribe, and those strange and sweet songs of hers, which had so surprised the white men, were full of mysterious wisdom about the birds, and the animals, and the flowers, and the rivers, which the Sun and the Good Spirit taught her from above. So she had lived among them, unmarried still, not only because she despised the addresses of all Indian youths, but because the conjuror had declared it to be profane in them to mingle with the race of the Sun, and had assigned her a cabin near his own, where she was served in state, and gave some sort of oracular responses, as they had seen, to the questions which he put to her.

Such was the cacique's tale, on which Cary remarked, probably, not unjustly, that he 'dared to say the conjuror made a very good thing of it' but Amyas was silent, full of dreams, if not about Manoa, still about the remnant of the Inca race. What if they were still to be found about the southern sources of the Amazon? He must have been very near them already, in that case. It was vexatious, but at least he might be sure that they had formed no great kingdom in that direction, or he should have heard of it long ago. Perhaps they had moved lately from thence eastward, to escape some fresh encroachment of the Spaniards, and this girl had been left behind in their flight. And then he recollected, with a sigh, how hopeless was any further search with his diminished band. At least, he might learn something of the truth from the maiden herself. It might be useful to him in some future attempt, for he had not yet given up Manoa. If he but got safe home, there was many a gallant gentleman (and Raleigh came at once into his mind) who would join him in a fresh search for the Golden City of Guiana, not by the upper waters, but by the mouth of the Orinoco.

So they paddled back, while the simple cacique entreated them to tell the Sun, in their daily prayers, how well the wild people had treated his descendant, and besought them not to take her away with them, lest the Sun should forget the poor Onaguas, and ripen their manioc and their fruit no more.

Amyas had no wish to stay where he was longer than was absolutely necessary to bring up the sick men from the Orinoco, but this, he well knew, would be a journey probably of some months, and attended with much danger.

Cary volunteered at once, however, to undertake the adventure, if half a dozen men would join him, and the Indians would send a few young men to help in working the canoe, but this latter item was not an easy one to obtain, for the tribe with whom they now were, stood in some fear of the fierce and brutal Gushubas, through whose country they must pass, and every Indian tribe, as Amyas knew well enough, looks on each tribe of different language to itself as natural enemies, hateful, and made only to be destroyed wherever met. This strange fact, too, Amyas and his party attributed to delusion

of the devil, the divider and accuser; and I am of opinion that they were perfectly right: only let Amyas take care that while he is discovering the devil in the Indians, he does not give place to him in himself, and that in more ways than one. But of that more hereafter.

Whether, however, it was pride or shyness which kept the maiden aloof, she conquered it after a while, perhaps through mere woman's curiosity and perhaps, too, from mere longing for amusement in a place so unspeakably stupid as the forest. She gave the English to understand, however, that though they all might be very important personages, none of them was to be her companion but Amyas. Aulere a month was past, she was often hunting with him far and wide in the neighbouring forest, with a train of chosen nymphs, whom she had persuaded to follow her example and spurn the ducky suitors around. This fashion, not uncommon, perhaps, among the Indian tribes, where women are continually escaping to the forest from the tyranny of the men, and often, perhaps, forming temporary communities, was to the English a plain proof that they were near the land of the famous Amazons, of whom they had heard so often from the Indians, while Amyas had no doubt that, as a descendant of the Incas, the maiden preserved the tradition of the Virgins of the Sun, and of the austere monastic rule of the Peruvian superstition. Had not that valiant German, George of Spure, and Jeronimo Ortal too, fifty years before, found convents of the Sun upon these very upper waters?

So a harmless friendship sprang up between Amyas and the girl, which soon turned to good account. For she no sooner heard that he needed a crew of Indians, than she consulted the Piache, assembled the tribe, and having retired to her hut, commenced a song, which (unless the Piache lied) was a command to furnish young men for Cary's expedition, under penalty of the sovereign displeasure of an evil spirit with an unpronounceable name—an argument which succeeded on the spot, and the canoe departed on its perilous errand.

John Brimblecombe had great doubts whether a venture thus started by direct help and patronage of the Mend would succeed, and Amyas himself, disliking the humbug, told Ayacanora that it would be better to have told the tribe that it was a good deed, and pleasing to the Good Spirit.

'Ah!' said she naively enough, 'they know better than that. The Good Spirit is big and lary, and he smiles, and takes no trouble: but the little bad spirit, he is so busy—here, and there, and everywhere,' and she waved her pretty hands up and down, 'he is the useful one to have for a friend.' Which sentiment the Piache much approved, as became his occupation, and once told Brimblecombe pretty sharply, that he was a meddling fellow for telling the Indians that the Good Spirit cared for them; 'for,' quoth he, 'if they begin to

ask the Good Spirit for what they want, who will bring me cassava and coca for keeping the bad spirit quiet!' This argument, however forcible the devil's priests in all ages have felt it to be, did not stop Jack's preaching (and very good and righteous preaching it was, moreover), and much less the morning and evening service in the island camp. This last, the Indians, attracted by the singing, attended in such numbers, that the Pache found his occupation gone, and vowed to put an end to Jack's Gospel with a poisoned arrow.

Which plan he (blinded by his master, Satan, so Jack phrased it) took into his head to impart to Ayacauora, as the partner of his tithes and offerings, and was exceedingly astonished to receive in answer a box on the ear, and a storm of abuse. After which, Ayacauora went to Amyas, and telling him all, proposed that the Pache should be thrown to the alligators, and Jack installed in his place; declaring that whatsoever the heeded men said must be true, and whosoever plotted against them should die the death.

Jack, however, magnanimously forgave his foe, and preached on, of course with fresh zeal, but not, alas! with much success. For the conjuror, though his main treasure was gone over to the camp of the enemy, had a reserve in a certain holy trumpet, which was hidden mysteriously in a cave on the neighbouring hills, not to be looked on by woman under pain of death, and it was well known, and had been known for generations, that unless that trumpet, after fastings, flagellations, and other solemn rites, was blown by night throughout the woods, the palm-trees would bear no fruit, yea, so great was the fame of that trumpet, that neighbouring tribes sent at the proper season to hire it and the blower thereof, by payment of much precious trumpery, that so they might be sharers in its fertilising powers.

So the Pache announced one day in public, that in consequence of the impurity of the Omaguas, he should retire to a neighbouring tribe, of more religious turn of mind, and taking with him the precious instrument, leave their palms to blight, and themselves to the evil spirit.

There was the wailing, and dire the wrath throughout the village. Jack's words were allowed to be good words; but what was the Gospel in comparison with the trumpet! The rasul saw his advantage, and began a fierce harangue against the heretic strangers. As he maddened, his hearers maddened, the savage nature, capricious as a child's, flashed out in wild suspicion. Women yelled, men scowled, and ran hastily to their huts for bows and blow-guns. The case was grown critical. There were not more than a dozen men with Amyas at the time, and they had only their swords, while the Indian men might muster nearly a hundred. Amyas forbade his men either to draw or to retreat; but poisoned arrows were weapons before which the boldest might well

quail, and more than one cheek grew pale, which had seldom been pale before.

'It is God's quarrel, sirs all,' said Jack Brimblecombe; 'let Him defend the right.'

As he spoke, from Ayacauora's hut arose her magic song, and quivered aloft among the green heights of the forest.

The mob stood spell-bound, still growling fiercely, but not daring to move. Another moment, and she had rushed out, like a very Diana, into the centre of the ring, bow in hand, and arrow on the string.

The fallen 'children of wrath' had found their match in her; for her beautiful face was convulsed with fury. Almost foaming in her passion, she burst forth with bitter revilings, she pointed with admiration to the English, and then with fiercest contempt to the Indians, and at last, with fierce gestures, seemed to cast off the very dust of her feet against them, and springing to Amyas's side, placed herself in the forefront of the English battle.

The whole scene was so sudden, that Amyas had hardly discovered whether she came as friend or foe, before her bow was raised. He had just time to strike up her hand, when the arrow flew past the ear of the offending Pache, and stuck quivering in a tree.

'Let me kill the wretch!' said she, stamping with rage, but Amyas held her arm firmly.

'Fools!' cried she to the tribe, while tears of anger rolled down her cheeks. 'Choose between me and your trumpet! I am a daughter of the Sun, I am white, I am a companion for Englishmen! But you! your mothers were Gualibas, and ate mud, and your fathers—they were howling apes! Let them sing to you! I shall go to the white men, and never sing you to sleep any more, and when the little evil spirit misses my voice, he will come and tumble you out of your hammocks, and make you dream of ghosts every night, till you grow as thin as blow-guns, and as stupid as eye-eyes!'

This terrible counter-threat, in spite of the slight bathos involved, had its effect; for it appealed to that dread of the sleep world which is common to all savages, but the conjuror was ready to outbid the prophets, and had begun a fresh oration, when Amyas turned the tides of war. Bursting into a huge laugh at the whole matter, he took the conjuror by his shoulders, sent him with one crafty kick half a dozen yards off upon his nose, and then, walking out of the ranks, shook hands round, with all his Indian acquaintances.

Whereon, like grown-up babies, they all burst out laughing too, shook hands with all the English, and then with each other, being, after all, as glad as any bishops to prorogue the convocation, and let unpleasant questions stand over till the next session. The Pache relented, like a prudent man, Ayacauora returned to her hut to sulk; and Amyas to his island, to long for Cary's return, for he felt himself on dangerous ground.

1 Two-toed sloths.

At last Will returned, safe and sound, and as merry as ever, not having lost a man (though he had had a smart brush with the Guahabas). He brought back three of the wounded men, now pretty nigh cured, the other two, who had lost a leg apiece, had refused to come. They had Indian wives, more than they could eat; and tobacco without end: and if it were not for the gnats (of which Cary said that there were more mosquitos than there was air), they should be the happiest men alive. Amyas could hardly blame the poor fellows, for the chance of their getting home through the forest with one leg each was very small, and, after all, they were making the best of a bad matter. And a very bad matter it seemed to him, to be left in a heathen land, and a still worse matter, when he overheard some of the men talking about their comrades' lonely fate, as if, after all, they were not so much to be pitied. He said nothing about it then, for he made a rule never to take notice of any facts which he got at by eaves-dropping, however unobtrusional, but he longed that one of them would say as much to him, and he would 'give them a piece of his mind.' And a piece of his mind he had to give within the week, for while he was on a hunting party, two of his men were missing, and were not heard of for some days, at the end of which time the old cacique came to tell him that he believed they had taken to the forest, each with an Indian girl.

Amyas was very wroth at the news. First, because it had never happened before: he could say with honest pride, as Raleigh did afterwards when he returned from his Guiana voyage, that no Indian woman had ever been the worse for any man of his. He had preached on this point month after month, and practised what he preached, and now his pride was sorely hurt.

Moreover, he drew great offence to the Indians themselves: but on this score the cacique soon comforted him, telling him that the girls, as far as he could find, had gone off of their own free will; intimating that he thought it somewhat an honour to the tribe that they had found favour in the eyes of the bearded men, and moreover, that late wars had so thinned the ranks of their men, that they were glad enough to find husbands for their maidens, and had been driven of late years to kill many of their female infants. This sad story, common perhaps to every American tribe, and one of the chief causes of their extermination, reassured Amyas somewhat: but he could not stomach either the loss of his men, or their breach of discipline; and look for them he would. Did any one know where they were? If the tribe knew, they did not care to tell: but Ayacanora, the moment she found out his wishes, vanished into the forest, and returned in two days, saying that she had found the fugitives, but she would not show him where they were, unless he promised not to kill them. He, of course, had no grand far so rigorous a method: he both needed the men, and he had no malice against them,—for

the one, Ebsworth, was a plain, honest, happy-go-lucky sailor, and as good a hand as there was in the crew, and the other was that same in-do-weel Will Parracombe, his old schoolfellow, who had been tempted by the gipsy-Jesuit at Appledore, and resisting that bait, had made a very fair seaman.

So forth Amyas went, with Ayacanora as a guide, some five miles upward along the forest slopes, till the girl whispered, 'There they are'; and Amyas, pushing himself gently through a thicket of bamboo, beheld a scene which, in spite of his wrath, kept him silent, and perhaps softened, for a minute.

On the farther side of a little lawn, the stream leapt through a chasm beneath overarching vines, sprinkling eternal freshness upon all around, and then sank foaming into a clear rock-basin, a bath for Dian's self. On its farther side, the crag rose some twenty feet in height, bank upon bank of feathered ferns and cushioned moss, over the rich green beds of which drooped a thousand orchids, scarlet, white, and orange, and made the still pool gorgeous with the reflection of their gorgeousness. At its more quiet outfall, it was half-hidden in huge fantastic leaves and tall flowering stems, but near the waterfall the grassy bank sloped down toward the stream, and there, on palm-leaves strewn upon the turf, beneath the shadow of the crag, lay the two men whom Amyas sought, and whom, now he had found them, he had hardly heart to wake from their delicious dream.

For what a nest it was which they had found! the air was heavy with the scent of flowers, and quivering with the murmur of the stream, the humming of the colibris and insects, the cheerful song of birds, the gentle cooing of a hundred doves, while now and then, from far away, the musical wail of the sloth, or the drip toll of the bell bird, came softly to the ear. What was not there which eye or ear could need? And what which palate could need other? For on the rock above, some strange tree, leaning forward, dropped every now and then a luscious apple upon the grass below, and huge wild plantains bent beneath their load of fruit.

There, on the stream bank, lay the two renegades from civilized life. They had cast away their clothes, and painted themselves, like the Indians, with arnotto and indigo. One lay lazily picking up the fruit which fell close to his side, the other sat, his back against a cushion of soft moss, his hands folded languidly upon his lap, giving himself up to the soft influence of the narcotic coca-juce, with half-shut dreamy eyes fixed on the everlasting sparkle of the waterfall—

'While beauty, born of murmuring sound,
Did pass into his face.'

Somewhat apart crouched their two dusky brides, crowned with fragrant flowers, but working busily, like true women, for the lords whom they delighted to honour. One sat

plaiting palm fibres into a basket, the other was boring the stem of a huge milk-tree, which rose like some mighty column on the right hand of the lawn, its broad canopy of leaves unseen through the dense underwood of laurel and bamboo, and betokened only by the rustle far aloft, and by the mellow shade in which it bathed the whole delicious scene.

Amyas stood silent for a while, partly from noble shame at seeing two Christian men thus fallen of their own self-will, partly because—and he could not but confess that—a solemn calm brooded above that glorious place, to break through which seemed sacrilege even while he felt it a duty. Such, he thought, was Paradise of old, such our first parents' bridal bower. Ah! if man had not fallen, he too might have dwelt for ever in such a home—with whom? He started, and shaking off the spell, advanced sword in hand.

The women saw him, and springing to their feet, caught up their long ponuas, and leapt like deer each in front of her beloved. There they stood, the dually tules pressed to their lips, eyeing him like tigresses who protect their young, while every slender limb quivered, not with terror, but with rage.

Amyas paused, half in admiration, half in prudence, for one rash step was death. But rushing through the canopy, Avacuora sprang to the front, and shrieked to them in Indian. At the sight of the prophetess the women wavered, and Amyas, putting on as gentle a face as he could, stepped forward, assuring them in his best Indian that he would harm no one.

'Elsworthy! Parracombe! Are you grown such savages already, that you have forgotten your captain? Stand up, men, and salute!'

Elsworthy sprang to his feet, obeyed mechanically, and then slipped behind his bride again, as if in shame. The dreamer turned his head languidly, raised his hand to his forehead, and then returned to his contemplation.

Amyas rested the point of his sword on the ground, and his hands upon the hilt, and looked sadly and solemnly upon the pair. Elsworthy broke the silence, half reproachfully, half trying to bluster away the coming storm.

'Well, noble captain, so you've hunted out us poor fellows, and want to drag us back again in a halter, I suppose!'

'I came to look for Christians, and I find heathens, for men, and I find swine. I shall love the heathens to their wilderness, and the swine to their trough. Parracombe!'

'He's too happy to answer you, sir. And why not? What do you want of us? Our two years' vow is out, and we are free men now.'

'Free to become like the beasts that perish? You are the Queen's servants still, and in her name I charge you—'

'Free to be happy,' interrupted the man. 'With the best of wives, the best of food, a warmer bed than a duke's, and a finer garden than an emperor's. As for clothes, why the

plague should a man wear them where he don't need them? As for gold, what's the use of it where Heaven sends everything ready-made to your hands! Harken, Captain Leigh. You've been a good captain to me, and I'll repay you with a bit of sound advice. Give up your gold-hunting, and toiling and moiling after honour and glory, and copy us. Take that fair maid behind you there to wife, patch here with us, and see if you are not happier in one day than ever you were in all your life before.'

'You are drunk, sirrah! William Parracombe! Will you speak to me, or shall I heave you into the stream to sober you?'

'Who calls William Parracombe?' answered a sleepy voice.

'I, fool—your captain.'

'I am not William Parracombe. He is dead long ago of hunger, and labour, and heavy sorrow, and will never see Bileford town any more. He is turned into an Indian now, and he is to sleep, sleep, sleep for a hundred years, till he gets his strength again. Poor fellow—'

'Awake, then, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. A Christianised Englishman, and living thus the life of a beast?'

'Christ shall give thee light?' answered the same unnatural abstracted voice. 'Yes, so the parsons say. And they say too, that He is Lord of heaven and earth. I should have thought His light was as near us here as anywhere, and nearer too, by the look of the place. Look round!' said he, waving a lazy hand, 'and see the works of God, and the place of Paradise, whither poor weary souls go home and rest, after their masters in the wicked world have used them up with labour and sorrow, and made them wade knee-deep in blood—I'm tired of blood, and tired of gold. I'll march no more, I'll fight no more. I'll hunger no more after vanity and vexation of spirit. What shall I get by it? Maybe I shall leave my bones in the wilderness. I can but do that here. Maybe I shall get home with a few pesos, to die an old cripple in some stinking hovel, that a monkey would scorn to lodge in here. You may go on; it'll pay you. You may be a rich man, and a knight, and live in a fine house, and drink good wine, and go to Court, and torment your soul with trying to get more, when you've got too much already, plotting and planning to ramble upon your neighbour's shoulders, as they all did—Sir Richard, and Mr Raleigh, and Chichester, and poor dear old Sir Warham, and all of them that I used to watch when I lived before. They were no happier than I was then; I'll warrant they are no happier now. Go your ways, captain, climb to glory upon some other backs than ours, and leave us here in peace, alone with God and God's woods, and the good wives that God has given us, to play a little like school children. It's long since I've had play hours, and now I'll be a little child once more, with the flowers, and the singing birds, and the silver fishes in the stream, that are at peace, and think no

harm, and want neither clothes, nor money, nor knighthood, nor peerage, but just take what comes, and their heavenly Father feedeth them, and Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these—and will He not much more feed us, that are of more value than many sparrows!’

‘And will you live here, shut out from all Christian ordinances!’

‘Christian ordinances! Adam and Eve had no parsons in Paradise. The Lord was their priest, and the Lord was their shepherd, and He’ll be ours too. But go your ways, sir, and send up Sir John Brimblecombe, and let him marry us here Church fashion (though we have sworn troth to each other before God already), and let him give us the Holy Sacrament once and for all, and then read the funeral service over us, and go his ways, and count us for dead, sir—for dead we are to the wicked worthless world we came out of three years ago. And when the Lord chooses to call us, the little birds will cover us with leaves, as they did the babies in the wood, and fresher flowers will grow out of our graves, sir, than out of yours in that bare Northern churchyard there beyond the weary, weary sea.’

His voice died away to a murmur, and his head sank on his breast.

Amyas stood spell-bound. The effect of the narcotic was all but miraculous in his eyes. The sustained eloquence, the novel richness of diction in one seemingly drowned in sensual sloth, were, in his eyes, the possession of some evil spirit. And yet he could not answer the Evil One. His English heart, full of the divine instinct of duty and public spirit, told him that it must be a lie—but how to prove it a lie? And he stood for full ten minutes searching for an answer, which seemed to fly farther and farther off the more he sought for it.

His eye glanced upon Ayacanora. The two girls were whispering to her smilingly. He saw one of them glance a look toward him, and then say something, which raised a beautiful blush in the maiden’s face. With a playful blow at the speaker, she turned away. Amyas knew instinctively that they were giving her the same advice as Kilsworthy had given to him. Oh, how beautiful she was! Might not the renegades have some reason on their side after all!

He shuddered at the thought—but he could not shake it off. It glided in like some gnuddy snake, and wreathed its coils round all his heart and brain. He drew back to the other side of the lawn, and thought and thought—

Should he ever get home? If he did, might he not get home a beggar! Beggar or rich, he would still have to face his mother, to go through that meeting, to tell that tale, perhaps to hear those reproaches, the forecast of which had weighed on him like a dark thunder-cloud for two weary years; to wipe out which by some desperate deed of glory he had wandered the wilderness, and wandered in vain.

Could he not settle here? He need not be a savage. He and his might Christians, civilise, teach equal law, mercy in war, chivalry to women, found a community which might be hereafter as strong a barrier against the encroachments of the Spaniard, as Manoa itself would have been. Who knew the wealth of the surrounding forests? Even if there were no gold, there were boundless vegetable treasures. What might he not export down the rivers? This might be the nucleus of a great commercial settlement—

And yet, was even that worth while? To settle here only to torment his soul with fresh schemes, fresh ambitions, not to rest, but only to change one labour for another? Was not your dreamer right? Did they not all need rest? What if they each sat down among the flowers, beside an Indian bride? They might live like Christians, while they lived like the birds of heaven—

What a dead silence! He looked up and round, the birds had ceased to chirp, the parrots were hiding behind the leaves, the monkeys were clustered motionless upon the highest twigs, only out of the far depths of the forest, the campanero gave its solemn toll, once, twice, thrice, like a great death-knell rolling down from far cathedral towers. Was it an omen? He looked up hastily at Ayacanora. She was watching him earnestly. Heavens! was she waiting for his decision? Both dropped their eyes. The decision was not to come from them.

‘A rustle! a roar! a shriek! and Amyas lifted his eyes in time to see a huge dark bar shoot from the crag above the dreamer’s head, among the group of girls.

A dull crash, as the group flew asunder, and in the midst, upon the ground, the tawny limbs of one were writhing beneath the fangs of a black jaguar, the rarest and most terrible of the forest kings. Of one? But of which? Was it Ayacanora? And, sword in hand, Amyas rushed madly forward, before he reached the spot those tortured limbs were still.

It was not Ayacanora, for with a shriek which rang through the woods, the wretched dreamer, wakened thus at last, sprang up and felt for his sword. Fool! he had left it in his hammock! Screaming the name of his dead bride, he rushed on the jaguar, as it crouched above its prey, and seizing its head with teeth and nails, worried it, in the ferocity of his madness, like a mastiff dog.

The brute wrenched its head from his grasp, and raised its dreadful paw. Another moment and the husband’s corpse would have lain by the wife’s.

But high in air gleamed Amyas’s blade, down with all the weight of his huge body and strong arm, fell that most trusty steel; the head of the jaguar dropped grinning on its victim’s corpse—

‘And all stood still, who saw him fall,
While men might count a score.’

'O Lord Jesus,' said Amyas to himself, 'Thou hast answered the devil for me! And this is the selfish rest for which I would have bartered the rest which comes by working where Thou hast put me!'

They bore away the lithe corpse into the forest, and buried it under soft moss and virgin mould; and so the fair clay was transfigured into fairer flowers, and the poor, gentle, untought spirit returned to God who gave it.

And then Amyas went sadly and silently back again, and Parracombe walked after him, like one who walks in sleep.

Ebsworthy, sobered by the shock, entreated to come too. But Amyas forbade him gently—

'No, lad, you are forgiven. God forbid that I should judge you or any man! Sir John shall come up and marry you; and then, if it still be your will to stay, the Lord forgive you, if you be wrong, in the meanwhile, we will leave with you all that we can spare. Stay here and pray to God to make you, and me too, wiser men.'

And so Amyas departed. He had come out stern and proud; but he came back again like a little child.

Three days after, Parracombe was dead. Once in camp he seemed unable to eat or move, and having received absolution and communion from good Sir John, faded away without disease or pain, 'babbling of green fields,' and murmuring the name of his lost Indian bride.

Amyas, too, sought ghostly counsel of Sir John, and told him all which had passed through his mind.

'It was indeed a temptation' of Diabolus,' said that simple sage, 'for he is by his very name the divider who sets man against man, and tempts one to care only for oneself, and forget kin and country, and duty and queen. But you have resisted him, Captain Leigh, like a true-horn Englishman, as you always are, and he has fled from you. But that is no reason why we should not flee from him too, and so I think the sooner we are out of this place, and at work again, the better for all our souls.'

To which Amyas most devoutly said, 'Amen!' If Ayacanora were the daughter of ten thousand Indians, he must get out of her way as soon as possible.

The next day he announced his intention to march once more, and to his delight found the men ready enough to move towards the Spanish settlements. One thing they needed gunpowder for their muskets. But that they must make as they went along, that is, if they could get the materials. Charcoal they could procure, enough to set the world on fire, but nitre they had not yet seen, perhaps they should find it among the hills, while as for sulphur, any brave man could get that where there were volcanoes. Who had not heard how one of Cortes' Spaniards, in like need, was lowered in a basket down the smoking crater of Popocatepetl, till he had gathered sulphur

enough to conquer an empire! And what a Spaniard could do an Englishman could do, or they would know the reason why. And if they found none—why, clothyard arrows had done Englishmen's work many a time already, and they could do it again, not to mention those same blow-guns and their arrows of curare poison, which, though they might be useless against Spaniards' armour, were far more valuable than muskets for procuring food, from the simple fact of their silence.

One thing remained to invite their Indian friends to join them. And that was done in due form the next day.

Ayacanora was consulted, of course, and by the Piche, too, who was glad enough to be rid of the rival preacher, and his unpleasantly good news that men need not worship the devil, because there was a good God above them. The maiden sang most melodious assent, the whole tribe echoed it, and all went smoothly enough till the old cacique observed that before starting a compact should be made between the allies as to their share of the booty.

Nothing could be more reasonable; and Amyas asked him to name his terms.

'You take the gold, and we will take the prisoners.'

'And what will you do with them?' asked Amyas, who recollected poor John Oxenham's hapless compact made in like case.

'Eat them,' quoth the cacique innocently enough.

Amyas whistled.

'Humph!' said Cary. 'The old proverb comes true—"the more the merrier, but the fewer the better fare." I think we will do without our red friends for this time.'

Ayacanora, who had been preaching war like a very Boadicea, was much vexed.

'Do you too want to dine off roast Spaniards?' asked Amyas.

She shook her head, and denied the imputation with much disgust.

Amyas was relieved, he had shrunk from joining the thought of so fair a creature, however degraded, with the horrors of cannibalism.

But the cacique was a man of business, and held out staunchly.

'Is it fair?' he asked. 'The white man loves gold, and he gets it. The poor Indian, what use is gold to him? He only wants something to eat, and he must eat his enemies. What else will pay him for going so far through the forests hungry and thirsty? You will get all, and the Omaguas will get nothing.'

The argument was unanswerable, and the next day they started without the Indians, while John Brimblecombe heaved many an honest sigh at leaving them to darkness, the devil, and the holy trumpet.

And Ayacanora?

When their departure was determined, she shut herself up in her hut, and appeared no more. Great was the weeping, howling, and leave-taking on the part of the simple Indians,

and loud the entreaties to come again, bring them a message from Annihvaca's daughter beyond the seas, and help them to recover their lost land of Papainene, but Ayacaurora took no part in them, and Amyas left her, wondering at her absence, but joyful and light-hearted at having escaped the rocks of the Sirens, and being at work once more.

CHAPTER XXV

HOW THEY TOOK THE GOLD TRAIN

'God will relent, and quit thee all thy debts
Who ever more approach, and more accept
Him who imploring merry men for life,
Than who will rigorous chooses death as due,
Which argues over just, and self-displeased
For self-offence, more than for God offended.'
Samson Agonistes.

A fortnight or more has passed in severe toil, but not more severe than they have endured many a time before. Bidding farewell once and for ever to the green ocean of the eastern plains, they have crossed the Cordillera, they have taken a longing glance at the city of Santa Fé, lying in the midst of rich gardens on its lofty mountain plateau, and have seen, as was to be expected, that it was far too large a place for any attempt of theirs. But they have not altogether thrown away their time. Their Indian lad has discovered that a gold train is going down from Santa Fé toward the Magdalena, and they are waiting for it beside the miserable rut which serves for a road, encamped in a forest of oaks which would make them almost fancy themselves back again in Europe, were it not for the tree-ferns which form the undergrowth, and were it not, too, for the deep gorges pouring at their very feet, in which, while their brows are swept by the cool breeze of a temperate zone, they can see far below, dim through their everlasting vapour-bath of rank hot steam, the mighty forms and gorgeous colours of the tropic forest.

They have pitched their camp among the tree-ferns, above a spot where the path winds along a steep hillside, with a sheer cliff below of many a hundred feet. There was a road there once, perhaps, when Cumhuamara was a civilized and cultivated kingdom, but all which Spanish misrule has left of it are a few steps slipping from their places at the bottom of a narrow ditch of mud. It has gone the way of the aqueducts, and bridges, and post-houses, the gardens and the llama-flocks of that strange empire. In the mad search for gold, every art of civilization has fallen to decay, save architecture alone, and that survives only in the splendid cathedrals which have risen upon the ruins of the temples of the Sun, in honour of a milder Pantheon, if, indeed, that can be called a milder one which demands (as we have seen already) human sacrifices, unknown to the gentle nature-worship of the Incas.

And now, the rapid tropic vegetation has reclaimed its old domains, and Amyas and his crew are as utterly alone, within a few miles of an important Spanish settlement, as they would be in the solitudes of the Orinoco or the Amazon.

In the meanwhile, all their attempts to find sulphur and nitro have been unavailing, and they have been forced to depend after all (much to Yeo's disgust) upon their swords and arrows. Be it so. Drake took Nombre de Dios and the gold train there with no better weapons, and they may do as much.

So, having blocked up the road above by felling a large tree across it, they sit there among the flowers chewing coca, in default of food and drink, and meditating among themselves the cause of a mysterious roar, which has been heard nightly in their wake ever since they left the banks of the Meta. Jaguar it is not, nor monkey—it is unlike any sound they know, and why should it follow them? However, they are in the land of wonders, and, moreover, the gold train is far more important than any noise.

At last, up front beneath there was a sharp crack and a loud cry. The crack was neither the snapping of a branch, nor the tapping of a woodpecker, the cry was neither the scream of the parrot, nor the howl of the monkey—

'That was a whip's crack,' said Yeo, 'and a woman's wail. They are close here, lads!'

'A woman's? Do they drive women in their gangs?' asked Amyas.

'Why not, the brutes? There they are, see! Did you see their basnets glitter?'

'Men!' said Amyas in a low voice, 'I trust you all not to shoot till I do.' Then gave them one arrow, out swords, and at them! 'Pass the word along.'

Up they came slowly, and all hearts beat loud at their coming.

First, about twenty soldiers, only one half of whom were on foot, the other half being borne, incredible as it may seem, each in a chair on the back of a single Indian, while those who marched had consigned their heaviest armour and their arquebuses into the hands of attendant slaves, who were each pricked on at will by the pike of the soldier behind them.

'The men are mad to let their ordinance out of their hands.'

'Oh, sir, an Indian will pray to an arquebuse not to shoot him, be sure their artillery is safe enough,' said Yeo.

'Look at the proud villains,' whispered another, 'to make dumb beasts of human creation like that!'

'Ten shot,' counted the business-like Amyas, 'and ten pikes, Will can tackle them up above.'

Last of this troop came some inferior officer, also in his chair, who, as he went slowly up the hill, with his face turned toward the gang which followed, drew every other second the cigar from his lips, to inspire them with those pious ejaculations to the various objects of his worship, divine, human, anatomic, wooden, and textile, which earned for the pious Spaniards of the

sixteenth century the uncharitable imputation of being at once the most fetiché-ridden idolaters, and the most abominable swearers, of all Europeans.

'The blasphemous dog!' said Yeo, fumbling at his bowstring, as if he loathed to send an arrow through him. But Amiyas had hardly laid his finger on the impatient veteran's arm, when another procession followed, which made them forget all else.

A sad and hideous sight it was—yet one too common even then in those remoter districts, where the humane edicts were disregarded, which the prayers of Dominican friars (to their everlasting honour be it spoken) had wrung from the Spanish sovereigns, and which the legislation of that most wise, virtuous, and heroic Inquisitor (paradoxical as the words may seem), Pedro de la Gasea, had carried into effect in Peru,—tittle and tarry alleviations of cruelties and miseries unexampled in the history of Christendom, or perhaps on earth, save in the conquests of Sennacherib and Zinghis-Khan. But on the frontiers, where negroes were imported to endure the toil which was found fatal to the Indian, and all Indian tribes convicted (or suspected) of cannibalism were hunted down for the salvation of their souls and the enslavement of their bodies, such scenes as these were still too common, and, indeed, if we are to judge from Humboldt's impartial account, were not very much amended even at the close of the last century, in those much boasted Jesuit missions in which (as many of them as existed anywhere but on paper) military tyranny was superadded to monastic, and the Gospel preached with fire and sword, almost as shamelessly as by the first Conquistadores.

A line of Indians, Negroes, and Zambos, naked, emaciated, scarred with whips and fetters, and chained together by their left wrists, toiled upwards, panting and perspiring under the burden of a basket held up by a strap which passed across their foreheads. Yeo's sneer was but too just: there were not only old men and youths among them, but women, slender young girls, mothers with children running at their knee, and, at the sight, a low murmur of indignation rose from the ambushed Englishmen, worthy of the free and righteous hearts of those days, when Raleigh could appeal to man and God, on the ground of a common humanity, in behalf of the outraged heathens of the New World, when Englishmen still knew that man was man, and that the instinct of freedom was the righteous voice of God, ere the hapless seventeenth century had brutalised them also, by bestowing on them, amid a hundred other bad legacies, the fatal gift of negro slaves.

But the first forty, so Amiyas counted, bore on their backs a burden which woe all, perhaps, but him and Yeo, forget even the wretches who bore it. Each basket contained a square package of carefully corded hide, the look whereof friend Amiyas knew full well.

'What's in thy, captain?'

'Gold!' And at that magic word all eyes were strained greedily forward, and such a rustle followed, that Amiyas, in the very face of detection, had to whisper—

'Be men, be men, or you will spoil all yet!'

The last twenty, or so, of the Indians bore larger baskets, but more lightly freighted, seemingly with manioc, and maize-bread, and other food for the party, and after them came, with their bearers and attendants, just twenty soldiers more, followed by the officer in charge, who smiled away in his chair, and twirled two huge mustachios, thinking of nothing less than of the English arrows which were itching to be away and through his ribs. The ambush was complete, the only question how and when to begin?

Amiyas had a shrinking, which all will understand, from drawing bow in cool blood on men so utterly unsuspecting and defenceless, even though in the very act of devilish cruelty—for devilish cruelty it was, as three or four drivers, armed with whips, lingered up and down the slowly-staggering file of Indians, and availed every moment's lagging, even every stumble, by a blow of the cruel manati hide, which cracked like a pistol-shot against the naked limbs of the silent and uncomplaining victim.

Suddenly the *carnes brili*, as usually happens, arose of its own accord.

The last but one of the chained line was an old gray-headed man, followed by a slender graceful girl of some eighteen years old, and Amiyas's heart warmed over them as they came up. Just as they passed, the foremost of the file had rounded the corner above, there was a bustle, and a voice shouted, 'Halt, Señors! there is a tree across the path!'

'A tree across the path!' followed the officer, with a variety of passionate addresses to the Mother of Heaven, the funds of well-saint Jago of Compostella, and various other personages, while the line of trembling Indians, told to halt above, and driven on by blows below, surged up and down upon the random steps of the Indian road, until the poor old man fell grovelling on his face.

The officer leaped down, and hurried upward, to see what had happened. Of course, he came across the old man.

'Sin pecado concebida! Grandfather of Beelzebub, is this a place to be worshipping your trends?' and he pricked the prostrate wretch with the point of his sword.

The old man tried to rise, but the weight on his head was too much for him, he fell again and lay motionless.

The driver applied the manati hide across his loins, once, twice, with fearful force, but even that specific was useless.

'Gracioso, Señor Captain,' said he, with a shrug. 'Used up. He has been failing these three months!'

'What does the intendant mean by sending me out with worn-out cattle like these? Forward there!' shouted he. 'Clear away the tree,

Señora, and I'll soon clear the chain. Hold it up, Pedrillo!

The driver held up the chain, which was fastened to the old man's wrist. The officer stepped back, and flourished round his head a Toledo blade, whose beauty made Amyas break the Tenth Commandment on the spot.

The man was a tall, handsome, broad-shouldered, high-bred man: and Amyas thought that he was going to display the strength of his arm, and the temper of his blade, in severing the chain at one stroke.

Even he was not prepared for the recondita fauces of a Spanish adventurer, worthy son or nephew of those first conquerors, who used to try the keenness of their swords upon the living bodies of Indians, and regale themselves at meals with the odour of roasting caciques.

The blade gleamed in the air, once, twice, and fell not on the chain, but on the wrist which it fettered. There was a shriek—a crimson flash—and the chain and its prisoner were parted indeed.

One moment more, and Amyas's arrow would have been through the throat of the murderer, who paused, regarding his workmanship with a satisfied smile, but vengeance was not to come from him.

Quick and fierce as a tiger-cat the girl sprang on the ruffian, and with the intense strength of passion, clasped him in her arms, and leaped with him from the narrow ledge into the abyss below.

There was a rush, a shout, all faces were bent over the precipice. The girl lunged by her chained wrist the officer was gone. There was a moment's awful silence, and then Amyas heard his body crashing through the tree-tops far below.

'Haul her up! Hew her in pieces! Burn the witch!' and the driver, seizing the chain, pulled at it with all his might, while all springing from their chairs, stooped over the brink.

Now was the time for Amyas! Heaven had delivered them into his hands. Swift and sure, at ten yards off, his arrow rushed through the body of the driver, and then, with a roar as of the leaping lion, he sprang like an avenging angel into the midst of the astonished ruffians.

His first thought was for the girl. In a moment, by sheer strength, he had jerked her safely up into the road; while the Spaniards recoiled right and left, fancying him for the moment some mountain giant or supernatural foe. His hurrah undid them in an instant, and a cry of 'English! Lutheran dogs!' arose, but arose too late. The men of Devon had followed their captain's lead: a storm of arrows left five Spaniards dead, and a dozen more wounded, and down leapt Salvation Yeo, his white hair streaming behind him, with twenty good swords more, and the work of death began.

The Spaniards fought like lions, but they had no time to fix their arquebuses on the crutches; no room, in that narrow path, to use their pikes. The English had the wall of them,

and to have the wall there, was to have the foe's life at their mercy. Five desperate minutes, and not a living Spaniard stood upon those steps, and certainly no living one lay in the green abyss below. Two only, who were behind the rest, happening to be in full armour, escaped without mortal wound, and fled down the hill again.

'After them! Michael Evans and Simon Heard, and catch them, if they run a league.'

The two long and lean Clovelly men, active as deer from forest training, ran two feet for the Spaniards' one; and in ten minutes returned, having done their work; while Amyas and his men hurried past the Indians, to help Gary and the party forward, when shouts and musket shots announced a sharp affray.

Their arrival settled the matter. All the Spaniards fell but three or four, who scrambled down the crannies of the cliff.

'Let not one of them escape! Slay them as Israel slew Amalek!' cried Yeo, as he bent over, and ere the wretches could reach a place of shelter, an arrow was quivering in each body, as it rolled lifeless down the rocks.

'Now then! Loose the Indians!'

They found armourers' tools on one of the lead bodies, and it was done.

'We are your friends,' said Amyas. 'All we ask is, that you shall help us to carry this gold down to the Magdalena, and then you are free.'

Some few of the younger grovelled at his knees, and kissed his feet, hailing him as the child of the Sun, but the most part kept a stolid indifference, and when freed from their fetters, sat quietly down where they stood, staring into vacancy. The iron had entered too deeply into their soul. They seemed past hope, enjoyment, even understanding.

But the young girl, who was last of all in the line, as soon as she was loosed, sprang to her father's body, speaking no word, lifted it in her thin arms, laid it across her knees, kissed the fallen lips, stroked the furrowed cheeks, murmured inarticulate sounds like the cooing of a woodland dove, of which none knew the meaning but she, and he who heard not, for his soul had long since fled. Suddenly the truth flashed on her, silent as ever, she drew one long heaving breath, and rose erect, the body in her arms.

Another moment, and she had leaped into the abyss.

They watched her dark and slender limbs, twined closely round the old man's corpse, turn over, and over, and over, till a crash among the leaves, and a scream among the birds, told that she had reached the trees, and the green roof hid her from their view.

'Brave lass!' shouted a sailor.

'The Lord forgive her!' said Yeo. 'But, your worship, we must have these rascals' ordnance.'

'And their clothes too, Yeo, if we wish to get down the Magdalena unchallenged. Now listen, my masters all! We have won, by God's good grace, gold enough to serve us the rest of our

lives, and that without losing a single man; and may yet win more, if we be wise, and He thinks good. But oh, my friends, remember Mr Oxenham and his crew, and do not make God's gift our ruin, by faithlessness, or greediness, or any mutinous haste.

'You shall find none in us!' cried several men. 'We know your worship. We can trust our general.'

'Thank God,' said Amyas. 'Now then, it will be no shame or sin to make the Indians carry it, saving the women, whom God forbid we should burden. But we must pass through the very heart of the Spanish settlements, and by the town of Saint Martha itself. So the clothes and weapons of these Spaniards we must have. It cost us that labour it may. How many lie in the road?'

'Thirteen here, and about ten up above,' said Cary.

'Then there are near twenty missing. Who will volunteer to go down over cliff, and bring up the spoil of them?'

'I, and I, and I,' and a dozen stepped out, as they did always when Amyas wanted anything done, for the simple reason, that they knew that he meant to help at the doing of it himself.

'Very well, then, follow me. Sir John, take the Indian lad for your interpreter, and try and comfort the souls of these poor heathens. Tell them that they shall all be free.'

'Why, who is that comes up the road?'

All eyes were turned in the direction of which he spoke. And, wonder of wonders! up came none other than Ayacanora herself, blow-gun in hand, bow on back, and bedecked in all her feather garments, which last were rather the worse for a fortnight's woodland travel.

All stood mute with astonishment, as, seeing Amyas, she uttered a cry of joy, quickened her pace into a run, and at last fell panting and exhausted at his feet.

'I have found you!' she said, 'you ran away from me, but you could not escape me!' And she fawned round Amyas, like a dog, who has found his master, and then sat down on the bank, and burst into wild sobs.

'God help us!' said Amyas, clenching his hair, as he looked down upon the beautiful weeper. 'What am I to do with her, over and above all these poor heathens?'

But there was no time to be lost, and over the cliff he scrambled, while the girl, seeing that the main body of the English remained, sat down on a point of rock to watch him.

After half an hour's hard work, the weapons, clothes, and armour of the fallen Spaniards were hauled up the cliff, and distributed in bundles among the men, the rest of the corpses were thrown over the precipice, and they started again upon their road toward the Magdalena, while Yeo snorted like a war-horse who smells the battle, at the delight of once more handling powder and ball.

'We can face the world now, sir! Why not go back and try Santa Fé, after all?'

W. H.

But Amyas thought that enough was as good as a feast, and they held on downwards, while the slaves followed, without a sign of gratitude, but meekly obedient to their new masters, and testifying now and then, by a sign or a grunt, their surprise at not being beaten, or made to carry their captors. Some, however, caught sight of the little calabashes of coca which the English carried. That woke them from their torpor, and they began coaxing abjectly (and not in vain) for a taste of that miraculous herb, which would not only make food unnecessary, and enable their panting lungs to endure that keen mountain air, but would rid them, for a while at least, of the fallen Indian's most unpropitious foe, the malady of thought.

As the cavalcade turned the corner of the mountain, they paused for one last look at the scene of that fearful triumph. Lines of vultures were already straining out of infinite space, as if created suddenly for the occasion. A few hours and there would be no trace of that fierce fray but a few white bones amid untrodden beds of flowers.

And now Amyas had time to ask Ayacanora the meaning of this her strange appearance. He wished her anywhere but where she was; but now that she was here, what heart could be so hard as not to take pity on the poor wild thing? And Amyas as he spoke to her had, perhaps, a tenderness in his tone, from very fear of hurting her, which he had never used before. Passionately she told him how she had followed on their track day and night, and had every evening made sounds, as loud as she dared, in hopes of their hearing her, and either waiting for her, or coming back to see what caused the noise.

Amyas now recollected the strange roaring which had followed them.

'Noises? What did you make then with?'

Ayacanora lifted her finger with an air of most self-satisfied mystery, and then drew cautiously from under her feather cloak an object at which Amyas had hard work to keep his countenance.

'Look!' whispered she, as if half afraid that the thing itself should hear her. 'I have it—the holy trumpet!'

There it was verily, that mysterious bone of contention, a handsome earthen tube some two feet long, neatly glazed, and painted with quaint grecques and figures of animals, a relic evidently of some civilisation now extinct.

Brimblecombe rubbed his little fat hands. 'Brave man! you have cheated Satan this time,' quoth he, while Yeo advised that the 'idolrous relic' should be forthwith 'hove over cliff.'

'Let be,' said Amyas. 'What is the meaning of this, Ayacanora? And why have you followed us?'

She told a long story, from which Amyas picked up, as far as he could understand her, that that trumpet had been for years the torment of her life; the one thing in the tribe superior

to her; the one thing which she was not allowed to see, because, forsooth, she was a woman. So she determined to show them that a woman was as good as a man, and hence her hatred of marriage, and her Anuvomau exploits. But still the Paache would not show her that trumpet, or tell her where it was and as for going to seek it, even she feared the superstitious wrath of the tribe at such a profanation. But the day after the English went, the Paache chose to express his joy at their departure, whereon, as was to be expected, a fresh explosion between master and pupil, which ended, she confessed, in her burning the old roguish hut over his head, from which he escaped with loss of all his conjuring-tackle, and fled raging into the woods, vowing that he would carry off the trumpet to the neighbouring tribe. Whereon, by a sudden impulse, the young lady took plenty of coca, her weapons, and her feathers, started on his trail, and ran him to earth just as he was unveiling the precious mystery. At which sight (she confessed) she was horribly afraid, and half inclined to run but, gathering courage from the thought that the white men used to laugh at the whole matter, she rushed upon the hapless conjuror, and bore off her prize in triumph, and there it was!

'I hope you have not killed him?' said Anyas.

'I did beat him a little, but I thought you would not let me kill him.'

Anyas was half amused with her confession of his authority over her but she went on—

'And then I dare not go back to the Indians, so I was forced to come after you.'

'And is that, then, your only reason for coming after us?' asked stupid Anyas.

He had touched some secret chord—though what it was he was too busy to inquire. The girl drew herself up proudly, blushing scarlet, and said—

'You never tell lies. Do you think that I would tell lies?'

On which she fell to the rear, and followed them steadfastly, speaking to no one, but evidently determined to follow them to the world's end.

They soon left the high road, and for several days held on downwards, hewing their path slowly and painfully through the thick under-wood. On the evening of the fourth day, they had reached the margin of a river, at a point where it stemed broad and still enough for navigation. For those three days they had not seen a trace of human beings, and the spot seemed lonely enough for them to encamp without fear of discovery, and begin the making of their canoes. They began to spread themselves along the stream, in search of the soft-wooded trees proper for their purpose; but hardly had their search begun, when, in the midst of a dense thicket, they came upon a sight which filled them with astonishment. Beneath a honeycombed cliff, which supported one enormous cotton tree, was a spot of some thirty

yards square sloping down to the stream, planted in rows with magnificent banana plants, full twelve feet high, and bearing among their huge waxy leaves clusters of ripening fruit; while, under their mellow shade, yams and cassava plants were flourishing luxuriantly, the whole being surrounded by a hedge of orange and scarlet flowers. There it lay, streaked with long shadows from the setting sun, while a cool southern air rustled in the cotton-tree, and flapped to and fro the great banana-leaves; a tiny paradise of art and care. But where was its inhabitant?

Aroused by the noise of their approach, a figure issued from a cave in the rocks, and after gazing at them for a moment, came down the garden towards them. He was a tall and stately old man, whose snow-white beard and hair covered his chest and shoulders, while his lower limbs were wrapped in Indian-web. Slowly and solemnly he approached, a staff in one hand, a string of beads in the other, the living likeness of some old Hebrew prophet, or anchorite of ancient legend. He bowed courteously to Anyas (who of course returned his salute), and was in act to speak, when his eye fell upon the Indians, who were laying down their burdens in a heap under the trees. His mild countenance assumed instantly an expression of the acutest sorrow and displeasure, and, striking his hands together, he spoke in Spanish—

'*Alas! miserable me! Alas! unhappy Señors!* Do my old eyes deceive me, and is it one of those evil visions of the past which haunt my dreams by night or has the accursed thirst of gold, the ruin of my race, penetrated even into this my solitude? Oh, Señors, Señors, know you not that you live with you your own poison, your own familiar fiend, the root of every evil? And is it not enough for you, Señors, to load yourselves with the wedge of Achan, and partake his doom, but you must make these hapless heathens the victims of your greed and cruelty, and forestall for them on earth those torments which may await their unpitied souls here after?'

'We have preserved, and not enslaved these Indians, ancient Señor,' said Anyas proudly. 'and to-morrow will see them as free as the birds over our heads.'

'Free? Then you cannot be countrymen of mine! But pardon an old man, my son, if he has spoken too hastily in the bitterness of his own experience. But who and whence are you? And why are you bringing into this lonely wilderness that gold—for I know too well the shape of those accursed packets, which would God that I had never seen!'

'What we are, reverend sir, matters little, as long as we behave to you as the young should to the old. As for our gold, it will be a curse or a blessing to us, I conceive, just as we use it well or ill; and so is a man's head, or his hand, or any other thing; but that is no reason for cutting off his limbs for fear of doing harm with them, neither is it for throwing away those

packages, which, by your leave, we shall deposit in one of these caves. We must be your neighbours, I fear, for a day or two; but I can promise you that your garden shall be respected, on condition that you do not inform any human soul of our being here.

'God forbid, Señor, that I should try to increase the number of my visitors, much less to bring hither strife and blood, of which I have seen too much already. As you have come in peace, in peace depart. Leave me alone with God and my penitence, and may the Lord have mercy on you!'

And he was about to withdraw, when, recollecting himself, he turned suddenly to Amayas again—

'Pardón me, Señor, if, after forty years of utter solitude, I shrink at first from the conversation of human beings, and forget, in the habitual shyness of a recluse, the duties of a hospitable gentleman of Spain. My garden, and all which it produces, is at your service. Only let me entreat that these poor Indians shall have their share, for heathens though they be, Christ died for them, and I cannot but cherish in my soul some secret hope that He did not die in vain.'

'God forbid!' said Brimblecombe. 'They are no worse than we, for aught I see, whatsoever their fathers may have been, and they have earned no worse than we since they have been with us, nor will I promise you.'

The good fellow did not tell that he had been starving himself for the last three days to cram his children with his own rations, and that the sailors, and even Amayas, had been going out of their way every five minutes, to get fruit for their new pets.

A camp was soon formed, and that evening the old hermit asked Amayas, Cary, and Brimblecombe to come up into his cavern.

They went, and after the accustomed compliments had passed, sat down on mats upon the ground, while the old man stood, leaning against a slab of stone surmounted by a rude wooden cross, which evidently served him as a place of prayer. He seemed restless and anxious, as if he waited for them to begin the conversation, while they, in their turn, waited for him. At last, when courtesy would not allow him to be silent any longer, he began with a faltering voice—

'You may be equally surprised, Señors, at my presence in such a spot, and at my asking you to become my guests even for one evening, while I have no better hospitality to offer you.'

'It is superfluous, Señor, to offer us food in your own habitation when you have already put all that you possess at our command.'

'True, Señors: and my motive for inviting you was, perhaps, somewhat of a selfish one. I am possessed by a longing to unburthen my heart of a tale which I never yet told to man; and which I fear can give to you nothing but pain, and yet I will entreat you, of your courtesy, to hear of that which you cannot amend, simply

in mercy to a man who feels that he must confess to some one, or die as miserable as he has lived. And I believe my confidence will not be misplaced, when it is bestowed upon you. I have been a cavalier, even as you are, and, strange as it may seem, that which I have to tell I would sooner impart to the ears of a soldier than of a priest; because it will then sink into souls which can at least sympathise, though they cannot absolve. And you, cavaliers, I perceive to be noble, from your very looks, to be valiant, by your mere presence in this hostile land, and to be gentle, courteous, and prudent, by your conduct this day to me and to your captives. Will you, then, hear an old man's tale? I am, as you see, full of words, for speech, from long disuse, is difficult to me, and I fear at every sentence lest my stiffened tongue should play the traitor to my worn-out brain; but if my request seems impertinent, you have only to bid me talk as a host should, of matters which concern his guests, and not himself.'

The three young men, equally surprised and interested by this exordium, could only entreat their host to 'use their ears as those of his slaves,' on which, after fresh apologies, he began—

'Know, then, victorious cavaliers, that I, whom you now see here as a poor hermit, was formerly one of the foremost of that terrible band who went with Pizarro to the conquest of Peru. Eighty years old am I this day, unless the calendar which I have carved upon yonder tree deceives me, and twenty years old was I when I sailed with that fierce man from Panama, to do that deed with which all earth, and heaven, and hell itself, I fear, has rung. How we endured, suffered, and triumphed, how, mad with success, and glutted with blood, we turned our swords against each other, I need not tell to you. For what gentleman of Europe knows not our glory and our shame?'

His hearers bowed assent.

'Yes, you have heard of our prowess: for glorious we were awhile, in the sight of God and man. But I will not speak of our glory, for it is tarnished, nor of our wealth, for it was our poison, nor of the sins of my comrades, for they have expiated them, but of my own sins, Señors, which are more in number than the hairs of my head, and a burden too great to bear. *Miserece Domine!*'

• And smiting on his breast, the old warrior went on—

'As I said, we were mad with blood, and none more mad than I. Surely it is no fable that men are possessed, even in this latter age, by devils. Why else did I rejoice in slaying? Why else was I, the son of a noble and truthful cavalier of Castile, among the foremost to urge upon my general the murder of the Inca? Why did I rejoice over his dying agonies? Why, when Don Fernando de Soto returned, and upbraided us with our villainy, did I, instead of confessing the sin which that noble cavalier set

before us, withstand him to his face, ay, and would have drawn the sword on him, but that he refused to fight a liar, as he said that I was!

'Theft! Don de Soto was against the murder? So his own grandson told me! But I had heard of him only as a tyrant and a butcher.'

'Señor, he was compact of good and evil, as are other men—he has paid dearly for his sin, let us hope that he has been paid in turn for his righteousness.'

John Brimblecombe shook his head at this doctrine, but did not speak.

'So you know his grandson? I trust he is a noble cavalier!'

Amyas was silent, the old gentleman saw that he had touched some sore point, and continued—

'And why, again, Señors, did I after that day give myself up to cruelty as to a sport, yea, thought that I did God service by destroying the creatures whom He had made, I who now dare not destroy a goat, lest I harm a being more righteous than myself? Was I mad? If I was, how then was I all that while as prudent as I am this day? But I am not here to argue, Señors, but to confess. In a word, there was no deed of blood done for the next few years in which I had not my share, if it were but within my reach. When Chalkuchma was burned, I was consenting, when that fair girl, the wife of Luca Manco, was tortured to death, I smiled at the agonies at which she too smiled, and taunted on the soldiers, to try if I could wring one groan from her before she died. You know what followed, the pillage, the violence, the indignities offered to the virgins of the Sun. Señors, I will not pollute your chaste ears with what was done. But, Señors, I had a brother.'

And the old man paused a while.

'A brother—whether better or worse than me, God knows, before whom he has appeared ere now. At least he did not, as I did, end as a rebel to his king! There was a maiden in one of those convents, Señors, more beautiful than day and (I blush to tell it) the two brothers of whom I spoke quarrelled for the possession of her. They struck each other, Señors! Who struck first I know not; but swords were drawn, and—The cavaliers round parted them, crying shame. And one of those two brothers—the one who speaks to you now—crying, "If I cannot have her, no man shall!" turned the sword which was aimed at his brother, against that hapless maiden—and—hear me out, Señors, before you flee from my presence as from that of a monster!—stabbed her to the heart. And as she died—one moment before, Señors, that I may confess all!—she looked up in my face with a smile as of heaven, and thanked me for having rid her once and for all from Christians and their villainy.'

The old man paused.

'God forgive you, Señor!' said Jack Brimblecombe softly.

'You do not, then, turn from me? Do not curse me? Then I will try you farther still, Señors. I will know from human lips whether

man can do such deeds as I have done, and yet be pardoned by his kind, that so I may have some hope, that where man has mercy, God may have mercy also. Do you think that I repented at those awful words? Nothing less, Señors all. No more than I did when Do Soto (on whose soul God have mercy) called me—mo, a liar! I knew myself a sinner, and for that very reason I was determined to sin. I would go on, that I might prove myself right to myself, by showing that I could go on, and not be struck dead from heaven. Out of mere pride, Señors, and self-will, I would fill up the cup of my iniquity; and I filled it.

'You know, doubtless, Señors, how, after the death of old Almagro, his son's party conspired against Pizarro. Now my brother remained faithful to his old commander, and for that very reason, if you will believe it, did I join the opposite party and gave myself up, body and soul, to do Almagro's work. It was enough for me, that the brother who had struck me thought a man right, for me to think that man a devil. What Almagro's work was, you know. He slew Pizarro. Murdered him, Señors, like a dog, or rather, like an old lion.'

'He deserved his doom,' said Amyas.

'Let God judge him, Señor, not we; and least of all of us I, who drew the first blood, and perhaps the last, that day. I, Señors, it was who treacherously stabbed Francisco de Chancas on the staircase, and so opened the door which else had foiled us all, and I—but I am speaking to men of honour, not to butchers. Suffice it that the old man died like a lion, and that we pulled him down, young as we were, like curs.'

'Well, I followed Almagro's fortunes. I helped to slay Alvarado. Call that my third murder, if you will, for if he was traitor to a traitor, I was traitor to a true man. Then to the war, you know how Vacaile Castro was sent from Spain to bring order and justice where was nought but chaos, and the dance of all devils. We met him on the hills of Chupas. Peter of Candia, the Venetian villain, pointed our guns false, and Almagro stabbed him to the heart. We charged with our lances, man against man, horse against horse. All fights I ever fought' (and the old man's eyes flashed out the ancient fire) 'were child's play to that day. Our lances shattered like reeds, and we fell on with battle-axe and mace. None asked for quarter, and none gave it, friend to friend, cousin to cousin—no, nor brother, oh God! to brother. We were the better armed but numbers were on their side. Fat Carbajal charged our cannon like an elephant, and took them, but Holguin was shot down. I was with Almagro, and we swept all before us, such by such, but surely, till the night fell. Then Vaca de Castro, the ecclesiastic, the clerk, the schoolman, the man of books, came down on us with his reserve like a whirlwind. Oh! cavaliers, did not God fight against us, when He let us, the men of iron, the heroes of Cuzco and Vilcaconga, be foiled by a scholar—'

with a pen behind his

car? We were beaten. Some ran; some did not run, Señors; and I did not. Geronimo de Alvarado shouted to me, "We slew Pizarro! We killed the tyrant!" and we rushed upon the conqueror's lances, to die like cavaliers. There was a gallant gentleman in front of me. His lance struck me in the crest, and bore me over my horse's crump, but mine, Señors, struck him full in the vizor. We both went to the ground together, and the battle galloped over us.

"I know not how long I lay, for I was stunned, but after a while I hit myself. My lance was still clenched in my hand, broken but not parted. The point of it was in my foeman's brain. I crawled to him, weary and wounded, and saw that he was a noble cavalier. He lay on his back, his arms spread wide. I knew that he was dead, but there came over me the strangest longing to see that dead man's face. Perhaps I knew him. At least I could set my foot upon it, and say, "Vanquished as I am, there lies a foe!" I caught hold of the rivets, and tore his helmet off. The moon shone bright, Señors, as bright as she shines now—the glaring, ghastly, full tale moon, which shows man all the sins which he tries to hide, and by that moonlight, Señors, I beheld the dead man's face. And it was the face of my brother."

"Did you ever guess, most noble cavaliers, what 'Am's curse might be like? Look on me, and know."

"I tore off my armour and fled, as I'm fled—northward ever, till I should reach a land whose name of Spaniard, yes, and the name of Christian, which the Spaniard has caused to be blasphemed from east to west, should never come. I sank fainting, and waked beneath this rock, this tree, forty-four years ago, and I have never left them since, save once to obtain seeds from Indians, who knew not that I was a Spanish conquistador. And may God have mercy on my soul!"

The old man ceased, and his young hearers, deeply affected by his tale, sat silent for a few minutes. Then John Brimblecombe spoke—

"You are old, sir, and I am young, and perhaps it is not my place to counsel you. Moreover, sir, in spite of this strange dress of mine, I am neither more nor less than an English priest, and I suppose you will not be willing to listen to a heretic."

"I have seen Catholics, Señor, commit too many abominations even with the name of God upon their lips, to shrink from a heretic if he speak wisely and well. At least, you are a man, and, after all, my heart yearns more and more, the longer I sit among you, for the speech of beings of my own race. Say what you will, in God's name!"

"I hold, sir," said Jack modestly, "according to holy Scripture, that whosoever repents from his heart, as God knows you seem to have done, is forgiven there and then; and though his sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow, for the sake of Him who died for all."

"Amen! Amen!" said the old man, looking lovingly at his little crucifix. "I hope and pray—his name is Love. I know it now, who better? But, sir, even if He have forgiven me, how can I forgive myself? In honour, sir, I must be just, and sternly just, to myself, even if God be indulgent, as He has been to me, who has left me here in peace for forty years, instead of giving me a prey to the first puma or jaguar which howls round me every night. He has given me time to work out my own salvation, but have I done it? That doubt maddens me at times. When I look upon that crucifix, I float on boundless hope, but if I take my eyes from it for a moment, faith fails, and all is blank, and dark and dreadful, till the devil whispers me to plunge into yon stream, and once and for ever wake to certainty, even though it be in hell."

What was Jack to answer? He himself knew not at first. More was wanted than the mere repetition of free pardon.

"Heretic as I am, sir, you will not believe me when I tell you, as a priest, that God accepts your penitence."

"My heart tells me so already at moments. But how know I that it does not lie?"

"Señor," said Jack, "the best way to punish oneself for doing ill, seems to me to go and do good, and the best way to find out whether God means you well, is to find out whether He will help you to do well. If you have wronged Indians in time past, see whether you cannot right them now. If you can, you are safe. For the Lord will not send the devil's servants to do His work."

The old man held down his head.

"Right the Indians! Alas! what is done, is done."

"Not altogether, Señor," said Amyas, "as long as an Indian remains alive in New Granada."

"Señor, shall I confess my weakness? A voice within me has bid me a hundred times go forth and labour for those oppressed wretches, but I dare not obey. I dare not look them in the face. I should fancy that they knew my story, that the very birds upon the trees would reveal my crime, and bid them turn from me with horror."

"Señor," said Amyas, "these are but the sick fancies of a noble spirit, feeding on itself in solitude. You have but to try to conquer."

"And look now," said Jack, "if you dare not go forth to help the Indians, see now how God has brought the Indians to your own door. Oh, excellent sir—"

"Call me not excellent," said the old man, smiting his breast.

"I do, and shall, sir, while I see in you an excellent repentance, an excellent humility, and an excellent justice," said Jack. "But oh, sir, look upon these forty souls, whom we must leave behind, like sheep which have no shepherd. Could you not teach them to fear God and to love each other, to live like rational men, perhaps to die like Christians? They would

obey you as a dog obeys his master. You might be their king, their father, yea, their pope, if you would.'

'You do not speak like a Lutheran.'

'I am not a Lutheran, but an Englishman. but, Protestant as I am, God knows, I had sooner see these poor souls of your creed than of none.'

'But I am no priest.'

'When they are ready,' said Jack, 'the Lord will send a priest. If you begin the good work, you may trust to Him to finish it.'

'God help me!' said the old warrior.

The talk lasted long into the night, but Amyas was up long before daybreak, felling the trees, and as he and Cary walked back to breakfast, the first thing which they saw was the old man in his garden with four or five Indian children round him, talking smilingly to them.

'The old man's heart is sound still,' said Will. 'No man is lost who still is fond of little children.'

'Ah, Señora!' said the hermit as they came up, 'you see that I have begun already to act upon your advice.'

'And you have begun at the right end,' quoth Amyas, 'if you win the children, you win the mothers.'

'And if you win the mothers,' quoth Will, 'the poor fathers must needs obey their wives, and follow in the wake.'

The old man only sighed. 'The prattle of these little ones softens my hard heart, Señora, with a new pleasure; but it saddens me, when I recollect that there may be children of mine now in the world—children who have never known a father's love—never known aught but a master's threats—'

'God has taken care of these little ones. Trust that He has taken care of yours.'

That day Amyas assembled the Indians, and told them that they must obey the hermit as their king, and settle there as best they could; for if they broke up and wandered away, nothing was left for them but to fall one by one into the hands of the Spaniards. They heard him with their usual melancholy and stupid acquiescence, and went and came as they were bid, like animated machines, but the negroes were of a different temper; and four or five stout fellows gave Amyas to understand that they had been warriors in their own country, and that warriors they would be still; and nothing should keep them from Spaniard-hunting. Amyas saw that the presence of these desperadoes in the new colony would both endanger the authority of the hermit, and bring the Spaniards down upon it in a few weeks; so, making a virtue of necessity, he asked them whether they would go Spaniard-hunting with him.

This was just what the bold Coromantees wished for, they grinned and shouted their delight at serving under so great a warrior, and then set to work most gallantly, getting through more in the day than any ten Indians, and indeed than any two Englishmen.

So went on several days, during which the trees were felled, and the process of digging them out began, while Ayacanora, silent and moody, wandered into the woods all day with her blow-gun, and brought home at evening a load of parrots, monkeys, and curassows; two or three old hands were sent out to hunt likewise, so that, what with the game and the fish of the river, which seemed inexhaustible, and the fruit of the neighbouring palm-trees, there was no lack of food in the camp. But what to do with Ayacanora weighed heavily on the mind of Amyas. He opened his heart on the matter to the old hermit, and asked him whether he would take charge of her. The latter smiled, and shook his head at the notion. 'If your report of her be true, I may as well take in hand to tame a jaguar.' However, he promised to try, and one evening, as they were all standing together before the mouth of the cave, Ayacanora came up smiling with the fruit of her day's sport, and Amyas, thinking this a fit opportunity, began a carefully-prepared harangue to her, which he intended to be altogether soothing, and even pathetic,—to the effect that the maiden, having no parents, was to look upon this good old man as her father; that he would instruct her in the white man's religion (at which promise Yeo, as a good Protestant, winced a good deal), and teach her how to be happy and good, and so forth, and that, in fine, she was to remain there with the hermit.

She heard him quietly, her great dark eyes opening wider and wider, her bosom swelling, her stature seeming to grow taller every moment, as she clenched her weapons firmly in both her hands. Beautiful as she always was, she had never looked so beautiful before, and as Amyas spoke of parting with her, it was like throwing away a lovely toy, but it must be done, for her sake, for his, perhaps for that of all the crew.

The last words had hardly passed his lips, when, with a shriek of mingled scorn, rage, and fear, she dashed through the astonished group.

'Stop her!' were Amyas's first words, but his next were, 'Let her go!' for, springing like a deer through the little garden, and over the flower-fence, she turned, menaung with her blow-gun the sailors, who had already started in her pursuit.

'Let her alone, for Heaven's sake!' shouted Amyas, who, he scarce knew why, shrank from the thought of seeing those graceful limbs struggling in the seamen's grasp.

She turned again, and in another minute her gaily plumes had vanished among the dark forest stems, as swiftly as if she had been a passing bird.

All stood thunderstruck at this unexpected end to the conference. At last Amyas spoke—'There's no use in standing here idle, gentlemen. Staring after her won't bring her back. After all, I'm glad she's gone.'

But the tone of his voice belied his words. Now he had lost her, he wanted her back, and perhaps every one present, except he, guessed why.

But Ayacanora did not return; and ten days

more went on in continual toil at the canoes without any news of her from the hunters Amyas, by the bye, had strictly bidden these last not to follow the girl, not even to speak to her, if they came across her in their wanderings. He was shrewd enough to guess that the only way to cure her sulkiness was to out-sulk her, but there was no sign of her presence in any direction; and the canoes being finished at last, the gold, and such provisions as they could collect, were placed on board, and one evening the party prepared for their fresh voyage. They determined to travel as much as possible by night, for fear of discovery, especially in the neighbourhood of the few Spanish settlements which were then scattered along the banks of the main stream. These, however, the negroes knew, so that there was no fear of coming on them unawares, and as for falling asleep in their night journeys, 'Nobody,' the negroes said, 'ever slept on the Magdalena; the mosquitoes took too good care of that.' Which fact Amyas and his crew verified afterwards as thoroughly as wretched men could do.

The sun had sunk, the night had all but fallen, the men were all on board, Amyas in command of one canoe, Cary of the other. The Indians were grouped on the bank, watching the party with their listless stare, and with them the young guide, who preferred remaining among the Indians, and was wide supremely happy by the present of a Spanish sword and an English axe, while, in the midst, the old hermit, with tears in his eyes, prayed God's blessing on them.

'I owe to you, noble cavaliers, new peace, new labour, I may say, new life. My God be with you, and teach you to use your gold and your swords better than I used mine.'

The adventurers waved their hands to him.

'Give way, men,' cried Amyas, and as he spoke the paddles dashed into the water, to a right English hurrah! which sent the birds fluttering from their roosts, and was answered by the yell of a hundred monkeys and the distant roar of the jaguar.

About twenty yards below, a wooded rock, some ten feet high, hung over the stream. The river was not there more than fifteen yards broad, deep near the rock, shallow on the farther side, and Amyas's canoe led the way, within ten feet of the stone.

As he passed, a dark figure leapt from the bushes on the edge, and plunged heavily into the water close to the boat. All started. A jaguar! No, he would not have missed so short a spring. What, then? A human being!

A head rose panting to the surface, and with a few strong strokes, the swimmer had climbed the gunwale. It was Ayacanora!

'Go back!' shouted Amyas. 'Go back, girl!'

She uttered the same wild cry with which she had fled into the forest.

'I will die, then!' and she threw up her arms. Another moment, and she had sunk.

To see her perish before his eyes! who could bear that! Her hands alone were above the

surface. Amyas caught convulsively at her in the darkness, and seized her wrist.

A yell rose from the negroes—a roar from the crew as from a cage of lions. There was a rush and a swirl along the surface of the stream, and 'Caïman! caïman!' shouted twenty voices.

Now, or never, for the strong arm! 'To larboard, men, or over we go!' cried Amyas, and with one huge heave, he lifted the slender body upon the gunwale. Her lower limbs were still in the water, when, within arms' length, rose above the stream a huge muzzle. The lower jaw lay flat, the upper reached as high as Amyas's head. He could see the long fangs gleam white in the moonshine, he could see for one moment, full down the monstrous depths of that great gape, which would have crushed a buffalo. Three inches, and no more, from that soft side, the snout surged up—

There was the gleam of an axe from above, a sharp ringing blow, and the jaws came together with a clash which rang from bank to bank. 'He had missed her!' Swerving beneath the blow, his snout had passed beneath her body and smashed up against the side of the canoe as the striker, overbalanced, fell headlong overboard upon the monster's back.

'Who is it?'

'Yeo!' shouted a dozen.

Man and beast went down together, and where they sank, the moonlight shone on a great swirling eddy, while all held their breaths, and Ayacanora cowered down into the bottom of the canoe, her proud spirit utterly broken, for the first time, by the terror of that great need, and by a bitter loss. For in the struggle, the holy trumpet, companion of all her wanderings, had fallen from her bosom, and her soul hope of bringing magic prosperity to her English friends had sunk with it to the bottom of the stream.

None heeded her, not even Amyas, round whose knees she clung, fawning like a spaniel dog for where was Yeo?

Another swirl, a shout from the canoe abreast of them, and Yeo rose, having dived clean under his own boat, and risen between the two.

'Safe as yet, lads! Heave me a line or he'll have me after all!'

But ere the boats reappeared, the old man was safe on board.

'The Lord has stood by me,' panted he, as he shot the water from his ears. 'We went down together. I knew the Indian trick, and being uppermost, had my thumbs in his eyes before he could turn, but he carried me down to the very mud. My breath was nigh gone, so I left go, and struck up—but my toes tangled as I rose again, I'll warrant. There the beggar is, looking for me, I declare!'

And, true enough, there was the huge brute swimming round and round, in search of his lost victim. It was too dark to put an arrow into his eye, so they paddled on, while Ayacanora crouched silently at Amyas's feet.

'Yeo!' asked he, in a low voice, 'what shall we do with her?'

'Why ask me, sir!' said the old man, as he had a very good right to ask.

'Because, when one don't know oneself, one had best inquire of one's elders. Besides, you saved her life at the risk of your own, and have a right to a voice in the matter, if any one has, old friend.'

'Then, my dear young captain, if the Lord puts a precious soul under your care, don't you refuse to bear the burden He lays on you.'

Amvas was silent a while, while Aruanora, who was evidently utterly exhausted by the night's adventure, and probably by long wanderings, watchings, and weepings which had gone before it, sank with her head against his knee, fell fast asleep, and breathed as gently as a child.

At last he rose in the canoe, and called Cary alongside.

'Listen to me, gentlemen, and sailors all. You know that we have a maiden on board here, by no choice of our own. Whether she will be a blessing to us, God alone can tell, but she may turn to the greatest curse which has befallen us ever since we came out over bar three years ago. Promise me one thing, or I jett her ashore the next beach, and that is, that you will treat her as if she were your own sister, and make an agreement here and now, that if the maid comes to harm among us, the man that is guilty shall hang for it by the neck till he's dead, even though he be I, Captain Leigh, who speak to you. I'll hang you, as I am a Christian, and I give you free leave to hang me.'

'A very fair bargain,' quoth Cary, 'and I for one will see it kept to. Lads, we'll twine a double strong halter for the Captain as we go down along.'

'I am not jesting, Will.'

'I know it, good old lad,' said Cary, stretching out his own hand to him across the water through the dark darkness, and giving him a hearty shake. 'I know it, and listen, men! So help me God! but I'll be the first to back the Captain in being as good as his word, as I trust he never will need to be.'

'Amen!' said Brimblecombe. 'Amen!' said Yeo, and many an honest voice joined in that honest compact, and kept it too, like men.

CHAPTER XXVI

HOW THEY TOOK THE GREAT GALLFON

'When captains courageous, whom death could not daunt,

Did march to the siege of the city of Gaunt,
They mustered their soldiers by two and by three,
But the foremost in battle was Mary Ambree,
When brave Sir John Major was slain in her sight,
Who was her true lover, her joy and delight,
Because he was murder'd most treacherously.
Then vow'd to avenge him fair Mary Ambree.'

Old Ballad, A.D. 1584

One more glance at the golden tropic sea, and the golden tropic evenings, by the shore of New Granada, in the golden Spanish Main

The bay of Santa Martha is rippling before the land-breeze one sheet of living flame. The mighty forests are sparkling with myriad fire-shock. The lazy mist which lounges round the inner hills shines golden in the sunset rays, and, nineteen thousand feet aloft, the mighty peak of Horqueta leaves the abyss of air, rose-red against the dark-blue vault of heaven. The rosy cone fades to a dull leaden hue, but only for a while. The stars flash out one by one, and Venus, like another moon, tinges the eastern snows with gold, and sheds across the bay a long yellow line of rippling light. Everywhere is glory and richness. What wonder if the earth in that enchanted land be as rich to her inmost depths as she is upon the surface! The heaven, the hills, the sea, are one sparkling garland of jewels—what wonder if the soil be jewelled also! if every watercourse and bank of earth be spangled with emeralds and rubies, with grains of gold and feathered wreaths of native silver!

So thought, in a poetic mood, the Bishop of Cartagena, as he sat in the state cabin of that great galleon, *The City of the True Cross*, and looked pensively out of the window towards the shore. The good man was in a state of holy calm. His stout figure rested on one easy chair, his stout ankles on another, beside a table spread with oranges and limes, guavas and pineapples, and all the fruits of Inl.

An Indian girl, bedizened with scarfs and gold chains, kept off the flies with a fan of feathers, and by him, in a pail of ice from the Horqueta (the gift of some pious Spanish lady, who had 'spent' an Indian or two in bringing down the precious offering), stood more than one flask of virtuous wine of Alcant. But he was not so selfish, good man, as to enjoy either ice or wine alone. Don Pedro, colonel of the soldiers on board, Don Alvarez, Intendant of his Catholic Majesty's Customs at Santa Martha, and Don Paul, captain of mariners in *The City of the True Cross*, had, by his special request, come to his assistance, that evening, and with two friars, who sat at the lower end of the table, were doing their best to prevent the good man from taking too bitterly to heart the present unsatisfactory state of his cathedral town, which had just been sacked and burnt by an old friend of ours, Sir Francis Drake.

'We have been great sufferers, Señors,—ah, great sufferers,' snuffled the bishop, quoting Scripture, after the fashion of the day, glibly enough, but often much too irreverently for me to repeat, so boldly were his texts travestied, and so freely interlarded by grumblings at Tita and the mosquitos. 'Great sufferers, truly, but there shall be a remnant,—ah, a remnant! like the shaking of the olive tree and the gleanings when the vintage is done.—Ah! Gold! Yes, I trust Our Lady's merries are not shut up, nor her arms shortened.—Look, Señors!—and he pointed majestically out of the window. 'It looks gold! it smells of gold, as I may say, by a poetical licence. Yea, the very waves, as they ripple past us, sing of gold, gold, gold!'

'It is a great privilege,' said the intendant, 'to have comfort so gracefully administered at once by a churchman and a scholar.'

'A poet, too,' said Don Pedro. 'You have no notion what sweet sounds—'

'Hush, Don Pedro—hush! If I, a mateless bird, have spent an idle hour in teaching lovers how to sing, why, what of that? I am a churchman, Señors; but I am a man and I can feel, Señors, I can sympathise, I can palliate, I can excuse. Who knows better than I how much human nature lurks in us fallen sons of Adam? Tita!'

'Um?' said the trembling girl, with a true Indian grunt.

'Fill his Excellency the Intendant's glass. Does much more treasure come down illustrious Señor? May the poor of Mary hope for a few more crumbs from their Mistress's table?'

'Not a peso I fear. The big white cow up there'—and he pointed to the Horqueta—'has been milked dry for this year.'

'Ah!' And he looked up at the magnificent snow peak. 'Only good to cool wine with, eh? and us safe for the time being as Solomon's birds.'

'Solomon's birds? Exclaim your recondite allusion, my lord.'

'Enlighten us, your Excellency, enlighten us.' 'Ah! thereby hangs a tale. You know the holy birds who run up and down on the Prado at Seville among the ladies' pretty feet,—eh? with hooked noses and cinnamon crests? Of course. Hoopoes—l'pupa, as the classics have it. Well, Señors, once on a time, the story goes, these hoopoes all had golden crowns on their heads, and, Señors, they took the consequences—eh? But it befell on a day that all the birds and beasts came to do homage at the court of His Most Catholic Majesty King Solomon, and among them came these same hoopoes, and they had a little request to make, the poor rogues. And what do you think it was? Why, that King Solomon would pray for them that they might wear any sort of crowns but these same golden ones, for—listen, Tita, and see the snare of riches—mankind so hunted, and shot, and trapped, and snared them, for the sake of these same golden crowns, that life was a burden to bear. So Solomon prayed, and instead of golden crowns, they all received crowns of feathers; and ever since, Señors, they live as merrily as crickets in an oven, and also have the honour of hearing the name of His Most Catholic Majesty King Solomon. Tita! fill the Señor Commandant's glass. Fray Gerundio, what are you whispering about down there, sir?'

Fray Gerundio had merely commented to his brother on the bishop's story of Solomon's birds with an—

'O sic omnia'—would that all gold would turn to feathers in like wise!'

'Then, friend,' replied the other, a Dominican, like Gerundio, but of a darker and sterner complexion, 'corrupt human nature would within

a week discover some fresh bauble, for which to kill and be killed in vain.'

'What is that, Fray Gerundio?' asked the bishop again.

'I merely remarked, that it were well for the world if all mankind were to put up the same prayer as the hoopoes.'

'World, sir! What do you know about the world? Convert your Indians, sir, if you please, and leave affairs of state to your superiors. You will excuse him, Señors' (turning to the Dons, and speaking in a lower tone). 'A very worthy and pious man, but a poor peasant's son, and beside—you understand. A little wrong here, too much fasting and watching, I fear, good man.' And the bishop touched his forehead knowingly, to signify that Fray Gerundio's wits were in an unsatisfactory state.

The friar heard and saw with a quiet smile. He was one of those excellent men whom the craftiness of his countrymen had spirited up (as the darkness, by mere contrast, makes the light more bright), as they did Las Casas, Gasca, and many another noble name which is written in the book of life, to deeds of love and pious daring worthy of any creed or age. True Protestants, they protested, even before kings, against the evil which lay nearest them, the sin which really beset them, true liberals, they did not disclaim to call the dark-skinned heathen their brothers, and asserted in terms which astonish us, when we recollect the age in which they were spoken, the inherent freedom of every being who wore the flesh and blood which their Lord wore, true martyrs, they bore witness of Christ, and received too often the reward of such plain shouder and contempt. Such a one was Fray Gerundio, a poor man, eh? may tongue-tied peasants see who never could put three sentences together, save when he waxed eloquent, cunning in hand, and some grumpy old Indians or negroes. He was accustomed to such rebuffs as the bishops, he took them for what they were worth, and sipped his wine in silence while the talk went on.

'They say,' observed the commandant, 'that a very small plate fleet will go to Spain this year.'

'What else?' says the intendant. 'What have we to send, in the name of all saints, since these accursed English Lutherans have swept us out clean?'

'And if we had anything to send, says the sea-captain, what have we to send it in? The fiend incarnate, Drake—'

'Ah!' said his holiness, 'spare my ears! Don Pedro, you will oblige my weakness by not mentioning that man,—his name is Tartarean, unfit for polite lips. Dragon—a dragon—serpant—the emblem of Diabolus himself—ah! And the guardian of the golden apples of the West, who would fain devour our new Hercules, His Most Catholic Majesty Decedent Eve, too, with one of those same apples—a very evil name, Señors—a Tartarean name,—Tita!'

'Um?'

'Fill my glass'
'Nay,' cried the colonel, with a great oath, 'this English fellow is of another breed of serpent from that, I warrant.'

'Your reason, Señor, your reason.'
'Because this one would have seen Eve at the bottom of the sea, before he let her, or any one but himself, taste aught which looked like gold.'
'Ah, ah!—very good! But—no length, valiant Señors, while the Church weeps. Alas for my sheep!'

'And alas for their sheepfold! It will be four years before we can get Carthage built again. And as for the blockhouse, when we shall get that rebuilt, Heaven only knows, while His Majesty goes on drumming the Indians for his English Armada. The town is as naked now as an Indian's back.'

'Baptista Antonio, the surveyor, has sent home by me a relation to the king, setting forth our defenceless state. But to read a relation and to act on it are two cocks of very different hackles, bishop, as all statesmen know. Heaven grant we may have orders by the next fleet to fortify, or we shall be at the mercy of every English pirate!'

'Ah, that blockhouse!' sighed the bishop. 'That was indeed a villainous trick. A hundred and ten thousand ducats for the ransom of the town! After having burned and plundered the one half—and having made me dine with them too, ah! and sit between the—the serpent, and his lieutenant-general—and drunk my health in my own private wine—wine that I had from Xeres nine years ago, Señors—and offered, the shameless heretics, to take me to England, if I would turn Lutheran, and find me a wife, and make an honest man of me—ah! and then to demand fresh ransom for the priory and the fort—perfidious!'

'Well,' said the colonel, 'they had the law of us, the cunning rascals, for we forgot to mention anything but the town in the agreement. Who would have dreamed of such a fetch as that?'

'So I told my good friend the prior, when he came to me to borrow the thousand crowns. It was Heaven's will. Unexpected like the thunderbolt, and to be borne as such. Every man must bear his own burden. How could I lend him aught?'

'Your holiness's money had been all carried off by them before,' said the intendant, who knew, and none better, the exact contrary.

'Just so—all my scanty savings' devolved on my lone old age. Ah, Señors, had we not had warning of the coming of these wretches from my dear friend the Marquess of Santa Cruz, whom I remember daily in my prayers, we had been like to them who go down quick into the pit. I too might have saved a trifle, had I been minded but in thinking too much of others, I forgot myself, alas!'

'Warning or none, we had no right to be beguiled by such a handful,' said the sea-captain; 'and a shame it is, and a shame it will be, for many a day to come.'

'Do you mean to cast any slur, sir, upon the courage and conduct of His Catholic Majesty's soldiers?' asked the colonel.

'I?—No; but we were foully beaten, and that behind our barricades too, and there's the plain truth.'

'Beaten, sir! Do you apply such a term to the fortunes of war? What more could our governor have done? Had we not the ways filled with poisoned caltrops, guarded by Indian arches, barred with butts full of earth, raked with culverins and arquebuses? What familiar spirit had we, sir, to tell us that these villains would come along the sea-beach, and not by the high-road, like Christian men?'

'Ah,' said the bishop, 'it was by intuition diabolic, I doubt not, that they took that way. Satan must needs help those who serve him; and for my part, I can only attribute (I would the captain here had piety enough to do so) the misfortune which occurred to art-magic. I believe these men to have been possessed by all fiends whatsoever.'

'Well, your holiness,' said the colonel, 'there may have been devilry in it, how else would men have dared to run right into the mouths of our cannon, fire their shot against our very noses, and tumble harmless over those huge butts of earth?'

'Doubtless by force of the fiends which ragged with them,' interposed the bishop.

'And then, with their blasphemous cries, leap upon us with sword and pike! I myself saw that Lieutenant-General Carlisle hew down with one stroke that noble young gentleman the ensign-bearer, your Excellency's sister's son's nephew, though he was armed cap à pie. Was not art magic here? And that most furious and blaspheming Lutheran Captain Young, I saw how he caught our general by the head, after the illustrious Don Alonso had given him a grievous wound, threw him to the earth, and so took him. Was not art-magic here?'

'Well, I say,' said the captain, 'if you are looking for art-magic, what say you to their marching through the flank fire of our galleys, with cloven pieces of ordnance, and two hundred shot playing on them, as if it had been a mosquito swarm? Some said my men fired too high, but that was the English rascals' doing, for they got down on the tide beach. But, Señor Commandant, though Satan may have taught them that trick, was it he that taught them to carry pikes a foot longer than yours?'

'Ah, well,' said the bishop, 'sacked are we, and Saint Domingo, as I hear, in worse case than we are, and Saint Augustine in Florida likewise; and all that is left for a poor priest like me is to return to Spain, and see whether the pious clemency of his Majesty, and of the universal Father, may not be willing to grant some small relief or bounty to the poor of Mary—perhaps (for who knows!) to translate to a sphere of more peaceful labour one who is now old, Señors, and weary with many toils—Tita! fill our glasses. I have saved somewhat—as

you may have done, Señora, from the general wreck, and for the flock, when I am no more, illustrious Señora, Heaven's mercies are infinite, new cities will rise from the ashes of the old, new mines pour forth their treasures into the sanctified laps of the faithful, and new Indians flock toward the life-giving standard of the Cross, to put on the easy, joke and light burden of the Church, and—

'And where shall I be then? Ah, where? I fain would I rest, and fain depart. Tita! sling my hammock. Señora, you will excuse ago and infirmities. Fray Gerundio, go to bed!'

And the Don rose to depart, while the bishop went on musing—

'Farewell! Life is short. Ah! we shall meet in heaven at last. And there are really no more pearls?'

'Not a frail, nor gold either,' said the intendant.

'Ah, well! Better a dinner of herbs where love is, than—Tita!

'My breviary—ah! Man's gratitude is short-lived, I had hoped—you have seen nothing of the Señora Bovadilla?'

'No!'

'Ah! she promised—but no matter—a little trifle as a keepsake—a gold cross, or an emerald ring, or what not—I forget. And what have I to do with worldly wealth?—Ah! Tita! bring me the casket!'

And when his guests were gone, the old man began mumbling prayers out of his breviary, and fumbling over jewels and gold, with the dull greedy eyes of covetous old age.

'Ah!—it may buy the red hat yet!—*Omnium Bonum venditur*! Put it by, Tita, and do not look at it too much, child. Enter not into temptation. The love of money is the root of all evil, and Heaven, in love for the Indian, has made him poor in this world, that he may be rich in faith. Ah!—Ugh!—No!'

And the old miser clambered into his hammock. Tita drew the mosquito net over him, wrapped another round her own head, and slept, or seemed to sleep, for she coiled herself up upon the floor, and master and slave soon snored a merry bass to the tinkle of the mosquitoes.

It was long past midnight, and the moon was down. The sentinels, who had tramped and challenged overhead till they thought their officers were sound asleep, had slipped out of the unwholesome rays of the planet to seek that health and peace which they considered their right, and slept as soundly as the bishop's self.

Two long lines glided out from behind the isolated rocks of the Morro Grande, which bounded the bay some five hundred yards astern of the galleon. They were almost invisible on the glittering surface of the water, being perfectly white; and, had a sentinel been looking out, he could only have discerned them by the phosphorescent flashes along their sides.

Now the bishop had awoke, and turned himself over uneasily; for the wine was dying out within him, and his shoulders had slipped down,

and his heels up, and his head ached! so he sat upright in his hammock, looked out upon the bay, and called Tita.

'Put another pillow under my head, child! What is that? a fish?'

Tita looked. She did not think it was a fish; but she did not choose to say so, for it might have produced an argument, and she had her reasons for not keeping his holiness awake.

The bishop looked again, settled that it must be a white whale, or shark, or other monster of the deep, crossed himself, prayed for a safe voyage, and snored once more.

Presently the cabin-door opened gently, and the head of the Señor Intendant appeared.

Tita sat up, and then began crawling like a snake along the floor, among the chairs and tables, by the light of the cabin lamp.

'Is he asleep?'

'Yes—but the casket is under his head.'

'Curse him! How shall we take it?'

'I brought him a fresh pillow half an hour ago, I hung his hammock wrong on purpose that he might want one. I thought to slip the box away as I did it—but the old or nursed it in both hands all the while.'

'What shall we do, in the name of all the fiends? She sails to-morrow morning, and then all is lost.'

Tita showed her white teeth, and touched the dagger which hung by the intendant's side.

'I dare not!' said the rascal, with a shudder.

'I dare!' said she. 'He whipt my mother, because she would not give me up to him to be taught in his schools, when she went to the mines. And she went to the mines, and died there in three months! I saw her go, with a chain round her neck, but she never came back again. Yes, I dare kill him! I will kill him! I will!'

The Señor felt his mind much relieved. He had no wish, of course, to commit the murder himself; for he was a good Catholic, and feared the devil. But Tita was an Indian, and her being lost did not matter so much. Indians' souls were cheap, like their bodies. So he answered, 'But we shall be discovered!'

'I will leap out of the window with the casket, and swim ashore. They will never suspect you, and they will fancy I am drowned.'

'The sharks may seize you, Tita. You had better give me the casket!'

Tita smiled. 'You would not like to lose that, eh? though you care little about losing me. And yet you told me that you loved me!'

'And I do love you, Tita! light of my eyes! life of my heart! I swear, by all the saints, I love you. I will marry you, I swear I will—I will swear on the crucifix, if you like!'

'Swear, then, or I do not give you the casket,' said she, holding out the little crucifix round her neck, and devouring him with the wild eyes of passionate unreasoning tropic love.

He swore, trembling, and deadly pale.

'Give me your dagger!'

'No, not mine. It may be found. I shall

be suspected. What if my shoath were seen to be empty?

'Your knife will do. His throat is soft enough.'

And she glided stealthily as a cat toward the hammock, while her cowardly companion stood shivering at the other end of the cabin, and turned his back to her, that he might not see the deed.

He stood waiting, one minute—two—five? Was it an hour, rather? A cold sweat bathed his limbs, the blood beat so fiercely within his temples, that his head rang again. Was that a death-bell tolling? No, it was the pulses of his brain. Impossible, surely, a death-bell. Whence could it come?

There was a struggle—ah! she was about it now, a stifled cry—ah! he had divided that most of all, to hear the old man cry. Would there be much blood? He hoped not. Another struggle, and Tita's voice, apparently muffled, called for help.

'I cannot help you. Mother of Mercies! I dare not help you!' hissed he. 'She devil! you have begun it, and you must finish it yourself!'

A heavy arm from behind clasped his throat. The bishop had broken loose from her and seized him! Or was it his ghost? or a fiend come to drag him down to the pit? And forgetting all but mere wild terror, he opened his lips for a scream, which would have wakened every soul on board. But a handkerchief was thrust into his mouth, and in another minute, he found himself bound hand and foot, and laid upon the table by a gigantic enemy. The cabin was full of armed men, two of whom were kneeling up the bishop in his hammock, two more had seized Tita, and more were clambering up into the stern-gallery beyond, wild figures, with bright blades and armour gleaming in the star light.

'Now, Will,' whispered the giant who had seized him, 'forward and clap the fore hatches on, and shout Fire! with all your might. Guilt-murderers! your life is in my hands. Tell me where the commander sleeps, and I pardon you.'

Tita looked up at the huge speaker, and obeyed in silence. The intendant heard him enter the colonel's cabin, and then a short scuffle, and silence for a moment.

But only for a moment, for already the alarm had been given, and mad confusion reigned through every deck. Amyas (for it was now other) had already gained the poop, the sentinels were gagged and bound, and every half-naked wretch who came trembling up on deck in his shirt by the main hatchway, calling out, 'Fire! another, 'Wreck!' and another, 'Treason!'

Lower away that boat!'

The men, unarmed and naked, could but obey. 'Now then, jump in. Here, hand them to the gangway as they come up.'

It was done; and as each appeared he was kicked to the scuppers, and bundled down over the side.

'She's full. Cast loose now and off with you. If you try to board again we'll sink you.'

'Fire! Fire!' shouted Cary, forward. 'Up the main hatchway for your lives!'

The ruse succeeded, utterly, and before half an hour was over, all the ship's boats which could be lowered were filled with Spaniards in their shirts, getting ashore as best they could.

'Here is a new sort of cannibal,' quoth Cary. 'The last Spanish one I saw was at the sortie from Smerwick but this is somewhat more prosperous than that.'

'Get the main and foremast up, Will!' said Amyas, 'cut the cable, and we will plume the quarry as we fly.'

'Spoken like a good falconer. Heaven grant that this big woodcock may carry a good trail inside!'

'I'll warrant her for that,' said Jack Brimblecombe. 'She floats so low.'

'Much of your build, too, Jack. By the bye, where is the commander?'

'Alas! Don Pedro, forgotten in the bustle, had been lying on the deck in his shirt, helplessly bound, exhausting that part of his vocabulary which related to the unseen world. Which most discourteous act seemed at first likely to be somewhat heavily avenged on Amyas; for as he spoke, a couple of caliver-shots, fired from under the poop, passed 'ping' 'ping' by his ears, and Cary clapped his hand to his side.

'Hurt, Will?'

'A pinch, old lad—look out, or we are "all un-derloren" after all, as the Flemings say.'

And as he spoke, a rush forward on the poop drove two of their best men down the ladder into the waist, where Amyas stood.

'Killed?' asked he, as he picked one up, who had fallen head over heels.

'Sound as a bell, sir, but they Gentika him, got hold of the firearms, and set the captain free.'

And rubbing the back of his head for a minute, he jumped up the ladder again, shouting—

'Have at ye, idolatrous pagans! Have at ye, Satan's spawn!'

Amyas jumped up after him, shouting to all hands to follow, for there was no time to be lost.

Out of the windows of the poop, which looked on the main deck, a galling fire had been opened, and he could not afford to lose men; for, as far as he knew, the Spaniards left on board might still far outnumber the English, so up he sprang on the poop, followed by a dozen men, and there began a very heavy fight between two parties of valiant warriors, who easily knew each other apart by the peculiar fashion of their armour. For the Spaniards fought in their shirts, and in no other garments, but the English in all other manner of garments, tag, rag, and boltail, and yet had never a shirt between them.

The rest of the English made a rush, of course, to get upon the poop, seeing that the Spaniards could not shoot them through the deck, but the fire from the windows was so hot, that although they dodged behind masts, spars, and every possible shelter, one or two dropped, and Jack Brimblecombe and Yeo took on themselves to call a retreat, and with about a dozen men, got back, and held a council of war.

What was to be done? Their arquebuses were of little use, for the Spaniards were behind a strong bulkhead. There were cannon but where was powder or shot? The boats, encouraged by the clamour on deck, were paddling alongside again. Yeo rushed round and round, probing every gun with his sword.

'Here! a patacano loaded! Now for a match, lads.'

Luckily one of the English had kept his match alight during the scuffle.

'Thanks be! Help me to unship the gun—the mast's in the way here.'

The patacano, or brass swivel, was unshipped. 'Steady, lads, and keep it level, or you'll shake out the priming. Ship it here, turn out that one, and heave it into that boat, if they come alongside. Steady now—so! Runnidge about, and find me a bolt or two, a mathinspike, anything. Quick, or the Captain will be overmastered yet.'

Missiles were found—olds and ends—and crammed into the swivel up to the muzzle—and, in another minute, its 'cargo of notions' was crashing into the poop-windows, silencing the fire from thence effectually enough for the time.

'Now, then, a rush forward, and right in along the deck!' shouted Yeo, and the whole party charged through the cabin-doors, which their shot had burst open, and hewed their way from room to room.

In the meanwhile, the Spaniards above had fought fiercely, but, in spite of superior numbers, they had gradually given back before the 'demoniacal possession of those blasphemous heretics, who fought not like men, but like furies from the pit.' And by the time that Brimblecombe and Yeo shouted from the stern-gallery below that the quarter-deck was won, few on either side but had their sword scratch to show.

'Yield, Señor!' shouted Amvas to the commander, who had been fighting like a lion, back to back with the captain of miners.

'Never! You have bound me, and insulted me! Your blood or mine must wipe out the stain!'

And he rushed on Amvas. There was a few moments' heavy fence between them, and then Amvas cut right at his head. But as he raised his arm, the Spaniard's blade slipped along his ribs, and snapped against the point of his shoulder-blade. An inch more to the left, and it would have been through his heart. The blow fell, nevertheless, and the commandant fell with it, stunned by the flat of the sword, but not wounded; for Amvas's hand had turned,

as he winced from his wound. But the sea-captain, seeing Amvas stagger, sprang at him, and, seizing him by the wrist, ere he could raise his sword again, shortened his weapon to run him through. Amvas made a grasp at his wrist in return, but, between his faintness and the darkness, missed it—Another moment, and all would have been over!

A bright blade flashed close past Amvas's ear, the sea-captain's grasp loosened, and he dropped a corpse, while over him, like an angry honeysuckle above her prey, stood Ayacano, her long hair floating in the wind, her dagger raised aloft, as she looked round, challenging all and every one to approach.

'Are you hurt?' panted she.

'A scratch, child—What do you do here? Go back, go back!'

Ayacano slipped back like a scolded child, and vanished in the darkness.

The battle was over. The Spaniards, seeing their commanders fall, laid down their arms, and cried for quarter. It was given, the poor fellows were led together, two and two, and seated in a row on the deck, the commandant, sorely bruised, yielded himself perforce, and the galleon was taken.

Amvas hurried forward to get the sails set. As he went down the poop ladder, there was some one sitting on the lowest step.

'Who is here—wounded?'

'I am not wounded,' said a woman's voice, low, and stilled with sobs.

It was Ayacano. She rose, and let him pass. He saw that her face was bright with tears, but he hurried on, nevertheless.

'Perhaps I did speak a little hastily to her, considering she saved my life, but what a brimstone it is! Mary Ambree in a dark skin! Now then, lads! Get the Santa Fe gold up out of the canons, and then we will put her head to the north-east, and away for Old England. Mr Brimblecombe! don't say that Eastward-ho don't bring luck this time!'

It was impossible, till morning dawned, either to get matters into any order, or to overhaul the prize they had taken, and many of the men were so much exhausted that they fell fast asleep on the deck ere the surgeon had time to dress their wounds. However, Amvas contrived, when once the ship was leaping merrily, close-hauled against a fresh land-breeze, to count his little flock, and found out of the forty-four but six seriously wounded, and none killed. However, their working numbers were now reduced to thirty-eight, beside the four negroes, a scanty crew enough to take home such a ship to England.

After a while, up came Jack Brimblecombe on deck, a bottle in his hand.

'Lads, a prize!'

'Well, we know that already.'

'Nay, but—look hither, and look in ice, too, as I live, the luxurious dogs! But I have so fought for it, I had. For when I went down into the state cabin, after I had seen to the wounded,

whom should I find loose but that Indian lass, who had just unbound the fellow you caught—

'Ah! those two, I believe, were going to murder the old man in the hammock, if we had not come in the nick of time. What have you done with them?'

'Why, the Spaniard ran when he saw me, and got into a cabin; but the woman, instead of running, came at me with a knife, and chased me round the table like a very cat-a-mountain. So I ducked under the old man's hammock, and out into the gallery, and when I thought the coast was clear, back again I came, and stumbled over this. So I just picked it up, and ran on deck with my tail between my legs, for I expected verily to have the black woman's knife between my ribs out of some dark corner.'

'Well done, Jack! Let's have the wine, nevertheless, and then down to set a guard on the cabin-doors for fear of plundering.'

'Better go down, and see that nothing is thrown overboard by Spaniards. As for plundering, I will settle that.'

And Amyas walked forward among the men.

'Mustering the men, boatswain, and count them.'

'All here, sir, but the six poor fellows who are laid forward.'

'Now, my men,' said Amyas, 'for three years you and I have wandered on the face of the earth, seeking our fortune, and we have found it at last, thanks be to God! Now, what was our promise and vow which we made to God beneath the trees of Guayra, if He should grant us good fortune, and bring us home again with a prize? Was it not, that the dead should share with the living, and that every man's portion, if he fell, should go to his widow or his orphans, or if he had none, to his parents?'

'It was, sir,' said Yeo, 'and I trust that the Lord will give these men grace to keep their vow. They have seen enough of His providences by this time to fear Him.'

'I doubt them not, but I remind them of it. The Lord has put into our hands a rich prize, and what with the gold which we have already, we are well paid for all our labours. Let us thank Him with fervent hearts as soon as the sun rises; and in the meanwhile, remember all, that whosoever plunders of his private account, robs not the adventurers merely, but the orphan and the widow, which is to rob God; and makes himself partaker of Achan's curse, who hid the wedge of gold, and brought down God's anger on the whole army of Israel. For me, lest you should think me covetous, I could claim my brother's share, but I held by gave it up freely into the common stock, for the use of the whole ship's crew, who have stood by me through wear and woe, as men never stood before, as I believe, by any captain. So, now to prayers, lads, and then to at our breakfast.'

So, to the Spaniards' surprise (who most of them believed that the English were atheists), to prayers they went.

After which Brimblecombe contrived to inspire the black cook and the Portuguese steward

with such energy that, by seven o'clock, the latter worthy appeared on deck, and with profound reverence, announced to 'The most excellent and heroic Señor Adelantado Captain Englishman,' that breakfast was ready in the state-cabin.

'You will do us the honour of accompanying us as our guest, sir, or our host, if you prefer the title,' said Amyas, to the commandant, who stood by.

'Pardon, Señor; but honour forbids me to eat with one who has offered to me the indelible insult of bonds.'

'Oh!' said Amyas, taking off his hat, 'then pray accept on the part my humble apologies for all which has passed, and my assurances that the indignities which you have unfortunately endured, were owing altogether to the necessities of war, and not to any wish to hurt the feelings of so valiant a soldier and gentleman.'

'It is enough, Señor,' said the commandant, bowing and slinging his shoulders—for, indeed, he too was very hungry; while Cary whispered to Amyas—

'You will make a comelier, yet, old lad.'

'I am not in jesting humour, Will. My mind sadly misgives me that we shall hear black news, and have, perhaps, to do a black deed yet, on board here. Señor, I follow you.'

So they went down, and found the bishop, who was by this time unbound, seated in a corner of the cabin, his hands fallen on his knees, his eyes staring on vacancy, while the two priests stood as close against the wall as they could squeeze themselves, keeping up a ceaseless mutter of prayers.

'Your holiness will breakfast with us, of course, and these two frocked gentlemen like wise. I see no reason for refusing them all hospitality, as yet.'

There was a marked emphasis on the last two words, which made both monks wince.

'Our chaplain will attend to you, gentlemen. His lordship the bishop will do me the honour of sitting next to me.'

The bishop seemed to revive slowly as he sniffed the savoury steam, and at last, rising mechanically, subsided into the chair which Amyas offered him on his left, while the commandant sat on his right.

'A little of this kid, my Lord! No—ah—Friday, I recollect. Some of that turtle-hen, then. Will, serve his lordship, pass the cassava-bread up, Jack! Señor Commandant! a glass of wine! You need it after your valiant toils. To the health of all brave soldiers—and a toast from your own Spanish proverb, "To-day to me, to-morrow to thee!"'

'I drink it, brave Señor. Your courtesy shows you the worthy countryman of General Drake, and his brave lieutenant.'

'Drake! Did you know him, Señor?' asked all the Englishmen at once.

'Too well, too well——' and he would have continued; but the bishop burst out—

'Ah, Señor Commandant! that name again! Have you no mercy! To sit between another pair of—, and my own wine, too' Ugh, ugh!

The old gentleman, whose mouth had been full of turtle the whole time, burst into a violent fit of coughing, and was only saved from apoplexy by Cary's patting him on the back.

'Ugh, ugh! The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, and their precious balm. Ah, Señor Lieutenant Englishman! May I ask you to pass those limes?—Ah! what is turtle without lime?—Even as a fat old man without money! *Nudus intravi, nudus exeo*—ah!'

'But what of Drake!'

'Do you not know, sir, that he and his fleet, only last year, swept the whole of this coast, and took, with shame I confess it, Carthagena, San Domingo, St. Augustine, and—I see you are too courteous, Señors, to express before me what you have a right to feel. But whence come you, sir? From the skies, or the depth of the sea!'

'Art magic, art magic!' mocked the bishop.

'Your holiness! It is scarcely prudent to speak thus here,' said the commandant, who was nevertheless much of the same opinion.

'Why you said so yourself, last night, Señor, about the taking of Carthagena.'

The commandant blushed, and stammered out somewhat—'That it was excusable in him, if he had said in jest, that so prodigious and unusual a valour had not sprung from mortal sources.'

'No more it did, Señor,' said Jack Brimblecombe stoutly, 'but from Him who taught our hands to war, and our fingers to fight!'

The commandant bowed stiffly. 'You will excuse me, Sir Preacher, but I am a Catholic, and hold the cause of my king to be above the cause of Heaven. But, Señor Captain, how came you thither, if I may ask? That you needed no art-magic after you came on board, I, alas! can testify but too well. But what spirit—whether good or evil, I ask not—brought you on board, and whence? Where is your ship? I thought that all Drake's squadron had left six months ago.'

'Our ship, Señor, has lain this three years rotting on the coast near Capo Codera.'

'Ah! we heard of that bold adventure—but we thought you all lost in the interior.'

'You did! Can you tell me, then, where the Señor Governor of La Guayra may be now?'

'The Señor Don Guzman de Soto,' said the commandant, in a somewhat constrained tone, 'is said to be at present in Spain, having thrown up his office in consequence of domestic matters, of which I have not the honour of knowing anything.'

Amyas longed to ask more, but he knew that the well-bred Spaniard would tell him nothing which concerned another man's wife, and went on.

'What befell us after, I tell you frankly.'

And Amyas told his story, from the landing

at Guayra to the passage down the Magdalena. The commandant lifted up his hands.

'Were it not forbidden to me, as a Catholic, most invincible Señor, I should say that the Divine protection has indeed—'

'Ah,' said one of the friars, 'that you could be brought, Señors, to render thanks for your miraculous preservation to her to whom alone it is due, Mary, the fount of mercies!'

'We have done well enough without her as yet,' said Amyas bluntly.

'The Lord raised up Nebuchadnezzar of old to punish the sins of the Jewish Church, and He has raised up these men to punish ours!' said Fray Gerundio.

'But, Nebuchadnezzar fell, and so may they,' growled the other to himself. Jack overheard him.

'I say, my Lord Bishop,' called he from the other end of the table, 'it is our English custom to let our guests be as rude as they like; but perhaps your Lordship will hark to these two friars, that if they wish to keep whole skins, they will keep civil tongues.'

'Be silent, asses! mules!' shouted the bishop, whose spirits were improving over the wine, 'who are you, that you cannot eat dirt as well as your betters!'

'Well spoken, my Lord. Here's the health of our saintly and venerable guest,' said Cary, while the commandant whispered to Amyas, 'Fat old tyrant! I hope you have found his money—for I am sure he has some on board, and I should be loth that you lost the advantage of it.'

'I shall have to say a few words to you about that money this morning, commandant, by the bye, they had better be said now. My Lord Bishop, do you know that had we not taken this ship when we did, you had lost not merely money as you have now, but life itself?'

'Money? I had none to lose! Life!—what do you mean?' asked the bishop, turning very pale.

'This, sir. That it ill bents due to me, whose throat has been saved from the assassin's knife but four hours since. When we entered the stern-gallery, we found two persons, now on board this ship, in the very act, sir, and article, of cutting your sinful throat, that they might rob you of the casket which lay beneath your pillow. A moment more, and you were dead. We seized and bound them, and so saved your life. Is that plain, sir?'

The bishop looked steadfastly and stupidly into Amyas's face, heaved a deep sigh, and gradually sank back in his chair, dropping the glass from his hand.

'He is in a fit.' Call in the surgeon! Run! and up jumped kind-hearted Jack, and brought in the surgeon of the galleon.

'Is this possible, Señor?' asked the commandant.

'It is true. Door, there! Evans! go and hang in that rascal whom we left bound in the cabin!'

Evans went, and the commandant continued—
 'But the stern gallery? How, in the name of all witches and miracles, came your valour thither?'

'Simply enough, and owing neither to witch nor miracle. The night before last we passed the mouth of the bay in our two canoes, which we had lashed together after the fashion I had seen in the Moluccas, to keep them afloat in the surf. We had scraped the canoes bright the day before, and rubbed them with white clay, that they might be invisible at night, and so we got safely to the Morro Graude, passing within half a mile of your ship.'

'Oh! my scoundrels of sentinels!'

'We landed at the back of the Morro, and lay there all day, being purposed to do that which, with your pardon, we have done. We took our sails of Indian cloth, whitened them likewise with clay which we had brought with us from the river (expecting to find a Spanish ship as we went along the coast, and determined to attempt her, or die with honour), and laid them over us on the canoes, paddling from underneath them. So that, had your sentinels been awake, they would have hardly made us out, till we were close on board. We had provided ourselves, instead of ladders, with bamboos rigged with cross-pieces, and a hook of strong wood at the top of each, they hung at your stern-gallery now. And the rest of the tale I need not tell you.'

The commandant rose in his courtly Spanish way—

'Your admirable story, Señor, proves to me how truly your nation, while it has yet, and I trust will ever have, to dispute the palm of valour with our own, is famed throughout the world for ingenuity, and for daring beyond that of mortal man. You have succeeded, valiant Captain, because you have deserved to succeed, and it is no shame to me to succumb to enemies, who have outwitted the cunning of the serpent with the valour of the lion. Señor, I feel as proud of becoming your guest as I should have been proud, under a happier star, of becoming your host.'

'You are, like your nation, only too generous, Señor. But what noise is that outside? Cary, go and see.'

But ere Cary could reach the door, it was opened, and Evans presented himself with a terrified face.

'Here's villainy, sir! The Dou's murdered, and cold, she is dead, less dead, and as we searched the ship for her, we found an Englishwoman, as I'm a sinful man!—and a shocking sight she is to see!'

'An Englishwoman?' cried all three, springing forward.

'Bring her in!' said Amvas, turning very pale; and as he spoke, Yeo and another led into the cabin a figure scarcely human.

An elderly woman, dressed in the yellow 'San Benito' of the Inquisition, with ragged grey locks hanging about a countenance distorted by suffering, and shrunk by famine.

Painfully, as one unaccustomed to the light, she peered and blinked round her. Her fallen lip gave her a half-idiotic expression; and yet there was an uneasy twinkle in the eye, as of boundless terror and suspicion. She lifted up her fattered wrist to shade her face, and as she did so, disclosed a line of fearful scars upon her skinny arm.

'Look there, sirs!' said Yeo, pointing to them with a stern smile. 'Here's some of these Popish gentry's handiwork. I know well enough how those marks came;' and he pointed to the similar scars on his own wrist.

The commandant, as well as the Englishmen, recoiled with horror.

'Holy Virgin! what wretch is this on board my ship? Bishop, is this the prisoner whom you sent on board?'

The bishop, who had been slowly recovering his senses, looked at her a moment, and then thrusting his chair back, crossed himself, and almost screamed, 'Malice! Malice! Who brought her here? Turn her away, gentlemen, turn her eye away, she will bewitch, fascinate'—and he began muttering prayers.

Amvas seized him by the shoulder, and shook him on to his legs.

'Swine! who is this? Wake up, coward, and tell me, or I will cut you piecemeal!'

But ere the bishop could answer, the woman uttered a wild shriek, and pointing to the taller of the two monks, cowered behind Yeo.

'He here?' cried she in broken Spanish. 'Take me away! I will tell you no more! I have told you all, and here enough beside. Oh! why is he come again? Did they not say that I should have no more torments?'

The monk turned pale, but like a wild beast at bay, glared firmly round on the whole company, and then, fixing his dark eyes full on the woman, he bade her be silent so sternly, that she shrank down like a beaten hound.

'Silence, dog!' said Will Cary, whose blood was up, and followed his words with a blow on the monk's mouth, which silenced him effectually.

'Don't be afraid, good woman, but speak English. We are all English here, and Protestants too. Tell us what they have done for you.'

'Another trap! another trap!' cried she, in a strong Devonshire accent. 'You be no English! You want to make me lie again, and then torment me. Oh! wretched, wretched that I am!' and she, bursting into tears, 'Whom should I trust? Not myself no, nor God, for I have denied Him! O Lord! O Lord!'

Amvas stood silent with fear and horror, some instinct told him that he was on the point of hearing news for which he feared to ask. But Jack spoke—

'My dear soul! my dear soul! don't you be afraid; and the Lord will stand by you, if you will but tell the truth. We are all Englishmen, and men of Devon, as you seem to be by your

speech; and this ship is ours, and the Pope himself shan't touch you'

'Devon!' she said doubtfully; 'Devon! Whence, then?'

'Bidsford men. This is Mr. Will Cary, to Clovelly. If you are a Devon woman, you've heard tell of the Carys, to be sure.'

The woman made a rush forward, and throw her fettered arms round Will's neck—

'Oh, Mr Cary, my dear life! Mr Cary! and so you be! Oh, dear soul alive! but you're learnt so brown, and I be 'most blind with misery. Oh, who ever sent you here, my dear Mr Will, then, to save a poor wretch from the pit?'

'Who on earth are you?'

'I'm y' lassmore, the white with to Welcombe. Don't you mind Lucy Passmore, as 'armed your warts for you when you was a boy?'

'Lucy Passmore!' almost shrieked all three friends. 'She that went off with—'

'Yes! she that sold her own soul, and persuaded that dear saint to sell hers; she that did the devil's work, and has taken the devil's wages,—after this fashion!' and she held up her scarred wrists wildly.

'Where is Doda de—Rose Salterne?' shouted Will and Jack.

'Where is my brother Frank?' shouted Amyas.

'Dead, dead, dead!'

'I know it,' said Amyas, sitting down again calmly.

'How did she die?'

'The Inquisition—'he pointing to the monk. 'Ask him—he betrayed her to her death. And ask him!' pointing to the bishop, 'he sat by her and saw her die.'

'Woman, you rave!' said the bishop, getting up with a terrible air, and moving as far as possible from Amyas.

'How did my brother die, Lucy?' asked Amyas, still calmly.

'Who he you, sir?'

A gleam of hope flashed across Amyas—she had not answered his question.

'I am Amyas Leigh of Burrough. Do you know aught of my brother Frank, who was lost at La Guayra?'

'Mr Amyas! Heaven forgive me that I did not know the bigness of you. Your brother, sir, died like a gentleman as he was.'

'But how?' gasped Amyas.

'Burned with her, sir!'

'Is this true, sir?' said Amyas, turning to the bishop, with a very quiet voice.

'I, sir?' stammered he, in panting haste.

'I had nothing to do—I was compelled in my office of bishop to be an unwilling spectator—the secular arm, sir, I could not interfere with that—any more than I can with the Holy Office. I do not belong to it—ask that gentleman—sir! Saints and angels, sir! what are you going to do?' shrieked he, as Amyas laid a heavy hand upon his shoulder, and began to lead him towards the door.

W. N.

'Hang you!' said Amyas. 'If I had been a Spaniard and a priest like yourself, I should have burnt you alive.'

'Hang me!' shrieked the wretched old Balaam, and burst into abject howls for mercy.

'Take the dark monk, Yeo, and hang him too. Lucy Passmore, do you know that fellow also?'

'No, sir,' said Lucy.

'Lucky for you, Fray Gerundio,' said Will Cary, while the good friar hid his face in his hands, and burst into tears. 'Lucky it was for him, indeed, for he had been a pitying spectator of the tragedy. "Ah!" thought he, "if life in this mad and sinful world be a reward, perhaps this escape is justified to me for having pleaded the cause of the poor Indian!"'

But the bishop shrieked on.

'Oh! not yet! An hour, only an hour! I am not fit to die.'

'That is no concern of mine,' said Amyas. 'I only know that you are not fit to live.'

'Let us at least make our peace with God,' said the dark monk.

'Hound! if your saints can really smuggle you up the backstairs to heaven, they will do it without five minutes' more coaxing and flattery.'

Fray Gerundio and the condemned man alike stopped their ears at the blasphemy.

'Oh, Fray Gerundio!' screamed the bishop, 'pray for me. I have treated you like a beast. Oh, Fray, Fray!'

'Oh, my Lord! my Lord!' said the good man, as with tears streaming down his face he followed his shrinking and straggling diocesan up the stairs, 'who am I? Ask no pardon of me. Ask pardon of God for all your sins against the poor innocent savages, when you saw your harmless sheep butchered year after year, and yet never lifted up your voice to save the flock which God had committed to you. Oh, confess that, my Lord! confess it ere it be too late!'

'I will confess all about the Indians, and the gold, and Tita too, Fray, pecavi, pecavi—only five minutes, Señor, five little minutes' grace, while I confess to the good Fray!—and he grovelled on the deck.

'I will have no such minnery where I command,' said Amyas sternly. 'I will be no accomplice in cheating Satan of his due.'

'If you will confess,' said Bramldonog, whose heart was melting fast, 'confess to the Lord, and He will forgive you. Even at the last moment mercy is open. Is it not, Fray Gerundio?'

'It is, Señor, it is, my Lord,' said Gerundio, but the bishop only clasped his hands over his head.

'Then I am undone! All my money is stolen! Not a farthing left to buy masses for my poor soul! And no absolution, no viaticum, nor anything! I die like a dog and am damned!'

'Clear away that running rigging!' said Amyas, while the dark Dominican stood perfectly collected, with something of a smile of

puty at the miserable lusher. A man accustomed to cruelty, and firm in his fanaticism, he was as ready to endure suffering as to inflict it, repeating to himself the necessary prayers, he called Fray Gerundio to witness that he died, however unworthy, a martyr, in charity with all men, and in the communion of the Holy Catholic Church; and then, as he fitted the cord to his own neck, gave Fray Gerundio various petty commissions about his sister and her children, and a little vineyard far away upon the sunny slopes of Castile, and so died, with a *'Domine, in manus tuas'*, like a valiant man of Spain.

Amyas stood long in solemn silence, watching the two corpses dangling above his head. At last he drew a long breath, as if a load was taken off his heart.

Suddenly he looked round to his men, who were watching eagerly to know what he would have done next.

'Hearken to me, my masters all, and may God hearken too, and do so to me, and more also, if, as long as I have eyes to see a Spaniard, and hands to hew him down, I do any other thing than hunt down that accursed nation day and night, and avenge all the innocent blood which has been shed by them since the day in which King Ferdinand drove out the Moors!'

'Amen!' said Salvation Yeo. 'I need not to swear that oath, for I have sworn it long ago, and kept it. Will your honour have us kill the rest of the idolaters?'

'God forbid!' said Cary. 'You would not do that, Amyas?'

'No, we will spare them. God has shown us a great mercy this day, and we must be merciful in it. We will land them at Cabo Volo. But henceforth till I die no quarter to a Spaniard!'

'Amen!' said Yeo.

Amyas's whole countenance had changed in the last half-hour. He seemed to have grown years older. His brow was wrinkled, his lip compressed, his eyes full of a terrible stony firm, as of one who had formed a great and dreadful purpose, and yet for that very reason could afford to be quiet under the burden of it, even cheerful, and when he returned to the cabin he bowed courteously to the commandant, begged pardon of him for having played the host so ill, and entreated him to finish his breakfast.

'But, Señor—is it possible? Is his holiness dead?'

'He is hanged and dead, Señor. I would have hanged, could I have caught them, every living thing which was present at my brother's death, even to the very flies upon the wall. No more words, Señor, your conscience tells you that I am just.'

'Señor,' said the commandant.—'One word—I trust there are no listeners—none of my crew, I mean, but I must exonerate myself in your eyes.'

'Walk out, then, into the gallery with me.'

'To tell you the truth, Señor—I trust in Heaven no one overhears—you are just. This Inquisition is the curse of us, the weight which is crushing out the very life of Spain. No man dares speak. No man dares trust his neighbour, no, not his child, or the wife of his bosom. It avails nothing to be a good Catholic, as I trust I am,' and he crossed himself, 'when any villain whom you may offend, any unnatural son or wife who wishes to be rid of you, has but to hunt heresy against you, and you vanish into the Holy Office—and then God have mercy on you, for man has none. Noble ladies of my family, sir, have vanished thither, carried off by night, we know not why, we dare not ask why. To expostulate, even to inquire, would have been to share their fate. There is one now, Señor—Heaven alone knows whether she is alive or dead.—It was nine years since, and we have never heard, and we shall never hear.'

And the commandant's face worked frightfully.

'She was my sister, Señor.'

'Heavens! sir, and have you not avenged her?'

'On clonchmen, Señor, and I a Catholic! To be hanged at the stake in this life, and after that to all eternity beside! Even a Spaniard dare not fire that. Beside, sir, the mob like this Inquisition, and an Auto da Fé is even better sport to them than a bull fight. They would be the last to tear a man in pieces who dare touch an Inquisitor. Sir, may all the saints in heaven obtain me forgiveness for my blasphemy, but when I saw you just now fearing those churchmen no more than you feared me, I longed, sir, that I am, to be a heretic like you.'

'It will not take long to make a brave and wise gentleman who has suffered such things, as you have, a heretic, as you call it—a *libre Christian* man, as we call it.'

'Tempt me not, sir,' said the poor man, crossing himself fervently. 'Let us say no more. Obedience is my duty, and for the rest the Church must decide, according to her infallible authority—for I am a good Catholic, Señor, the best of Catholics, though a great sinner—I trust no one has overheard us.'

Amyas left him with a smile of pity, and went to look for Lucy Passmore, whom the sailors were unring and feeding, while Amyas watched them with a puzzled face.

'I will talk to you when you are better, Lucy,' said he, taking her hand. 'Now you must eat and drink, and forget all among us kids of Devon.'

'Oh, dear blessed sir, and you will send Sir John to pray with me? For I turned, sir, I turned but I could not help it—I could not abear the torments but she bore them, sweet angel—and more than I did. Oh, dear me!'

'Lucy, I am not fit now to hear more. You shall tell me all to-morrow,' and he turned away.

'Why do you take her hand?' said Amyas.

more, half scornfully 'She is old and ugly, and dirty.'

'She is an Englishwoman, child, and a martyr, poor thing; and I would nurse her as I would my own mother.'

'Why don't you make me an Englishwoman, and a martyr? I could learn how to do anything that that old hag could do!'

'Instead of calling her names, go and tend her, that would be much sifter work for a woman than fighting among men.'

Ayacanora darted from him, thrust the sailors aside, and took possession of Lucy Pasmore.

'Where shall I put her?' asked she of Amyas, without looking up.

'In the best cabin; and let her be served like a queen, lady.'

'No one shall touch her but me;' and taking the withered frame in her arms, as if it were a doll, Ayacanora walked off with her in triumph, telling the men to go and mind the ship.

'The girl is mad,' said one.

'Mad or not, she has an eye to our captain,' said another.

'And where's the man that would behave to the poor wild thing as he does?'

'Sir Francis Drake would, from whom he got his lesson. Do you mind his putting the negro lass ashore aft? he found out about—'

'Hush. Bygone, by-gones, and those that did it are in their graves long ago. But it was too hard of him on the poor thing.'

'If he had not got rid of her, there would have been more threats than one out about this lass, that's all I know,' said another, 'and so there would have been about this one before now, if the captain wasn't a born angel out of heaven, and the lieutenant no less.'

'Well, I suppose we may get a whet by now I wonder if these Dons have any beer aboard.'

'Nought but grape vinegar, which fools call wine, I'll warrant.'

'There was better than vinegar on the table in there just now.'

'Ah,' said one grumbler of true English breed, 'but that's not for poor fellows like we.'

'Don't lie, Tom Evans, you never were given that way yet, and I don't think the trade will suit a good fellow like you.'

The whole party started for the speaker of these words was none other than Amyas himself, who had rejoined them, a bottle in each hand.

'No, Tom Evans. It has been share and share alike for three years, and bravely you have all held up, and share alike it shall be now, and here's the handful of it. We'll serve out the good wine fairly all round as long as it lasts, and then take to the bad—but mind you don't get drunk, my sons, for we are much too short of hands to have any stout fellows lying about the scuppers.'

But what was the story of the intendante's being murdered? Brimblecombe had seen him run into a neighbouring cabin, and when the door of it was opened, there was the culprit, but dead and cold, with a deep knife-wound in his side. Who could have done the deed? It must

have been Tita, whom Brimblecombe had seen loose, and trying to free her lover.

The ship was searched from stern to stern but no Tita. The mystery was never explained. That she had leapt overboard, and tried to swim ashore none doubted; but whether she had reached it, who could tell? One thing was strange—that not only had she carried off no treasure with her, but that the gold ornaments which she had worn the night before, lay together in a heap on the table, close by the murdered man. Had she wished to rid herself of everything which had belonged to her tyrants?

The commandant heard the whole story thoughtfully.

'Wretched man!' said he, 'and he has a wife and children in Seville.'

'A wife and children?' said Amyas, 'and I heard him promise marriage to the Indian girl.'

That was the only hint which gave a reason for his death. What, if, in the terror of discovery and capture, the scoundrel had dropped any self-condemning words about his marriage, any prayer for those whom he had left behind, and the Indian had overheard them? It might be so, at least sin had brought its own punishment.

And so that wild night and day subsided. The prisoners were kindly used enough, for the Englishman, tired from any petty love of tormenting, knows no mean between killing a foe outright, and treating him as a brother, and when, two days afterwards, they were sent ashore in the canoes off Cabo Vicio, captives and captors shook hands all round, and Amyas, after returning the commandant his sword, and presenting him with a case of the bishop's wine, bowed him courteously over the side.

'I trust that you will pay us another visit, valiant Señor Capitán,' said the Spaniard, bowing and smiling.

'I should most gladly accept your invitation, illustrious Señor Commandant, but as I have vowed henceforth, whenever I shall meet a Spaniard, neither to give nor take quarter, I trust that our paths to glory may be in different directions.'

The commandant shrugged his shoulders; the ship was put again before the wind, and as the shores of the Main faded lower and dimmer behind her, a mighty cheer broke from all on board, and for once the cry from every mouth was Eastward-ho!

Scrap by scrap, as weakness and confusion of intellect permitted her, Lucy Pasmore told her story. It was a simple one after all, and Amyas might almost have guessed it for himself. Rose had not yielded to the Spaniard without a struggle. He had visited her two or three times at Lucy's house (how he found out Lucy's existence she herself could never tell, unless from the Jesuits) before she agreed to go with him. He had gained Lucy to his side by huge promises of Indian gold; and, in fine, they had gone to Lundy, where the lovers were married by a priest, who was none other, Lucy would swear, than

the shorter and stouter of the two who had carried off her husband and his boat—in a word, Father Parsons.

Amyas gnashed his teeth at the thought that he had had Parsons in his power at Brenttor down, and let him go. It was a fresh proof to him that Heaven's vengeance was upon him for letting one of its enemies escape. Though what good to Rose or Frank the hanging of Parsons would have been, I, for my part, cannot see.

But when had Eustace been at Lundy? Lucy could throw no light on that matter. It was evidently some by thread in the huge spider's web of Jesuit intrigue, which was, perhaps, not worth knowing after all.

They sailed from Lundy in a Portuguese ship, were at Lisbon a few days (during which Rose and Lucy remained on board), and then away for the West Indies, while all went merry as a marriage bell. 'Sir, he would have kissed the dust off her dear feet, till that evil eye of Mr. Knataco's came, no one knew how or whence.' And, from that time, all went wrong. Eustace got power over Don Guzman, whether by threatening that the marriage should be dissolved, whether by working on his superstitious scruples about leaving his wife still a heretic, or whether (and this last Lucy much suspected) by insinuations that her heart was still at home in England, and that she was longing for Amyas and his ship to come and take her home again, the house soon became a den of misery, and Eustace the prevailing evil genius. Don Guzman had even commanded him to leave it—and he went, but, somehow, within a week he was there again, in greater favour than ever. Then came preparations to meet the English, and high words about it between Don Guzman and Rose, till, a few days before Amyas's arrival, the Don had dashed out of the house in a fury, saying openly that she preferred these Lutheran dogs to him, and that he would have their hearts' blood first, and hers after.

The rest was soon told. Amyas knew but too much of it already. The very morning after he had gone up to the villa, Lucy and her mistress were taken (they knew not by whom) down to the quay, in the name of the Holy Office, and shipped off to Carthage.

There they were examined, and confronted on a charge of witchcraft, which the wretched Lucy could not well deny. She was tortured to make her incriminate Rose, and what she said, or did not say, under the torture, the poor wretch could never tell. She recanted, and became a Romanist; Rose remained firm. Three weeks afterwards, they were brought out to an Auto-da-Fé, and there, for the first time, Lucy saw Frank walking, dressed in a San Benito, in that ghastly procession. Lucy was adjudged to receive publicly two hundred stripes, and to be sent to 'The Holy House' at Seville to perpetual prison. Frank and Rose, with a renegade Jew, and a negro who had been convicted of practising 'Obi,' were sentenced to death as impenitent, and delivered over to the secular arm, with

prayers that there might be no shedding of blood. In compliance with which request, the Jew and the negro were burnt at one stake, Frank and Rose at another. She thought they did not feel it more than twenty minutes. They were both very bold and steadfast, and held each other's hand (that she would swear to) to the very last.

And so ended Lucy Pkasmore's story. And if Amyas Leigh, after he had heard it, vowed afresh to give no quarter to Spaniards wherever he should find them, who can wonder, even if they blame?

CHAPTER XXVI

HOW SALVATION YEO FOUND HIS LITTLE MAID AGAIN

'All precious things, discover'd late,
To them who seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And drives the veil from hidden worth.'
The Sleeping Beauty

AND so Ajacanora took up her abode in Lucy's cabin, as a regularly accredited member of the crew.

But a most troublesome member, for now began in her that perilous crisis which seems to endanger the bodies and souls of all savages and savage tribes, when they first dangle with the white man, that crisis which, a few years afterwards, began to hasten the extermination of the North American tribes, and had it not been for the admirable good sense and constancy of Amyas, Ajacanora might have ended even more wretchedly than did the far famed Pocahontas, daughter of the Virginian king, who, after having been received at Court by the old pedant James the First, with the honours of a sister sovereign, and having become the reputed ancestress of more than one ancient Virginian family, ended her days in wretchedness in some Wapping garret.

For the mind of the savage, crushed by the sight of the white man's superior skill, and wealth, and wisdom, loses at first its self-respect, while his body, pampered with easily obtained luxuries, instead of having to win the necessities of life by heavy toil, loses its self-helpfulness, and with self-respect and self-help vanish all the savage virtues, few and clumsy as they are, and the downward road toward begging and stealing, slothfulness and idleness, is easy, if not sure.

And down that road it really seemed at first that poor Ajacanora was walking fast. For the warrior-princess of the Omaguas soon became, to all appearance, nothing but a very naughty child, and the Diana of the Meta, after she had satisfied her simple wonder at the great floating house by rambling from deck to deck, and peeping into every cupboard and cranny, manifested a great propensity to steal and hide (she was too proud or too shy to ask for) every trumpery which smelt her fancy, and when Amyas forbade her to take anything without leave, threatened

to drown herself, and went off and sulked all day in her cabin. Nevertheless, she obeyed him, except in the matter of sweet things. Perhaps she craved naturally for the vegetable food of her native forests, at all events the bishop's stores of fruit and sweetmeats diminished rapidly, and what was worse, so did the sweet Spanish wine which Amiyas had set apart for poor Lucy's daily cordial. When on another severe lecture, in which Amiyas told her how mean it was to rob poor sick Lucy, whereat she, as usual, threatened to drown herself, and was running upon deck to do it, when Amiyas caught her and dragged her. On which a violent fit of crying, and great intemperance and promises, and a week after, Amiyas found that she had cheated Satan and her own conscience by tormenting the Portuguese steward into giving her some other wine instead. But luckily for her, she found Amiyas's warnings about wine making her mad so far forth, that she did several foolish things one evening, and had a bad headache next morning, so the murderer was out, and Amiyas ordered the steward up for a sound flogging, but Ayacanora, honourably enough, not only begged him off, but offered to be whipped instead of him, confessing that the poor fellow spoke truly when he swore that she had threatened to kill him, and that he had given her the wine in foolish fear for his life.

However, her own headache and Amiyas's cold looks were lesson enough, and after another attempt to drown herself, the wilful beauty settled down for a while, and what was better, could hardly be persuaded, thenceforth to her dying day, to touch fermented liquors.

But, in the meanwhile, poor Amiyas had many a bruise beating as to how he was to tame a lady who, on the first provocation, took refuge in suicide. Punish her he dared not, even if he had the heart. And as for putting her ashore, he had an instinct, and surely not a superstitious one, that his strange affection for the English was not unsent by Heaven, and that God had committed her into his charge, and that He would require an account at his hands of the soul of that fair lost lamb.

So, almost at his wife's end, he prayed to God, good simple fellow, and that many a time, to show him what he should do with her before she killed either herself, or what was just as likely, one of the crew, and it seemed best to him to make Parson Jack teach her the rudiments of Christianity, that she might be baptized in due time when they got home to England.

But here arose a fresh trouble—for she roundly refused to learn of Jack, or of any one but Amiyas himself, while he had many a good reason for refusing the office of schoolmaster, so, for a week or two more Ayacanora remained untaught, save in the English tongue, which she picked up with marvellous rapidity.

And next, as if troubles would never end, she took a violent dislike, not only to John Brimblecombe, whose gait and voice she openly mim-

icked for the edification of the men, but also to Will Cary, whom she never allowed to speak to her or approach her. Perhaps she was jealous of his intimacy with Amiyas, or perhaps, with the subtle instinct of a woman, she knew that he was the only other man on board who might dare to make love to her (though Will, to do him justice, was as guiltless of any such intention as Amiyas himself). But when she was remonstrated with, her only answer was that Cary was a catique as well as Amiyas, and that there ought not to be two catiques, and one day she actually proposed to Amiyas to kill his supposed rival, and take the ship all to himself, and sulked for several days at hearing Amiyas, amidst shouts of laughter, retail her jocular advice to its intended victim.

Moreover, the negroes came in for their share, being regarded all along by her with an unspeakable repugnance, which showed itself at first in looking from them who never she could, and, afterwards, in throwing at them everything she could lay hands on, till the poor Quashies, in danger of their lives, complained to Amiyas, and got rest for a while.

Over the rest of the sailors she lorded it like a very princess, calling them from their work to run on her errands and make toys for her, enforcing her commands now and then by a shrewd box on the ears, while the good fellows, especially old Yeo, like true sailors, patted her, obeyed her, even jested with her, much as they might have done with a tame kelpie, whose claws might be unsheathed and about their ears at any moment. But she amused them, and amused Amiyas too. They must of course have a jest, and what greater one could they have? And as for Amiyas, the constant interest of her presence, even the constant anxiety of her wilfulness, kept his mind busy, and drove out many a sad foreboding. But that meeting with his mother, and the tragedy which he had to tell her, which would otherwise, so heavily did they weigh on him, have crushed his spirit with melancholy, and made all his worldly success and marvellous deliverance worthless in his eyes.

At last the matter, as most things luckily do, came to a climax, and it came in this way.

The ship had been slipping along now for many a day, slowly but steadily before a favourable breeze. She had passed the ring of the West India islands, and was now crawling, safe from all pursuit, through the vast weed-beds of the Sargasso Sea. There, for the first time, it was thought safe to relax the discipline which had been hitherto kept up, and to 'runnage' (as was the word in those days) their noble prize. What they found, of gold and silver, jewels, and pier handise, will interest no readers. Suffice it to say, that there was enough there, with the other treasure, to make Amiyas rich for life, after all claims of Cary's and the crew, not forgetting Mr. Salterne's third, as owner of the ship, had been paid off. But in the captain's cabin were found two chests, one full of gorgeous

Mexican feather dresses, and the other of Spanish and East Indian finery, which, having come by way of Havana and Cartagena, was going on, it seemed, to some Schora or other at the Caraccas. Which two objects were, at Cary's proposal, voted amid the acclamations of the crew to Ayacanora, as her due and fit share of the pillage, in consideration of her Amazonian prowess and valuable services.

So the poor child took greedy possession of the trumpery, had them carried into Lucy's cabin, and there knelt gloating over them many an hour. The Mexican work she chose to despise as savage, but the Spanish dresses were a treasure, and for two or three days she appeared on the quarter-deck, anning herself like a peacock before the eyes of Amiyas in Seville mantillas, Madrid hats, Indian brocade farthingales, and I know not how many other gewgaws, and dare not say how put on.

The crew tittered. Amiyas felt much more inclined to cry. There is nothing so pathetic as a child's vanity, saying a grown person aping a child's vanity, and saving, too, a child's agony of disappointment when it finds that it has been laughed at instead of being admired. Amiyas would have spoken, but he was afraid; however, the evil brought its own cure. The pageant went on, as its actor thought, most successfully for three days or so, but at last the dupe, unable to contain herself longer, appealed to Amiyas,—"Ayacanora quite English girl now, is she not?"—heard a titter behind her, looked round, saw a dozen honest faces in broad grin, comprehended all in a moment, darted down the companion-ladder, and vanished.

Amiyas, fully expecting her to jump overboard, followed as fast as he could. But she had locked herself in with Lucy, and he could hear her silent sobs; and Lucy's faint voice entreating to know what was the matter.

In vain he knocked. She refused to come out all day, and at even they were forced to break the door open, to prevent Lucy being starved.

There sat Ayacanora, her finery half torn off, and scattered about the floor in spite, crying still as if her heart would break, while poor Lucy cried too, half from fright and hunger, and half for company.

Amiyas tried to comfort the poor child, assured her that the men should never laugh at her again; "But then," added he, "you must not be so—so—". What to say he hardly knew.

"So what?" asked she, crying more bitterly than ever.

"So like a wild girl, Ayacanora."

Her hands dropped on her knees, a strong spasm ran through her throat and bosom, and she fell on her knees before him, and looked up imploringly in his face.

"Yes; wild girl—poor, bad, wild girl. . . But I will be English girl now!"

"Fine clothes will never make you English, my child," said Amiyas.

"No! not English clothes—English heart! Good heart, like yours! Yes, I will be good, and Sir John shall teach me!"

"There's my good maid," said Amiyas. "Sir John shall begin and teach you to-morrow."

"No! Now! now! Ayacanora cannot wait. She will drown herself if she is bad another day! Come, now!"

And she made him fetch Brimblecombe, heard the honest fellow patiently for an hour or more, and told Lucy that very night all that he had said. And from that day, whenever Jack went in to read and pray with the poor sufferer, Ayacanora, instead of escaping on deck as before, stood patiently trying to make it all out, and knelt when he knelt, and tried to pray too—that she might have an English heart; and doubtless her prayers, dumb as they were, were not unheard.

So went on a few days more, hopefully enough, without any outbreak, till one morning, just after they had passed the Sargasso beds. The ship was taking care of herself; the men were all on deck under the awning, tinkering, and cobbling, and chatting; Brimblecombe was catechising his fair pupil in the cabin, Amiyas and Cary, eager in mouth, were chatting about all heaven and earth, and, above all, of the best way of getting up a fresh adventure against the Spaniards as soon as they returned, while Amiyas was pointing out the Will to it dark hatred of the whole nation, that dark purpose of revenge for his brother and for Rose, which had settled down like a murky cloud into every cranny of his heart and mind. Suddenly there was a noise below, a scuffle and a shout, which made them both leap to their feet, and up on deck rushed Jack Brimblecombe, holding his head on with both his hands.

"Save me! save me from that she-fiend! She is possessed with a legion! She has broken my nose—torn out half my hair—and I'm sure I have none to spare! Here she comes! Stand by me, gentlemen both! Satan, I defy thee!" And Jack descended himself behind the pair, as Ayacanora whirled upon deck like a very Maenad, and, seeing Amiyas, stopped short.

"If you had defied Satan down below there," said Cary, with a laugh, "I suspect he wouldn't have broken out on you so boldly, Master Jack."

"I am innocent—innocent as the babe unborn! Oh! Mr. Cary! this is too bad of you, sir!" quoth Jack indignantly, while Amiyas asked what was the matter.

"He looked at me," said she sturdily.

"Well, a cat may look at a king."

"But he shan't look at Ayacanora. Nobody shall but you, or I'll kill him!"

In vain Jack protested his innocence of having even looked at her. The fancy (and I verily believe it was nothing more) had taken possession of her. She refused to return below to her lesson. Jack went off grumbling, minus his hair, and wore a black eye for a week after.

'At all events,' quoth Cary, reighting his cigar, 'it's a fault on the right side.'

'God give me grace, or it may be one on the wrong side for me.'

'He will, old heart-of-oak!' said Cary, laying his arm around Amyas's neck, to the evident disgust of Ayacanora, who went off to the side, got a fishing-hue, and began amusing herself therewith, while the ship slipped on quickly and silently as ever, save when Ayacanora laughed and clapped her hands at the flying-fish scudding from the bows. At last, tired of doing nothing, she went forward to the poop-rail to listen to John Squire the armorer, who sat tinkering a headpiece, and humming a song, *mutato nomine*, concerning his native place—

'Oh, Bideford is a pleasant place, it shines where it stands,

And the more I look upon it, the more my heart it warms,

For there are fair young lasses, in rows upon the quay,
To welcome gallant mariners, when they come home from say.'

'Tis Sunderland, John Squire, to the song, and not Bideford,' said his mate.

'Well, Bideford's so good as Sunderland any day, for all there's no say-couls there blacking a place about; and makes just so good harmonies, Tommy Hamblin—'

'Oh, if I was a heering, to swim the ocean o'er,
Or if I was a say-dolt, to fly unto the shore,
To fly unto my true love, & waiting at the door,
To wait for with a gold ring, and plough the main no more.'

Here Yeo broke in—

'Aren't you ashamed, John Squire, to your years, singing such carnal vanities, after all the providences you have seen? Let the songs of Zion be in your mouth, man, if you must needs keep a caterwauling all day like that.'

'You sing 'em yourself then, gunner.'

'Well,' says Yeo, 'and why not?' And out he pulled his psalm book, and began a scrip of the grand old psalm—

'Such as in ships and brittle barks
Into the seas descend,
Then merchandise through fearful floods
To compass and to end,
There men are forced to behold
The Lord's works what they be,
And in the dreadful deep the same,
Most marvellous they see.'

'Humph!' said John Squire. 'Very good and godly! But still I do like a merry catch now and then, I do. Wouldn't you let a body sing "Rumblelow"—even when he's heaving of the anchor?'

'Well, I don't know,' said Yeo, 'but the Lord's people had better praise the Lord then too, and pray for a good voyage, instead of howling about—'

'A randy, randy, dandy O,
A whet of ale and brandy O,
With a rumblelow and a Westward ho!
And heave, my mariners all, O!'

'Is that fit talk for immortal souls? How does that chink's-trade sound beside the Psalms, John Squire?'

Now it befell that Salvation Yeo, for the very purpose of holding up to ridicule that time-honoured melody, had put into it the true nasal twang, and rung it out as merrily as he had done perhaps twelve years before, when he got up John Oxenham's anchor in Plymouth Sound. And it befell also that Ayacanora, as she stood by Amyas's side, watching the men, and trying to make out their chat, heard it, and started, and then, half to herself, took up the strain, and sang it over again, word for word, in the very same tune and tone.

Salvation Yeo started in his turn, and turned deadly pale.

'Who sang that?' he asked quickly.

'The little maid here. She's coming on nicely in her English,' said Amyas.

'The little maid?' said Yeo, turning paler still. 'Why do you go about to scare an old servant by talking of little maids, Captain Amyas? Well,' he said aloud to himself, 'as I am a sinful sinner, if I hadn't seen where the voice came from, I should have sworn it was her, just as we taught her to sing it by the river there, I and William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade. The Lord have mercy on me.'

All were silent as the grave when Yeo made any allusion to that lost child. Ayacanora only, joined with Amyas's commendation, went humming on to herself—

• At theave, my man, sail, O!'

Yeo started up from the gun where he sat. 'I can't do it!' As I live I can! You Indian maiden, where did you learn to sing that there?'

Ayacanora looked up at him, but tried to smother his vehemence, then at Amyas, to see if she had been doing anything wrong, and then turned slowly away, looked over the side, and hummed on.

'Ask her, for mercy's sake—ask her, Captain Fough!'

'My child,' said Amyas, speaking in Indian, 'how is it you sing that so much better than any other English? Did you ever hear it before?'

Ayacanora looked up at him puzzled, and shook her head, and then—

'If you tell Indian to Ayacanora, she dumb. She must be English girl now, like poor Lucy.'

'Well then,' said Amyas, 'do you recollect, Ayacanora—do you recollect—what shall I say anything that happened when you were a little girl?'

She paused a while, and then moving her hands over her eyes—

'Trees—great trees like the Magdalenae—always nothing but trees—wild and bad everything. Ayacanora won't talk about that.'

'Do you mind anything that grew on those trees?' asked Yeo eagerly.

She laughed. 'Silly! Flowers and fruit,

and nuts—grow on all trees, and monkey cups too. Ayacanora climbed up after them—when she was wild. I won't tell any more.

'But who taught you to call them monkey-cups?' asked Yeo, trembling with excitement.

'Monkey's drink, mono drink.'

'Mono?' said Yeo, foiled on one cast, and now trying another. 'How did you know the beasts were called monos?'

'She might have heard it coming down with us,' said Cary, who had joined the group.

'Ay, monos,' said she, in a self-justifying tone. 'Faces like little men, and tails. And one very dirty black one, with a beard, say Amen in a tree to all the other monkeys, just like Sir John on Sunday.'

This allusion to Epiphonias and the preaching apes upset all but old Yeo.

'But don't you recollect any Christians?—white people!'

She was silent.

'Don't you mind a white lady?'

'Um?'

'A woman, a very pretty woman, with hair like his?' pointing to Amyas.

'No.'

'What do you mind, then, beside those Indians?' asked Yeo, in despair.

She turned her back on him peevishly, as if tired with the efforts of her memory.

'Do try to remember,' said Amyas, and she set to work again at once.

'Ayacanora mind great monkeys—black, oh, so high,' and she held up her hand above her head, and made a violent gesture of disgust.

'Monkeys! what, with tails?'

'No, like man. Ali'ges—just like Cooky there—dirty Cooky!'

And that hapless son of Ham, who happened to be just crossing the main deck, heard a marling spike, which by ill luck was lying at hand, flying past his ears.

'Ayacanora, if you heave any more things at Cooky, I must have you whipped,' said Amyas, without, of course, any such intention.

'I'll kill you then,' answered she in the most matter-of-fact tone.

'She must mean negurs,' said Yeo, 'I wonder where she saw them, now. What if it were they Omaroons?'

'But why should any one who had seen whites forget them, and yet remember negroes?' asked Cary.

'Let us try again. Do you mind no great monkeys but those black ones?' asked Amyas.

'Yes,' she said, after a while, 'Devil.'

'Devil?' asked all three, who, of course, were by no means free from the belief that the fiend did actually appear to the Indian conjurers, such as had brought up the girl.

'Ay, him Sir John tell about on Sunday.'

'Save and help us!' said Yeo. 'and what was he like up to?'

She made various signs to intimate that he had a monkey's face, and a gray beard like Yeo's. So far so good. but now came a series of man-

ipulations about her pretty little neck, which set all their fancies at fault.

'I know,' said Cary, at last, bursting into a great laugh. 'Sir Urian had a ruff on, as I live! Trunk-hose too, my fair dame! Stop—I'll make sure. Was his neck like the Señor Com-mandant's, the Spaniard?'

Ayacanora clapped her hands at, finding herself understood, and the questioning went on.

'The "Devil" appeared like a monkey, with a grey beard, in a ruff,—humpf!—'

'Ay!' said she in good enough Spanish, 'Mono de Panama, viejo diablo de Panama.'

Yeo threw up his hands with a shriek—

'O Lord of all mercies! Those were the last words of Mr John Oxenham! 'Ay—and the Devil is surely none other than the devil Don Francisco Xarato! Oh dear! oh dear! oh dear! my sweet young lady! my pretty little maid! and don't you know me? Don't you know Salvation Yeo, that carried you over the mountains, and used to climb for the monkey cups for you, my dear young lady! And William Penberthy too, that used to get you flowers, and your poor dear father, that was just like Mr Cary there, only he had a black beard, and black curls, and swore terribly in his speech like a Spaniard, my dear young lady?'

And the honest fellow, falling on his knees, covered Ayacanora's hands with kisses, while all the crew, fancying him gone suddenly mad, crowded aft.

'Steady, men, and don't vex him!' said Amyas. 'He thinks that he has found his little maid at last.'

'And so do I, Amyas, as I live,' said Cary.

'Steady, steady, my masters all! If this turn out a wrong scent after all, his wits will crack. Mr Yeo, can't you think of any other token?'

Yeo stamped impatiently. 'What need then? It's her, I tell ye, and that's enough! What a beauty she's grown! Oh dear! where were my eyes all this time, to behold her, and not to see her! 'Tis her very mortal self, it is! And don't you mind me, my dear, now? Don't you mind Salvation Yeo, that taught you to sing "Heave my maimers all, O!" a sitting on a log by the boat upon the sand, and there was a sight of red lilacs grew on it in the moss, dear, now, wasn't there? and we made pomes of them to put in your hair, now?—And the poor old man ran on in a supple, suggestive tone, as if he could persuade the girl into becoming the person whom he sought.

Ayacanora had watched him, first angry, then amused, then attentive, and at last with the most intense earnestness. Suddenly she grew crimson, and snatching her hands from the old man's, hid her face in them, and stood.

'Do you remember anything of all this, my child?' asked Amyas gently.

She lifted up her eyes suddenly to him, with a look of imploring agony, as if beseeching him to spare her. The death of a whole old life, the

birth of a whole new life, was struggling in that beautiful face, choking in that magnificent throat, as she threw back her small head, and drew in her breath, and dashed her locks back from her temples, as if seeking for fresh air. She shuddered, reeled, then fell weeping on the bosom, not of Salvation Yeo, but of Amiyas Leigh.

He stood still a minute or two, hearing that fair burden, ere he could recollect himself. Then—

'Ayacanora, you are not yet mistress of yourself, my child. You were better to go down, and see after poor Lucy, and we will talk about it all to-morrow.'

She gathered herself up instantly, and with eyes fixed on the deck slid through the group, and disappeared below.

'Ah!' said Yeo, with a tone of exquisite sadness, 'the young to the young! Over land and sea, in the forests and in the gulleys, in battle and prison, I have sought her! And now!—'

'My good friend,' said Amiyas, 'neither are you master of yourself yet. When she comes round again, whom will she love and thank but you?'

'You, sir! She owes all to you, and so do I. Let me go, below, sir. My old wits are shaky. Bless you, sir, and thank you for ever and ever!'

And Yeo grasped Amiyas's hand, and went down to his cabin, from which he did not reappear for many hours.

From that day Ayacanora was a new creature. She thought that she was an Englishwoman, that she, the wild Indian, was really one of the great white people whom she had learned to worship, carried in it some regenerating change. She regained all her former stateliness, and with it a self-restraint, a temperance, a softness which she had never shown before. Her dislike to Cary and Jack vanished. Modest and distant as ever, she now took delight in learning from them about England and English people, and her knowledge of our customs gained much from the somewhat fantastic behaviour which Amiyas thought good, for reasons of his own, to assume toward her. He assigned her a handsome cabin to herself, always addressed her as *Madam*, and told Cary, Brinblecombe, and the whole crew that she was a lady and a Christian, he expected them to behave to her as such. So there was much bowing and scraping on the poop as it had been a prince's court, and Ayacanora, though sorely puzzled and chagrined at Amiyas's new solemnity, contrived to imitate it pretty well (taking for granted that it was the right thing), and having tolerable masters in the art of manners (for both Amiyas and Cary were thoroughly well-bred men), profited much in all things, except in intimacy with Amiyas, who had, cunning fellow, hit on this parade of good manners as a fresh means of increasing the distance between him and her. The crew, of course, though they were a little vexed at

losing their pet, consoled themselves with the thought that she was a 'real born lady,' and Mr Oxenham's daughter, too, and there was not a man on board who did not prick up his ears for a message if she approached him, or one who would not have, I verily believe, jumped overboard to do her a pleasure.

Only Yeo kept sorrowfully apart. His never looked at her, spoke to her, met her even, if he could. His dream had vanished. He had found her! and after all, she did not care for him? Why should she?

But it was hard to have hunted a bubble for years, and have it break in his hand at last. 'Set not your affections on things on the earth,' murmured Yeo to himself, as he pored over his Bible, in the vain hope of forgetting his little maid.

But why did Amiyas wish to increase the distance between himself and Ayacanora? Many reasons might be given. I deny none of them. But the main one, fantastic as it may seem, was simply, that while she had discovered herself to be an Englishwoman, he had discovered her to be a Spaniard. If her father were seven times John Oxenham (and even that the perverse fellow was inclined to doubt), her mother was a Spaniard—Pah! one of the accursed race, knave-woman, perhaps, to his brother's murderers! His jaundiced eyes could see nothing but the Spanish element in her, or, indeed, in anything else. As Cary said to him once, using a cant phrase of Sidney's, which he had picked up from Frank, all heaven and earth were 'spangled' to him. He seemed to recollect nothing but that Heaven had 'made Spaniards to be killed, and him to kill them.' If he had not been the most sensible of John Bulls, he would certainly have forestalled the monomania of that young Frenchman of rank, who, some eighty years after him, so maddened his brain by reading of the Spanish cruelties, that he threw up all his prospects and turned captain of Friarsteins in the West Indies, for the express purpose of ridding them of their tyrants; and when a Spanish ship was taken, used to relinquish the whole booty to his crew, and reserve for himself only the pleasure of witnessing his victims' dying agonies.

But what had become of that bird-like song of Ayacanora's which had astonished them on the banks of the Meta, and cheered them many a time in their anxious voyage down the Magdalena? From the moment that she found out her English parentage, it stopped. She refused utterly to sing anything but the songs and psalms which she picked up from the English. Whether it was that she despised it as a relic of her barbarism, or whether it was too maddening for one whose heart grew heavier and humbler day by day, the nightingale notes were heard no more.

So homeward they ran, before a favouring south-west breeze; but long ere they were within sight of land, Lucy Passmore was gone to her rest beneath the Atlantic waves.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOW AMYAS CAME HOME THE THIRD TIME

'It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights were long and mirk,
That wife's two sons came hame again,
And their hats were o' the birk

'It tild us grow by bush or brae,
Am yet in ousy shough,
But by the gates o' paradise
That birk grew fair enough'

The Wife of Usher's Well

It is the evening of the 15th of February 1587, and Mrs Leigh (for we must return now to old scenes and old faces) is pacing slowly up and down the terrace-walk at Burrough, looking out over the winding river, and the hazy sand hills, and the wide western sea, as she has done every evening, be it fair weather or foul, for three weary years. Three years, and more are past and gone, and yet no news of Frank and Amyas, and the gallant ship and all the gallant souls therein; and loving eyes in Bideford and Appledore, Clovelly and Ilfracombe, have grown hollow with watching and with weeping for those who have sailed away into the West, as John Oxenham sailed before them, and have vanished like a dream, as he did, into the infinite unknown. Three weary years, and yet no word. Once there was a flush of hope, and good Sir Richard (without Mrs Leigh's knowledge) had sent a horseman posting across to Plymouth, when the news arrived that Drake, Frolisher, and Carlisle had returned with their squadron from the Spanish Main. Alas! he brought back great news, glorious news, news of the sacking of Carthage, San Domingo, Saint Augustine, of the relief of Raleigh's Virginian colony—but no news of the *Rose*, and of those who had sailed in her. And Mrs Leigh bowed her head, and worshipped, and said, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!'

Her hair was now grown grey, her cheeks were wan, her step was feeble. She seldom went from home, save to the church, and to the neighbouring cottages. She never mentioned her sons' names, never allowed a word to pass her lips, which might betoken that she thought of them; but every day, when the tide was high, and red flag on the sandhills showed that there was water over the bar, she paced the terrace-walk, and devoured with greedy eyes the sea beyond, in search of the sail which never came. The stately ships went in and out as of yore, and white sails hung off the bar for many an hour, day after day, month after month, year after year: but an instinct within told her that none of them were the sails she sought. She knew that ship, every line of her, the cut of every cloth, she could have picked it out miles away, among a whole fleet, but it never came, and Mrs Leigh bowed her head and worshipped, and went to and fro among the poor, who looked on her as an awful being, and one whom God

had brought very near to Himself, in that mysterious heaven of sorrow which they too knew full well. And lone women and bed-ridden men looked in her steadfast eyes, and loved them, and drank in strength from them, for they knew (though she never spoke of her own grief) that she had gone down into the heretofore depths of the fiery furnace, and was walking there unhurt by the side of One whose form was as of the Son of God. And all the while she was blaming herself for her 'earthly' longings, and confessing nightly to Heaven that weakness which she could not shake off, which drew her feet at each high tide to the terrace-walk beneath the row of wind-swept trees.

But this evening Northam is in a stir. The pebble-ridge is thundering far below, as it thundered years ago, but Northam is noisy enough without the rolling of the surge. The tower is rocking with the pealing bells: the people are all in the streets shouting and singing round bonfires. They are burning the pope in effigy, drinking to the Queen's health, and 'So perish all her enemies!' The hills are red with bonfires in every village, and far away, the bells of Bideford are answering the bells of Northam, as they answered them seven years ago, when Amyas returned from sailing round the world. For this day has come the news that Mary Queen of Scots is beheaded in Fotheringhay, and all England, like a dreamer who shakes off some hideous nightmare, has leapt up in one tremendous shout of jubilation as the terror and the danger of seventeen anxious years is lifted from its heart for ever.

Yes, she is gone, to answer at a higher tribunal than that of the Estates of England, but all the noble English blood which has been poured out for her, for all the noble English hearts whom she has tempted into treachery, rebellion, and murder: Elizabeth's own words have been fulfilled at last, after years of long suffering—

'The daughter of the late,
That discord eye did show,
Hath reaped no gain when former rule
Hath taught still peace to grow'

And now she can do evil no more. Murder and adultery, the heart which knew no forgiveness, the tongue which could not speak truth even for its own interest, have past and are perhaps atoned for, and her fair face hangs a pitiful dream in the memory even of those who knew that either she or England must perish.

'Nothing is left of her
Now, but pure womanly

And Mrs Leigh, Protestant as she is, breathes a prayer, that the Lord may have mercy on that soul, as 'clear as diamond, and as hard,' as she said of herself. That last scene, too, before the fatal block—it could not be altogether acting. Mrs Leigh had learned many a priceless lesson in the last seven years; might not Mary Stuart have learned something in seventeen? And Mrs Leigh had been a courtier, and knew, as far

as a chaste Englishwoman could know (which even in those coarser days was not very much), of that gaudy style of French court profligacy in which poor Mary had had her youthful training, amid the Medici, and the Guises, and Cardinal Lorraine, and she shuddered, and sighed to herself—'To whom little is given, of them shall little be required!' But still the bells pealed on and would not cease.

What was that which answered them from afar out of the last darkening twilight? A flash, and then the thunder of a gun at sea.

Mrs. Leigh stopped. The flash was right outside the bar. A ship in distress it could not be. The wind was light and westerly. It was a high spring-tide, as evening floods are always there. What could it be? Another flash, another gun. The noisy folks of Northam were hushed at once, and all hurried into the churchyard which looks down on the broad flats and the river.

There was a gallant ship outside the bar. She was running in, too, with all sails set. A large ship, nearly a thousand tons she might be, but not of English rig. What was the meaning of it? A Spanish cruiser about to make reprisals for Drake's raid along the Cadiz shore? Not that, surely. The Don had no fancy for such unscientific and dare-devil warfare. If he came, he would come with admiral, rear-admiral, and vice-admiral transports, and avisoes, according to the best-approved methods, articles, and science of war. What could she be?

Easily, on the flowing tide, and fur western wind, she has slipped up the channel between the two lines of sandhill. She is almost off Appledore now. She is no enemy, and if she be a foreigner, she is a daring one, for she has never sailed her topmasts,—and that, all know, every foreign ship must do within sight of an English port, or stand the chance of war, as the Spanish admiral found, who many a year since was sent in time of peace to fetch home from Flanders Anne of Austria, Philip the Second's last wife.

For in his pride he sailed into Plymouth Sound without veiling topmasts, or lowering the flag of Spain. Whereon, like lion from his den, out rushed John Hawkins the Port Admiral, in his famous *Jesus of Lubec* (afterwards lost in the San Juan d'Ulloa fight), and, without argument or parley, sent a shot between the admiral's masts, which not producing the desired effect, alongside ran bold Captain John, and with his next shot, so says his son, an eye-witness, 'lacked the admiral through and through; whereon down came the offending flag; and due apologies were made: but not accepted for a long time by the stout guardian of her Majesty's honour. And if John Hawkins did as much for a Spanish fleet in time of peace, there is more than one old sea-dog in Appledore who will do as much for a single ship in time of war if he can find even an iron pot to burn powder withal.

The strange sail passed out of sight behind the hill of Appledore; and then there rose into

the quiet evening air a cheer, as from a hundred throats. Mrs. Leigh stood still, and listened. Another gun thundered among the hills, and then another cheer.

It might have been twenty minutes before the vessel hove in sight again round the dark rocks of the Hubbastone, as she turned up the Bidford river. Mrs. Leigh had stood that whole time perfectly motionless, a pale and scarcely breathing statue, her eyes fixed upon the Viking's rock.

Round the Hubbastone she came at last. There was music on board, drums and fife, shawms and trumpets, which sounded ringing echoes from every knoll of wood and slab of slate. And as she opened full on Burrough House, another cheer burst from her crew, and rolled up to the hills from off the silver water far below, full a mile away.

Mrs. Leigh walked quickly toward the house, and called her maid—

'Grace, bring me my hood. Master Amyas is come home!'

'No, surely! O joyful sound! Praise and blessed be the Lord, then, praise and blessed be the Lord! But, Madam, however did you know that?'

'I heard his voice on the river, but I did not hear Mr. Frank's with him, Grace!'

'Oh, be sure, Madam, where the one is the other is. They'd never part company. Both come home or neither, I'll warrant. Here's your hood, Madam!'

And Mrs. Leigh, with Grace behind her, started with rapid steps towards Bidford.

Was it true? Was it a dream? Had the divine instinct of the mother enabled her to recognise her child's voice among all the rest, and at that enormous distance, or was her brain turning with the long effort of her super-natural calm?

Grace asked herself, in her own way, the same question many a time between Burrough and Bidford. When they arrived on the quay the question answered itself.

As they came down Bridgeland Street (where afterwards the tobacco warehouses for the Virginia trade used to stand, but which then was but a row of rove-walks and sailmakers' shops) they could see the strange ship already at anchor in the river. They had just reached the lower end of the street, when round the corner swept a great mob, sailors, women, apprentices, huzza-ing, questioning, weeping, laughing. Mrs. Leigh stopped, and behold, they stopped also.

'Here she is!' shouted some one, 'here's his mother!'

'His mother? Not their mother!' said Mrs. Leigh to herself, and turned very pale, but that heart was long past breaking.

The next moment the giant head and shoulders of Amyas, far above the crowd, swept round the corner.

'Make a way! Make room for Madam Leigh!—And Amyas fell on his knees at her feet.

She threw her arms round his neck, and bent

her fair head over his, while sailors, 'prentices, and coarse harbour-women were hushed into holy silence, and made a ring round the mother and the son.

Mrs. Leigh asked no question. She saw that Amyas was alone.

At last he whispered, 'I would have died to save him, mother, if I could.'

'You need not tell me that, Amyas Leigh, my son.'

Another silence.

'How did he die?' whispered Mrs. Leigh.

'He is a martyr. He died in the—'

Amyas could say no more.

'The Inquisition?'

'Yes.'

A strong shudder passed through Mrs. Leigh's frame, and then she lifted up her head.

'Come home, Amyas. I little expected such an honour—such an honour—ha! ha! and such a fair young martyr, too, a very St. Stephen! God have mercy on me, and let me not go mad before these folk, when I ought to be thanking Thee for Thy great mercies! Amyas, who is that?'

And she pointed to Ayacanora, who stood close behind Amyas, watching with keen eyes the whole.

'She is a poor wild Indian girl—my daughter, I call her. I will tell you her story hereafter.'

'Your daughter? My grand-daughter, then. Come hither, maiden, and be my grand-daughter.'

Ayacanora came obedient, and knelt down, because she had seen Amyas kneel.

'God forbid, child! kneel not to me. Come home, and let me know whether I am sane or mazed, alive or dead.'

And drawing her hood over her face, she turned to go back, holding Amyas tight by one hand, and Ayacanora by the other.

The crowd let them depart some twenty yards in respectful silence, and then burst into a cheer which made the old town ring.

Mrs. Leigh stopped suddenly.

'I had forgotten, Amyas. You must not let me stand in the way of your duty. Where are your men?'

'Kissed to death by this time, all of them, that is, who are left.'

'Left?'

'We went out a hundred, mother, and we came home forty-four—if we are at home. It's not a dream, mother! Is this you? and this old Bridgeland Street again? As I live, there stands Evans the smith, at his door, tankard in hand, as he did when I was a boy!'

The brawny smith came across the street to them; but stopped when he saw Amyas, but no Frank.

'Better one than neither, Ma'am!' said he, trying a rough comfort. Amyas shook his hand as he passed him, but Mrs. Leigh neither heard nor saw him, nor any one.

'Mother,' said Amyas, when they were now past the causeway, 'we are rich for life.'

'Yes, a martyr's death was the fittest for him.'

'I have brought home treasure untold.'

'What, my boy?'

'Treasure untold. Cary has promised to see to it to-night.'

'Very well. I would that he had slept at our house. He was a kindly lad, and loved Frank. When did he?—'

'Three years ago, and more. Within two months of our sailing.'

'Ah! Yes, he told me so.'

'Told you so?'

'Yes; the dear lad has often come to see me in my sleep, but you never came. I guessed how it was—as it should be.'

'But I loved you none the less, mother.'

'I know that, too. But you were busy with the men, you know, sweet, so your spirit could not come roving home like his, which was free. Yes—all as it should be. My mind, and do you not find it cold here in England, after those hot regions?'

'Ayacanora's heart is warm, she does not think about cold.'

'Warm? perhaps you will warm my heart for me, then.'

'Would God I could do it, mother,' and Amyas, half reproachfully.

Mrs. Leigh looked up in his face, and burst into a violent flood of tears.

'Sinful! sinful that I am!'

'Blessed creature!' cried Amyas, 'if you speak so I shall go mad. Mother, mother, I have been dreading this meeting for months. It has been a nightmare hanging over me like a horrible black thunder-cloud, a great chill mists high, with its top hid in the clouds, which I had to climb, and dare not. I have longed to leap overboard, and flee from it like a coward into the depths of the sea—The thought that you might ask me whether I was not my brother's keeper—that you might require his blood at my hands—and now, now! when it comes! to find you all love, and trust, and patience—mother, mother, it's more than I can bear!' and he wept violently.

Mrs. Leigh knew enough of Amyas to know that any burst of this kind, from his quiet nature, betokened some very fearful struggle, and the loving creature forgot everything instantly, in the one desire to soothe him.

And soothe him she did, and home the two went arm in arm together, while Ayacanora held fast, like a child, by the skirt of Mrs. Leigh's cloak. The self-help and daring of the first nymph had given place to the trembling modesty of the young girl, suddenly cast on shore in a new world, among strange faces, strange hopes, and strange fears also.

'Will your mother love me?' whispered she to Amyas, as she went in.

'Yes, but you must do what she tells you.' Ayacanora pouted.

'She will laugh at me, because I am wild.'

'She never laughs at any one.'

'Humph!' said Ayacanora. 'Well, I shall not be afraid of her. I thought she would have

been tall like you ; but she is not even as big as me.'

This hardly sounded hopeful for the prospect of Ayacanora's obedience ; but ere twenty-four hours had passed, Mrs. Leigh had won her over utterly, and she explained her own speech by saying that she thought so great a man ought to have a great mother. She had expected, poor thing, in her simplicity, some awful princess with a frown like Juno's own, and found instead a healing angel.

Her story was soon told to Mrs. Leigh, who of course, woman-like, would not allow a doubt as to her identity. And the sweet mother never nuprinted a prouder or fonder kiss upon her son's forehead, than that with which she repaid his simple declaration, that he had kept unspotted, like a gentleman and a Christian, the soul which God had put into his charge.

'Then you have forgiven me, mother ?'

'Years ago I said in this same room, what should I render to the Lord for having given me two such sons ? And in this room I say it once again. Tell me all about my other son, that I may honour him as I honour you.'

And then, with the iron nerve which good women have, she made him give her every detail of Lucy Fasmore's story, and of all which had happened from the day of their sailing to that luckless night at Guyra. And when it was done, she led Ayacanora out, and began busy-ing herself about the gull's comforts, as calmly as if Frank and Amyas had been sleeping in their cribs in the next room.

But she had hardly gone upstairs, when a loud knock at the door was followed by its opening hastily, and into the hall burst, regardless of etiquette, the tall and stately figure of Sir Richard Grenville.

Amyas dropped on his knees instinctively. The stern warrior was quite unmannered, and as he bent over his godson, a tear dropped from that iron cheek, upon the non cheek of Amyas Leigh.

'My lad ! my glorious lad ! and where have you been ? Get up, and tell me all. The sailors told me a little, but I must hear every word. I knew you would do something grand. I told your mother you were too good a workman for God to throw away. Now, let me have the whole story. Why, I am out of breath. To tell truth I ran three parts of the way hither.'

And down the two sat, and Amyas talked long into the night, while Sir Richard, his usual statelyness recovered, smiled stern approval at each deed of daring ; and when all was ended, answered with something like a sigh—

'Would God that I had been with you every step ! Would God, at least, that I could show as good a three years' log book, Amyas, my lad !'

'You can show a better one, I doubt not.'

'Humph !' With the exception of one paltry Spanish prize, I don't know that the Queen is the better, or her enemies the worse, for me, since we parted last in Dublin city.'

'You are too modest, sir.'

'Would that I were, but I got on in Ireland, I found, no better than my neighbours ; and so came home again, to find that while I had been wasting my time in that land of misrule, Raleigh had done a deed to which I can see no end. For, lad, he has found (or rather his two captains, Amadas and Barlow, have found for him) between Florida and Newfoundland, a country, the like of which, I believe, there is not on the earth for climate and fertility. Whether there be gold there, I know not, and it matters little, for there is all else on earth that man can want, furs, timber, rivers, game, sugar-canes, corn, fruit, and every commodity which France, Spain, or Italy can yield, with in abundance, the savages civil enough for savages, and, in a word, all which goes to the making of as noble a jewel as her Majesty's crown can wear. The people call it Wingandacoo, but we, after her Majesty, Virginia.'

'You have been there, then ?'

'The year before last, lad, and left there Ralf Lane, Amadas, and some twenty gentlemen, and many men, and, moreover, some money of my own, and some of old Will Salterne's, with neither of us will ever see again. For the colony, I know not how, quarrelled with the Indians (I fear I too was over sharp with some of them for stealing—if I was, God forgive me), and could not, forsooth, keep themselves alive for twelve months, so that Drake, coming back from his last West Indian voyage, after giving them all the help he could, had to bring the whole party home. And if you will believe it, the fruit-hearted fellows had not been gone a fortnight, before I was back again with three ships and all that they could want. And never was I more wroth in my life, when all I found was the ruins of their huts, which (so rich as the growth there) were already full of great no-lons, and wild deer feeding thereon—a poor sight enough, but not what I wanted just then. So back I came, and being in no overgood temper, vented my humours on the Portuguese at the Azores, and had hard fights and small booty. So there the matter stands, but not for long, for shame it were if such a paradise, once found by Britons, should fall into the hands of any but her Majesty, and we will try again this spring, if men and money can be found. Ph, lad ?'

'But the prize ?'

'Ah ! that was no small make weight to our masters, after all. I sighted her for six days' sail from the American coast, but ere we could lay her aboard it fell dead calm. No sea, no boat, no wind—she was all lost in a gale of wind—and the other ships were becalmed two leagues astern of me. There was no use lying there and pounding her till she sank, so I called the carpenter, got up all the old chests, and with them and some spars we floated ourselves along-side, and only just in time. For the last of us had hardly scrambled up into the chains, when our crazy Noah's ark went all aboard, and sank at the side, so that if we had

been minded to run away, Amyas, we could not; whereon, judging valour to be the better part of discretion (as I usually do), we fell to with our swords and had her in five minutes, and fifty thousand pounds' worth in her, which set up my purse again, and Raleigh's too, though I fear it has run out again since as fast as it ran in.

And so ended Sir Richard's story.

Amyas went the next day to Salterne, and told his tale. The old man had heard the outlines of it already, but he calmly bade him sit down, and listened to all, his chin upon his hands, his elbows on his knees. His cheek never blanched, his lips never quivered throughout. Only when Amyas came to Rose's marriage, he heaved a long breath, as if a weight was taken off his heart.

'Say that again, sir.'

Amyas said it again, and then went on, faltering, he hinted at the manner of his death. 'Go on, sir! Why are you afraid? There is nothing to be ashamed of there, is there?'

Amyas told the whole with downcast eyes, and then stole a look at his hearer's face. There was no sign of emotion, only somewhat of a proud smile curled the corners of that iron mouth.

'And her husband?' asked he, after a pause.

'I am ashamed to have to tell you, sir, that the man still lives.'

'Still lives, sir?'

'Too true, as far as I know. That it was not my fault, my story bears me witness.'

'Sir, I never doubted your will to kill him. Still lives, you say? Well, so do rats and adlers. And now, I suppose, Captain Leigh, your worship is minded to permit yourself on shore a while with the fair lass whom you have brought home (as I hear) before having another dash at the devil and his kin?'

'Do not mention that young lady's name with mine, sir, she is no more to me than she is to you, for she has Spanish blood in her veins.'

Salterne smiled grimly.

'But I am minded at least to do one thing, Mr Salterne, and that is, to kill Spaniards, in fair fight, by land and sea, wheresoever I shall meet them. And, therefore, I stay not long here, whithersoever I may be bound next.'

'Well, sir, when you start, come to me for a ship, and the best I have is at your service, and, if she do not suit, command her to be fitted as you like best, and I, William Salterne, will pay for all which you shall command to be done.'

'My good sir, I have accounts to square with you after a very different fashion. As part-adventurer in the *Rose*, I have to deliver to you your share of the treasure which I have brought home.'

'My shay, sir! If I understood you, my ship was lost off the coast of the Caraccas three years ago, and this treasure was all ~~gone~~ since!'

'True; but you, as an adventurer in the expedition, have a just claim for your share, and will receive it.'

'Captain Leigh, you are, I see, as your father was before you, a just and upright Christian man. But, sir, this money is none of mine, for it was won in no ship of mine.—Hear me, sir! And if it had been, and that ship'—(he could not speak her name)—'lay safe and sound now by Bideford quay, do you think, sir, that William Salterne is the man to make money out of his daughter's sin and sorrow, and to handle the price of blood? No, sir! You went like a gentleman to seek her, and like a gentleman, as all the world knows, you have done your best, and I thank you. But our account ends there. The treasure is yours, sir, I have enough, and more than enough, and none, God help me, to leave it to, but greedily and needily kin, who will be rather the worse than the better for it. And if I have a claim in law for aught, which I know not, neither shall ever ask—why, if you are not too proud, accept that claim as a plain burgher's thank-offering to you, sir, for a great and a noble love which you and your brother have shown to one who, though I say it to my shame, was not worthy thereof.'

'She was worthy of that and more, sir. For if she smelt like a woman, she died like a saint.'

'Yes, sir!' answered the old man, with a proud smile, 'she had the right English blood in her, I doubt not, and showed it at the last. But now, sir, no more of this. When you need a ship, come to my service, till then, sir, farewell, and God be with you.'

And the old man rose, and with an unmoved countenance bowed Amyas to the door. Amyas went back and told Cary, bidding him take half of Salterne's gift, but Cary swore a great oath that he would have none of it.

'Hear of Clovelly, Amyas, and want to rob you? I who have lost nothing,—you who have lost a brother! God forbid that I should ever touch a farthing beyond my original share!'

That evening a messenger from Bideford came running breathless up to Burrough Court. The authorities wanted Amyas's immediate attendance, for he was one of the last, it seemed, who had seen Mr Salterne alive.

Salterne had gone over, as soon as Amyas departed, to an old acquaintance, signed and sealed his will in their presence with a firm and cheerful countenance, refusing all condolence, and then gone home, and locked himself into Rose's room. Supper time came and he did not appear. The apprentices could not make him answer, and at last called in the neighbours, and forced the door. Salterne was kneeling by his daughter's bed; his head was upon the coverlet, his Prayer-book was open before him at the Burial Service; his hands were clasped in supplication, but he was dead and cold.

He will lay by him. He had left all his property among his poor relations, saving and

excepting all money, etc., due to him as owner and part-adventurer of the ship *Rose*, and his new bark of three hundred tons burdon, now lying East-the-water, all which was bequeathed to Captain Amyas Leigh, on condition that he should re-christen that bark the *Vengeance*, fit her out with part of the treasure, and with her sail once more against the Spaniard, before three years were past.

And thus was the end of William Salterne, no merchant.

CHAPTER XXIX

HOW THE VIRGINIA FLEET WAS STOPPED BY THE QUEEN'S COMMAND

'The daughter of debate,
That discord still doth sow,
Shall reap no gun when former rule
Hath taught all peace to grow
No foreign innuendo weight
Shall enter in this port
(For it thus it brookes no stranger's force,
I let them elsewhere resort)

Qu. Elizabeth 1569

AND now Amyas is settled quietly at home again, and for the next twelve months little passes worthy of record in these pages. Yeo has installed himself as major domo, with no very definite functions save those of walking about everywhere at Amyas's heels like a lank grey wolf-hound, and spending his evenings at the bedside, as a true old sailor does, with his hand on his knee, and his hands busy in manufacturing numberless neckties, useful and useless, for every member of the family, and above all for Ayacanora, whom he visits every week by humbly offering some toy only fit for a child, at which she pouts, and is reproved by Mrs. Leigh, and then takes the gift, and put it away never to look at it again. For her whole soul is set upon being an English maid, and she runs about all day long after Mrs. Leigh, insisting upon learning the mysteries of the kitchen and the stillroom, and, above all, the art of making clothes for herself, and at last for everybody in Northam. For first, she will be a good housewife, like Mrs. Leigh, and next a new idea has dawned upon her, that of helping others. To the boundless hospitality of the savage she has been of course accustomed, but to give to those who can give nothing in return, is a new thought. She sees Mrs. Leigh spending every spare hour in working for the poor, and visiting them in their cottages. She sees Amyas, after public thanks in church for his safe return, giving away money, food, what not, in Northam, Appledore, and Hidesford, buying cottages and making them almshouses for worn-out mariners; and she is told that this is his thank-offering to God. She is puzzled, her notion of a thank-offering was rather that of the Indians, and indeed of the Spaniards,—sacrifices of human victims, and the bedizenment of the Great Spirit's sanctuary with their

skulls and bones. Not that Amyas, as a plain old-fashioned churchman, was unmindful of the good old instinctive rule, that something should be given to the Church itself, for the vicar of Northam was soon resplendent with a new surplice, and what was more, the altar with a splendid flagon and salver of plate (lost, I suppose, in the civil wars) which had been taken in the great galleon *Ayacanora* could understand that but the almsgiving she could not, till Mrs. Leigh told her, in her simple way, that whosoever gave to the poor gave to the Great Spirit, for the Great Spirit was in them, and in *Ayacanora* too, if she would be quiet and listen to him, instead of pouting, and stamping, and doing nothing but what she liked. And the poor child took in that new thought like a child, and worked her fingers to the bone for all the old dames in Northam, and went about with Mrs. Leigh, lovely and beloved, and looked now and then out from under her long black eyelashes to see if she was winning a smile from Amyas. And on the day on which she won one, she was good all day, and on the day on which she did not, she was thoroughly naughty, and would have worn out the patience of any soul less chastened than Mrs. Leigh's. But as for the pomp and glory of her dress, there was no keeping it within bounds, and she swept into church each Sunday bedizened in Spanish trim, with such a blaze and rustle, that the good vicar had to remonstrate humbly with Mrs. Leigh on the disturbance which she caused to the eyes and thoughts of all his congregation. To which *Ayacanora* answered, that she was not thinking about them and they need not think about her, and that if the Priche in plain English, the conjurer, as she supposed, wanted a present, he might have all her Mexican fether-dresses, she would not wear them—they were wild Indian things, and she was an English maid—but they would just do for a Priche, and so darted upstairs, brought them down, and insisted so stoutly on arraying the vicar therein, that the good man beat a swift retreat. But he carried off with him, nevertheless, one of the handsomest mantles, which, instead of selling it, he converted cleverly enough into an altar cloth, and for several years afterwards, the communion at Northam was celebrated upon a blaze of emerald, azure, and crimson, which had once adorned the sinful body of some Aztec prince.

So *Ayacanora* flattered on while Amyas watched her, half amused, half in simple pride of her beauty, and looked around at all gazers, as much as to say, 'See what a fine bird I have brought home.'

Another great trouble which she gave Mrs. Leigh was her conduct to the ladies of the neighbourhood. They came, of course, one and all, not only to congratulate Mrs. Leigh, but to get a peep at the fair savage, but the fair savage snubbed them all round, from the vicar's wife to Lady Grenville herself, so effectually that few attempted a second visit.

Mrs. Leigh remonstrated, and was answered by floods of tears. 'They only come to stare at a poor wild Indian girl, and she would not be made a show of. She was like a queen once, and every one obeyed her, but here every one looked down upon her.' But when Mrs. Leigh asked her, whether she would sooner go back to the forests, the poor girl clung to her like a baby, and entreated not to be sent away, 'She would sooner be a slave in the kitchen here, than go back to the bad people.'

And so on, month after month of foolish storm and foolish sunshine, but she was under the shadow of one in whom was neither stern nor sunshine, but a perpetual genial calm of soft grey weather, which tempored down to its own peacefulness all who entered its charmed influence, and the outbursts grew more and more rare, and Ayacanora more and more rational, though no more happy, day by day.

And one by one small hints came out which made her identity certain, at least in the eyes of Mrs. Leigh and Yeo. After she had become familiar with the sight of houses, she gave them to understand that she had seen such things before. The red cattle, too, seemed not unknown to her, the sheep puzzled her for some time, and at last she gave Mrs. Leigh to understand that they were too small!

'Ah, madam,' quoth Yeo, who caught at every straw, 'it is because she has been accustomed to those great camel sheep (llamas they call them) in Peru.'

But Ayacanora's delight was a horse. The use of tame animals at all was a daily wonder to her, but that a horse could be ridden was the crowning miracle of all, and a horse she would ride, and after plaguing Amyas for one in vain (for he did not want to break her pretty neck), she proposed confidentially to Yeo to steal one, and toiled in that, went to the vicar and offered to barter all her finery for his broken-kneed pony. But the vicar was too honest to drive so good a bargain, and the matter ended in Amyas buying her a jennet, which she learned in a fortnight to ride like a very Guacho.

And now awoke another curious slumbering reminiscence. For one day, at Lady Grenville's invitation, the whole family went over to Stow, Mrs. Leigh soberly on a pillion behind the groom, Ayacanora cantering round and round upon the moors like a hound let loose, and trying to make Amyas ride races with her. But that night, sleeping in the same room with Mrs. Leigh, she awoke shrieking, and sobbed out a long story how the 'Old ape of Panama,' her especial abomination, had come to her bedside and dragged her forth into the courtyard, and how she had mounted a horse and ridden with an Indian over great moors and high mountains down into a dark wood, and there the Indian and the horses vanished, and she found herself suddenly changed once more into a little savage child. So strong was the impression, that she could not be persuaded that the thing had not

happened, if not that night, at least some night or other. So Mrs. Leigh at last believed the same, and told the company next morning in her pious way how the Lord had revealed in a vision to the poor child who she was, and how she had been exposed in the forests by her jealous step-father, and neither Sir Richard nor his wife could doubt but that her was the true solution. It was probable that Don Xararte, though his home was Panama, had been often at Quito, for Yeo had seen him come on board the Lima ship at Guayaquil, one of the nearest ports. This would explain her having been found by the Indians beyond Cotopaxi, the nearest peak of the Eastern Andes, if, as was but too likely, the old man, believing her to be Oxenham's child, had conceived the fearful vengeance of exposing her in the forests.

Other little facts came to light one by one. They were all connected (as was natural in a savage) with some ritual or other natural object. Whatever impressions her morals or affections had received, had been erased by the long spiritual death of that forest sojourn, and Mrs. Leigh could not elicit from her a trace of feeling about her mother, or recollection of any early religious teaching. This link, however, was supplied at last, and in this way.

Sir Richard had brought home an Indian with him from Virginia. Of his original name I am not sure, but he was probably the 'Wanchese' whose name occurs with that of 'Manteo'.

This man was to be baptized in the church at Bideford by the name of Raleigh, his sponsors being most probably Raleigh himself, who may have been there on Virginia business, and Sir Richard Grenville. All the notabilities of Bideford came, of course, to see the baptism of the first 'Red man' whose foot had ever trodden British soil, and the mayor and corporation were appeared in full robes, with canes and truncheons, to do honour to that first fruits of the Gospel in the West.

Mrs. Leigh went, as a matter of course, and Ayacanora would needs go too. She was very anxious to know what they were going to do with the 'Carib'.

'To make him a Christian.'

'Why did they not make her one?'

Because she was one already. They were sure that she had been christened as soon as she was born. But she was not sure, and pointed a good deal at the chance of an 'ugly red Carib' being better off than she was. However, all assembled duly, the stately son of the forest, now transformed into a footman of Sir Richard's, was standing at the font, the service was half performed when a heavy sigh, or rather groan, made all eyes turn, and Ayacanora sank fainting upon Mrs. Leigh's bosom.

She was carried out, and to a neighbouring house; and when she came to herself, told a strange story. How, as she was standing there trying to recollect whether she too had ever been baptized, the church seemed to grow larger, the priest's dress richer, the walls were covered

with pictures, and above the altar, in jewelled robes, stood a lady, and in her arms a babe. Soft music sounded in her ears, the air was full (on that she insisted much) of fragrant odour which filled the church like mist; and through it she saw not one, but many Indians, standing by the font, and a lady held her by the hand, and she was a little girl again.

And after many quæstio nuga, so accurate was her recollection, not only of the scene but of the building, that Yeo pronounced—

‘A christened woman she is, madam, if Popish christening is worth calling such, and has seen Indians christened too in the Cathedral Church at Quito, the inside whereof I know well enough, and too well, for I saw there three mortal hours in a San Pauto, to hear a friar preach his false doctrines, not knowing whether I was to be hanged or not next day.’

So Azacora went home to Hurreough, and Raleigh the Indian to Sir Richard’s house. The entry of his baptism still stands, crooked lettered, in the old parchment register of the Bishopric baptisms for 1587-8—

‘Raleigh, a Winganditoian March 26’

His name occurs once more, a year and a month after—

‘Rawly, a Winganditoian, April 1589’

But it is notorious to all among the baptisms. The free forest wanderer has pined in vain for his old deer-hunts amid the fragrant cedar woods, and lazy puddings through the still lagoons, where water-lilies sleep beneath the shade of great magnolias, wreathed with clustered vines, and now he is away to ‘happier hunting grounds,’ and all that is left of him below sleeps in the narrow town churchyard, blocked in with dingy houses, whose tenants will never waste a sigh upon the Indian’s grave. There the two entries stand, unto this day, and most pathetic they have seemed to me, a sort of emblem and first-fruits of the sad fate of that worn-out old race, to whom civilisation came too late to save, but not too late to hasten their decay.

But though Amyas lay idle, England did not. That spring saw another and a larger colony sent out by Raleigh to Virginia, under the charge of one John White. Raleigh had written more than once, entreating Amyas to take the command, which if he had done perhaps the United States had begun to exist twenty years sooner than they actually did. But his mother had bound him by a solemn promise (and who can wonder at her for asking, or at him for giving it?) to wait at home with her twelve months at least. So, instead of himself, he sent five hundred pounds, which I suppose are in Virginia (virtually at least) until this day; for they never came back again to him.

But, soon came a sharper trial of Amyas’s promise to his mother; and one which made him, for the first time in his life, moody, W. H.

peevish, and restless, at the thought that others were fighting Spaniards, while he was sitting idle at home. For his whole soul was filling fast with sullen malice against Don Guzman. He was losing the ‘single eye,’ and his whole body was no longer full of light. He had entered into the darkness in which every man walks who hates his brother, and it lay upon him like a black shadow day and night. No company, too, could be more fit to darken that shadow than Salvation Yeo’s. The old man grew more stern in his fanaticism day by day, and found a too willing listener in his master, and Mrs. Leigh was (perhaps for the first and last time in her life) seriously angry, when she heard the two coolly debating whether they had not committed a grievous sin in not killing the Spanish prisoners on board the galleon.

It must be said, however (as the poem facts set down in this book testify), that if such was the temper of Englishmen at that day, the Spaniards had done a good deal to provoke it and were just then attempting to do still more.

For now we are approaching the year 1588, ‘which an astronomer of Königsberg, above a hundred years before, foretold would be an admirable year, and the German chronologists preserved would be the chronological year of the world.’

The prophets may stand for what they are worth, but they were at least fulfilled. That year was, indeed, the chronological year of the world, and decided once and for all the fates of the European nations, and of the whole continent of America.

No wonder, then, all that happened in such great crisis of the human race) some avowed, instinct that The Day of the Lord was at hand, some dim feeling that there was war in heaven, and that the hosts of darkness and the angels of light were arrayed against each other in some mighty struggle for the possession of the souls of men, should have tried to express itself in astrologic dreams, and, as was the fashion then, attributed to the ‘rulers of the planetary houses,’ some sympathy with the coming world tragedy.

But, for the wise, there needed no conjunction of planets to tell them that the day was near at hand, when the long desultory duel between Spain and England would end, once and for all, in some great death grapple. The war, as yet, had been confined to the Netherlands, to the West Indies, and the coasts and isles of Africa, to the quarters, in fact, where Spain was held either to have no rights, or to have forfeited them by tyranny. But Spain itself had been respected by England, as England had by Spain, and trade to Spanish ports went on as usual, till, in the year 1585, the Spaniard, without warning, laid an embargo on all English ships coming to his European shores. They were to be seized, it seemed, to form part of an enormous armament, which was to attack and crush, once and for all—whom? The rebellious Netherlanders, said the

Spaniards but the Queen, the ministry, and, when it was just not too late, the people of England, thought otherwise. England was the destined victim, so, instead of negotiating, in order to avoid fighting, they fought in order to produce negotiation. Drake, Frobisher, and Carlele, as we have seen, swept the Spanish Main with fire and sword, stopping the Indian supplies, while Walsingham (craftiest, and yet most honest of mortals) prevented, by some mysterious financial operation, the Venetian merchants from repaying the Spaniards' loss by a loan; and no Armada came that year.

In the meanwhile, the Jesuits, here and abroad, made no secret, among their own dupes, of the real objects of the Spanish armaments. 'The impious horstus,'—the Drake and Raleigh, Grenvilles and Cavendishes, Hawkins and Frobishers, who had dared to violate that hidden sanctuary of just half the globe, which the pope had bestowed on the defender of the true faith,—a shameful ruin, a terrible death, awaited them, when their sacrilegious barks should sink beneath the thunder of Spanish cannon, blessed by the pope, and sanctified with holy water and prayer to the service of 'God and his Mother.' Yes, they would fall, and England with them. The proud islanders, who had dared to rebel against St. Peter, and to cast off the worship of 'Mary,' should bow their necks once more under the yoke of the Gospel. Their so-called Queen, illegitimate, excommunicate, contumacious, the abettor of free-trade, the defender of the Netherlands, the pillar of false doctrine throughout Europe, should be sent in chains across the Alps, to sue for her life at the feet of the injured and long-suffering father of mankind, while his nominee took her place upon the throne which she had long since forfeited by her heresy.

'What nobler work?' How could the Church of God be more gloriously propagated? How could higher merit be obtained by faithful Catholics? It must succeed. Spain was invincible in valour, inexhaustible in wealth. Heaven itself offered them an opportunity. They had nothing now to fear from the Turk, for they had concluded a truce with him, nothing from the French, for they were embroiled in civil war. The heavens themselves had called upon Spain to fulfil her heavenly mission, and restore to the Church's crown this brightest and richest of her lost jewels. The heavens themselves called to a new crusade. The saints, whose altars the English had rifled and profaned, called them to a new crusade. The Virgin Queen of Heaven, whose boundless stores of grace the English spurned, called them to a new crusade. Justly incensed at her own wrongs and indignities, that "ever-gracious Virgin, refuge of sinners, and mother of fair love, and holy hope," adjured by their knightly honour all valiant cavaliers to do battle in her cause against the impious harlot who assumed her titles, received from her idolatrous flatterers the homage due to Mary alone, and even (for

Father Parsons had asserted it, therefore it must be true) had caused her name to be substituted for that of Mary in the Litany of the Church. Let all who wore within a manly heart, without a manly sword, look on the woes of "Mary,"—her shame, her tears, her blushes, her heart pierced through with daily wounds, from horetic tongues, and choose between her and Elizabeth!

So said Parsons, Allen, and dozens more; and said more than this, too, and much which one had rather not repeat, and were somewhat surprised and mortified to find that their hearers, though they granted the premises, were too dull or carnal to arrive at the same conclusion. The English lay Romanists, almost to a man, had hearts scurrilous than their beads, and, however illogically, could not help holding to the strange superstition, that, being Englishmen, they were bound to fight for England. So the hapless Jesuits, who had been boasting for years past that the persecuted faithful throughout the island would rise as one man to fight under the blessed banner of the pope and Spain, found that the faithful, like Thomas of old, forsook them and 'went after this present world', having no objection, of course, to the restoration of popery but preferring some more comfortable method than an invasion which would inevitably rob them of their ancestral lands and would seat merely and greedy Castilians in their old country houses, to treat their tenants as they had treated the Indians of Hispaniola, and them as they had treated the Canines.

But though the hearts of men in that ungodly age were too hard to melt at the supposed woes of the Mary who reigned above, and too dull to turn rebels and traitors for the sake of those thrones and principalities in supra-lunar spheres which might be in her gift, yet there was a Mary who reigned (or ought to reign) below, whose woes (like her gifts) were somewhat more palpable to the carnal sense. A Mary who, having every comfort and luxury (including hounds and horses) found for her by the English Government, at an expense which would be now equal to some twenty thousand a year, could afford to employ the whole of her jointure as Queen Dowager of France (probably equal to fifty thousand a year more) in plotting the destruction of the said government, and the murder of its Queen, a Mary who, if she prospered as she ought, might have dukedoms, and earldoms, fur lands and castles to bestow on her faithful servants, a Mary, finally, who contrived by means of an angel face, a serpent tongue, and a heart (as she said herself) as hard as a diamond, to make every weak man fall in love with her, and, what was worse, fancy more or less that she was in love with him.

Of her the Jesuits were not unmindful; and found it convenient, indeed, to forget a while the sorrows of the Queen of Heaven in those of the Queen of Scots. Not that they cared much for those sorrows, but they were an excellent stock-in-trade. She was a Romanist, she was 'beautiful and unfortunate,' a virtue, which,

like charity, hides the multitude of sins, and therefore she was a convenient card to play in the great game of Rome against the Queen and people of England; and played the poor card was, till it got torn up by over-using. Into her merits or demerits I do not enter deeply here. Let her rest in peace.

To all which the people of England made a most practical and terrible answer. From the highest noble to the lowest peasant, arose one simultaneous plebiscitum. "We are tired of these seventeen years of chicanery and terror. This woman must die, or the commonweal of England perish!" We all know which of the alternatives was chosen!

All Europe stood aghast, but rather with astonishment at English audacity, than with horror at English wickedness. Mary's own French kinsfolk had openly given her up as too bad to be excused, much less assisted. Her own son blustered a little to the English ambassador, for the majesty of kings was invaded where Walsingham said in open council, that "the Queen should send him a couple of hounds, and that would set all right." Which sage advice (being acted on, and some deer sent over and above) was so successful that the pious mourner, having run off (Ranulph says, like a baby to see the deer in their cart), returned for answer that he would "thereafter depend wholly upon her Majesty, and serve her fortune against all the world, and that he only wanted now two of her Majesty's yeoman prickers, and a couple of her grooms of the deer." The Spaniard was not sorry on the whole for the catastrophe; for all that had kept him from conquering England long ago was the fear lest, after it was done, he might have had to put the crown thereof on Mary's head, instead of his own. But Mary's death was as convenient a stalking horse to him as to the pope, and now the Armada was coming in earnest.

Elizabeth began negotiating; but fancy not that she does nothing more, as the following letter testifies, written about Midsummer, 1587.

'F Drake to Captain Amyas Leigh. Thus with haste.

'DEAR LAD,

"As I said to her most glorious Majesty, I say to you now. There are two ways of facing an enemy. The one to stand off, and cry, "Try that again and I'll strike thee", the other to strike him first, and then, "Try that at all, and I'll strike thee again." Of which latter counsel her Majesty so far approves, that I go forthwith (tell it not in Gath) down the coast, to singe the King of Spain's beard (so I termed it to her Majesty, she laughing), in which if I leave so much as a fishing-boat afloat from the Groyne unto Cadiz, it will not be with my good will, who intend that if he comes this year, he shall come by swimming and not by sailing. So if you are still the man I have known you, bring a good ship round to Ply-

mouth within the month, and away with me for hard blows and hard money, the feel of both of which you know pretty well by now.

'Thine lovingly,

'F DRAKE.'

Amyas clutched his locks over this letter, and smoked more tobacco the day he got it than had ever before been consumed at once in England. But he kept true to his promise, and this was his reply—

'Amayas Leigh to the Worshipful Sir F Drake, Admiral of her Majesty's Fleet in Plymouth

'MOST HONOURABLE SIR,

"A magician keeps me here, in balboes for which you have no picklock, namely, a mother who forbids. The loss is mine, but Antichrist I can fight any year (for he will not die this Lent, nor the next), while my mother—but I will not trouble your patience more than to ask from you to get the news, if you can, from any prisoners of one Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto, whether he is in Spain or in the Indies, and what the villain does, and where he is to be found. This only I entrust of you, and so remain behind with a heavy heart.

'Yours to command in all else, and I

would to Heaven, in this also,

'AMYAS LEIGH.'

I am sorry to have to say, that after having thus obeyed his mother, Master Amyas as men are too apt to do, revenged himself on her by being more and more cross and disagreeable. But his temper amended much, when, a few months after, Drake returned triumphant, having destroyed a hundred sail in Cadiz alone, taken three great galleons with immense wealth on board, burnt the small craft all along the shore, and offered battle to Santa Cruz at the mouth of the Tagus. After which it is unnecessary to say, that the Armada was put off for yet another year.

This news, indeed, gave Amyas little comfort. for he merely observed, grumbling, that Drake had gone and spoiled everybody else's sport; but what cheered him was news from Drake that Don Guzman had been heard of from the captain of one of the galleons, that he was high in favour in Spain, and commandant of soldiers on board one of the largest of the Marquis's ships.

And when Amyas heard that, a terrible joy took possession of him. When the Armada came, as come it would, he should meet his enemy at last! He would wait now patiently: if—and he shuddered at himself, as he found himself in the very act of breathing a prayer that Don Guzman might not die before that meeting.

In the meanwhile, rumour flew thousand-tongued through the length and breadth of the land; of vast preparations going on in Spain and Italy; of timber felled long before for some such purpose, brought down to the sea, and sawn out for shipbuilding; of casting of cannon,

and drilling of soldiers; of ships in hundreds collecting at Lisbon, of a crusade preached by Pope Sixtus the Fifth, who had bestowed the kingdom of England on the Spaniard, to be enjoyed by him as vassal tributary to Rome, of a million of gold to be paid by the pope, one half down at once, the other half when London was taken, of Cardinal Allen writing and printing busily in the Netherlands, calling on all good Englishmen to carry out, by rebelling against Elizabeth, the Bull of Sixtus the Fifth, and (I blush to repeat it) to have been dictated by the Holy Ghost, of Inquisitors getting ready fetters and devil's engines of all sorts, of princes and noblemen, flocking from all quarters, gentlemen selling their private estates to get out ships, how the Prince of Meito, the Marquess of Burgundy, Vespasian Gonzaga, John Medici, Amadis of Savoy, in short, the illegitimate sons of all the southern princes having no lands of their own, were coming to find that necessary of life in this pleasant little white-garden. Nay, the Duke of Medina Sidonia had already engaged Mount-Edgemore for himself, as the fairest jewel of the south, which even good old Sir Richard Edgecombe heard, he observed quietly, that in 1565 he had the pleasure of receiving at his table at one time the admirals of England, Spain, and the Netherlands, and therefore had experience in entertaining Dons, and made preparations for the visit by filling his cellars with gunpowder, with a view to a housewarming and fen-de-join on the occasion. But as old Fuller says, 'The bear was not yet killed, and Medina Sidonia might have caught a great cold, had he no other clothes to wear than the skin thereof.'

So flew rumour, false and true, till poor John Bull's wits were well-nigh turned. But to the very last, after his lazy fashion, he persuaded himself that it would all come right somehow, that it was too great news to be true, that if it was true, the expedition was only meant for the Netherlands, and, in short, sat quietly over his beef and beer for many a day after the French king had sent him fair warning, and the Queen, the ministry, and the admirals had been assuring him again and again that he, and not the Dutchman, was the destined prey of this great flight of ravenous birds.

At last the Spaniard, in order that there should be no mistake about the matter, kindly printed a complete bill of the play, to be seen still in Van Meteran, for the comfort of all true Catholics, and confusion of all pestilent heretics, which document, of course, the seminary priests used to enforce the duty of helping the invaders, and the certainty of their success, and from their hands it soon passed into those of the devout ladies, who were not very likely to keep it to themselves, till John Bull himself found his daughters buzzing over it with very pale faces (as young ladies well might who had no wish to follow the fate of the damsel of Antwerp), and condescending to run his eye through it, discovered, what all the rest of Europe had

known for months past, that he was in a very great scrape.

Well it was for England then, that her Tudor sovereigns had compelled every man (though they kept up no standing army) to be a trained soldier. Well it was that Elizabeth, even in those dangerous days of intrigue and rebellion, had trusted her people enough, not only to leave them their weapons, but (what was, forsooth, in these more 'free' and 'liberal' days dare not do) to teach them how to use them. Well it was, that by careful legislation for the comfort and employment of 'the masses' (term then, thank God, unknown), she had both won their loyalty, and kept them busied in fighting order. Well it was that, acting as fully as Napoleon did on 'la carrière ouverte aux talents', she had raised to the highest posts in her councils, her army, and her navy, men of business, who had not been ashamed to buy and sell as merchants and adventurers. Well for England, in a word, that Elizabeth had pursued for thirty years a very different course from that which we have been pursuing for the last thirty, with one exception, namely the leaving as much as possible to private enterprise.

There we have copied her world to heaven that we had in some other matters. It is the fashion now to call her a despot, but unless every monarch is to be branded with that epithet whose power is not as is ascribed as Queen Victoria's is now, we ought rather to call her the most popular sovereign, obeyed of their own free will by the freest subjects which England has ever seen; confess the Armada fight to have been as great a moral triumph as it was a political one, and (now that our literature is a little silenced by Crimean disasters) inquire whether we have not something to learn from those old Tudor times, as to how to choose officials, how to train a people, and how to defend a country.

To return to the thread of my story

January 1587-8 had well-nigh run through, before Sir Richard Grenville made his appearance on the streets of Budeford. He had been appointed in November one of the council of war for providing for the safety of the nation, and the West Country had seen nothing of him since. But one morning, just before Christmas, his stately figure darkened the old bay window at Burrough, and Amyas rushed out to meet him, and bring him in, and ask what news from Court.

'All good news, dear lad, and dearer Madam. The Queen shows the spirit of a very Hecuba or Semiramis, ay, a very Scythian Tomyris, and if she had the Spaniard before her now, would verily, for aught I know, feast him as the Scythian queen did Cyrus, with "Sata te sanguine, quod sisti."'

'I trust her most merciful spirit is not so changed already,' said Mrs. Leigh.

'Well, if she would not do it, I would, and ask pardon afterwards, as Raleigh did about the rascals at Smerwick, whom Amyas knows

of Mrs. Leigh, those are times in which mercy is cruelty. Not England alone, but the world, the Bible, the Gospel itself, is at stake, and we must do terrible things, lest we suffer more terrible ones.'

'God will take care of world and Bible better than any cruelty of ours, dear Sir Richard.'

'Nay, but, Mrs. Leigh, we must help Him to take care of them! If those Smirwick Spaniards had not been—'

'The Spaniard would not have been exasperated into invading us.'

'And we should not have had this chance of crushing him once and for all—but the quarrel is of older standing. Madam, eh, Amyas? Amyas, has Raleigh written to you of late?'

'Not a word, and I wonder why.'

'Well, no wonder at that, if you know how he has been labouring. The wonder is, when he got the knowledge wherewith to labour, for he never saw sea-work to my remembrance.'

'Never saw a shot fired by sea, except ours at Smirwick, and that hardly with the Spaniards in 1579, when he sailed for Virginia with Sir Humphrey, and he was a mere crack then.'

'So you consider him as your pupil, eh? But he learnt enough in the Netherland wars, and in Ireland too, if not of the strength of ships, yet still of the weakness of land forces, and would you believe it, the man has twisted the whole council round his finger, and made them give up the land defences to the naval ones.'

'Quite right he, and wooden walls against stone ones for ever! But as for twisting, he would persuade Satan, if he got him alone for half an hour.'

'I wish he would sail for Spain then, just now, and try the powers of his tongue,' said Mrs. Leigh.

'But are we to have the honour, really?'

'We are, lad. There were many in the council who were for disputing the landing on shore, and said, which I do not deny—that the 'prentice boys of London could face the bloodiest blood in Spain. But Raleigh argued (following my Lord Burleigh in that) that we differed from the Low Countries, and all other lands, in that we had not a castle or town throughout, which would stand a ten days' siege, and that our ramparts, as he well said, were, after all, only a body of men. So, he argued, as long as the enemy has power to land where he will, prevention, rather than cure, is our only hope, and that belongs to the office, not of an army, but of a fleet. So the fleet was agreed on, and a fleet we shall have.'

'Then here is his health, the health of a true friend to all bold manners and myself in particular! But where is he now?'

'Coming here to-morrow, as I hope—for he left London with me, and so down by us into Cornwall, to drill the train-bands, as he is bound to do, being Seneschal of the Duchies and Lieutenant-General of the county.'

'Besides Lord Warden of the Stanneries. How the man thrives!' said Mrs. Leigh.

'How the man deserves to thrive!' said Amyas; 'but what are we to do?'

'That is the rub. I would fain stay and fight the Spaniards.'

'So would I, and will.'

'But he has other plans in his head for us.'

'We can make our own plans without his help.'

'Heighday, Amyas! How long? When did he ask you to do a thing yet and you refuse him?'

'Not often, certainly—but Spaniards I must fight.'

'Well, so must I, boy—but I have given a sort of promise to him, nevertheless.'

'Not for me too, I hope?'

'No, he will extract that himself when he comes, you must come and sup to-morrow, and talk it over.'

'I talked over, rather. What chestnut does the cat want us monkeys to pull out of the fire for him now, I wonder?'

'Sir Richard Grenville is hardly accustomed to be called a monkey,' said Mrs. Leigh.

'I meant no harm, and his worship knows it, none better—but where is Raleigh going to send us, with a murmur?'

'To Virginia. The settlers must have help, and, as I trust in God, we shall be back again long before this armament can bestir itself.'

So Raleigh came, saw, and conquered. Mrs. Leigh consented to Amyas's going (for his twelvemonth would be over ere the fleet could start) upon so peaceful and useful an errand, and the next five months were spent in continual labour on the part of Amyas and Grenville, till seven ships were all but ready in Boleford river, the admiral whereof was Amyas Leigh.

But that fleet was not destined ever to see the shores of the New World, and nobler work to do (if Americans will forgive the speech) than ever settling the United States.

It was in the long June evenings, in the year 1588, Mrs. Leigh sat in the open window, busy at her needle work. Ayacanora sat opposite to her, on the seat of the bay, trying diligently to read *The History of the Nine Worthies*, and stealing a glance every now and then towards the garden, where Amyas stalked up and down as he had used to do in happier days gone by. But his brow was contracted now, his eyes fixed on the ground, as he plodded backwards and forwards, his hands behind his back, and a huge cigar in his mouth, the wonder of the little boys of Northam, who peeped in stealthily as they passed the iron-work gates, to see the back of the famous fire-breathing captain who had sailed round the world and been in the country of headless men and flying dragons, and they popped back their heads suddenly, as he turned toward them in his walk. And Ayacanora looked, and looked, with no less admiration than the urchins at the gate, but she got no more of an answering look from Amyas than

they did, for his head was full of calculations of tonnage and stowage, of salt pork and albarrels, and the packing of tools and seeds, for he had promised Raleigh to do his best for the new colony, and he was doing it with all his might, so Ayacanora looked back again to her book, and heaved a deep sigh. It was answered by one from Mrs. Leigh.

'We are a melancholy pair, sweet chuck,' said the fair widow. 'What is my maid sighing about, there?'

'Because I cannot make out the long words,' said Ayacanora, telling a very white fib.

'Is that all? Come to me, and I will tell you.'

Ayacanora moved over to her, and sat down at her feet.

'H—e, h—e, r—o, fo, i—c—e—l, herocal,' said Mrs. Leigh.

'But what does that mean?'

'Grand, good, and bravo, like—'

Mrs. Leigh was about to hedge and the name of one who was lost to her on earth. His fair angelic face hung opposite upon the wall. She paused unable to pronounce his name, and lifted up her eyes, and gazed on the portrait, and breathed a prayer between closed lips, and drooped her head again.

Her pupil caught at the pause, and filled it up for herself—

'Like him?' and she turned her head quickly toward the window.

'Yes, like him, too,' said Mrs. Leigh, with a half-smile at the gesture. 'Now, mind your book. Maidens must not look out of the window in school hours.'

'Shall I ever be an English girl?' asked Ayacanora.

'You are one now, sweet, your father was an English gentleman.'

Amyas looked in, and saw the two sitting together.

'You seem quite merry there,' said he.

'Come in, then, and be merry with us.'

He entered, and sat down, while Ayacanora fixed her eyes most steadfastly on her book.

'Well, how goes on the reading?' said he, and then, without waiting for an answer—

'We shall be ready to clear out this day week, mother, I do believe, that is, if the hatchets are made in time to pack them.'

'I hope they will be better than the last,' said Mrs. Leigh. 'It seems to me a shameful sin to palm off on poor ignorant savages goods which we should consider worthless for ourselves.'

'Well, it's not over fair, but still, they are a sight better than they ever had before. An old hoop is better than a deer's bone, as Ayacanora knows,—eh?'

'I don't know anything about it,' said she, who was always nettled at the least allusion to her past wild life. 'I am an English girl now, and all that is gone—I forget it.'

'Forget it?' said he, teasing her for want of something better to do. 'Should not you like

to sail with us, now, and see the Indians in the forest once again?'

'Sail with you?' and she looked up eagerly.

'There! I knew it! She would not be four-and-twenty hours ashore, but she would be off into the woods again, bow in hand, like any runaway nymph, and we should never see her more.'

'It is false, bad man!' and she burst into violent tears, and hid her face in Mrs. Leigh's lap.

'Amyas, Amyas, why do you tease the poor fatherless thing?'

'I was only jesting, I'm sure,' said Amyas, like a repentant schoolboy. 'Don't cry now, don't cry, my child, see here,' and he began fumbling in his pockets. 'See what I bought of a chapman in town to-day for you, my maid, indeed, I did.'

And out he pulled some smart kerchief or other, which had taken his sailor's fancy.

'Look at it now, blue, and crimson, and green, like any parrot!' and he held it out.

She looked round sharply, snatched it out of his hand, and tore it to shreds.

'I hate it, and I hate you!' and she sprang up and darted out of the room.

'Oh, boy, boy!' said Mrs. Leigh, 'will you kill that poor child? It matters little for an old heart like mine, which has but one or two chords left whole, how soon it be broken altogether, but a young heart is one of God's precious treasures, Amyas, and suffers many a long pang in the breaking, and woe to them who despise Christ's little ones!'

'Break your heart, mother!'

'Never mind my heart, dear son, yet how can you break it more surely than by tormenting one whom I love, because she loves you?'

'But! pray, mother, and maids' tempers. But how can I break your heart? What have I done? Have I not given up going again to the West Indies for your sake? Have I not given up going to Virginia, and now again settled to go after all, just because you commanded? Was it not your will? Have I not obeyed you, mother, mother? I will stay at home now, if you will. I would rather rust here on land, I vow I would, than grieve you —' and he threw himself at his mother's knees.

'Have I asked you not to go to Virginia? No, dear boy, though every thought of a fresh parting seems to crack some new fibre within me, you must go! It is your calling. Yes, you were not sent into the world to amuse me, but to work. I have had pleasure enough of you, my darling, for many a year, and too much, perhaps, till I shrank from lending you to the Lord. But He must have you. . . . It is enough for the poor old widow to know that her boy is what he is, and to forget all her anguish day by day, for joy that a man is born into the world. But, Amyas, Amyas, are you so blind as not to see that Ayacanora—'

'Don't talk about her, poor child. Talk about yourself.'

'How long have I been worth talking about! No, Amyas, you must see it, and if you will not see it now, you will see it one day in some sad and fearful prodigy, for she is not one to die tamely. She loves you, Amyas, as a woman only can love.'

'Loves me? Well, of course. I found her, and brought her home; and I don't deny she may think that she owes me somewhat—though it was no more than a Christian man's duty. But as far her caring much for me, mother, you measure every one else's tenderness by your own.'

'Think that she owes you somewhat? Silly boy, this is not gratitude, but a deeper affection, which may be more heavenly than gratitude, as it may, too, become a horrible cause of ruin. It rests with you, Amyas, which of the two it will be.'

'You are in earnest?'

'Have I the heart or the time to jest?'

'No, no, of course not, but, mother, I thought it was not comely for women to fall in love with men?'

'Not comely, at least, to confess their love to men. But she has never done that, Amyas, not even by a look or a tone of voice, though I have watched her for months.'

'To be sure, she is as demure as any cat when I am in the way. I only wonder how you found it out.'

'Ah,' said she, smiling slyly, 'even in the saddest woman's soul there linger snatches of old music, odours of flowers long dead and turned to dust—pleasant ghosts, which still keep her mind attuned to that which may be in others, though in her never more, till she can hear her own wedding-hymn re-echoed in the tones of every girl who loves, and sees her own wedding-torch re-lighted in the eyes of every bride.'

'You would not have me marry her?' asked blunt, practical Amyas.

'God knows what I would have. I know not. I see neither your path nor my own—no, not after weeks and months of prayer. All things beyond are wrapped in mist, and what will be, I know not, save that whatever else is wrong, mercy at least is right.'

'I'd sail to-morrow if I could. As for marrying her, mother—her birth, mind me—'

'Ah, boy, boy! Are you God, to visit the sins of the parents upon the children?'

'Not that. I don't mean that, but I mean this, that she is half a Spaniard, mother, and I cannot!—Her blood may be as blue as King Philip's own, but it is Spanish still! I cannot bear the thought that my children should have in their veins one drop of that poison.'

'Amyas! Amyas!' interrupted she, 'is this not, too, visiting the parents' sins on the children?'

'Not a whit, it is common sense,—she must have the taint of their bloodthirsty humour. She has it—I have seen it in her again and again. I have told you, have I not? Can I for

get the look of her eyes as she stood over that galleon's captain, with the smoking knife in her hand—Ugh! And she is not tamed yet, as you can see, and never will be—not that I care, except for her own sake, poor thing!'

'Cruel boy! to impute as a blame to the poor child, not only the errors of her training, but the very madness of her love!'

'Of her love!'

'Of what else, blind bizzard! From the moment that you told me the story of that captain's death, I knew what was in her heart—and thus it is that you requite her for having saved your life!'

'Lumph! that is our word too much, mother. If you don't want to send me crazy, don't put the thing on the score of gratitude or duty. As it is, I can hardly speak civilly to her (I had forgiven her) when I collect that she belongs to the crew who murdered him—and he pointed to the picture, and Mrs. Leigh shuddered as he did so.

'You feel it! You know you feel it, tender-hearted, forgiving angel as you are, and what do you think I must feel?'

'Oh, my son, my son!' cried she, wringing her hands, 'if I be aretch enough to give place to the devil for a moment, does that give you a right to entertain and cherish him thus day by day?'

'I should cherish him with a vengeance, if I brought up a crew of children who could boast of a pedigree of idolaters and tyrants, hunters of Indians, and torturers of women! How pleasant to hear her telling Master Jack, "Your illustrious grand-uncle, the pope's legate, was the man who lured Rose Silcme at Carthagea," or Miss Grace, "Your great grandfather of sixteen quarterings, the Marquis of this, son of the Grand-ecquerrie that, and husband of the Princess's mother, used to feed his bloodhounds, when beef was scarce, with Indians' babies!" Eh, mother! These things are true, and if you can forget them, I cannot. Is it not enough to have made me forego for a while my purpose, my business, the one thing I live for, and that is, hunting down the Spaniards as I would adders or foxes, let you must ask me over and above to take one to my bosom!'

'Oh, my son, my son! I have not asked you to do that, I have only commanded you, in God's name, to be merciful, if you wish to obtain mercy. Oh, if you will not pity this poor maiden, pity yourself, for God knows you stand in more need of it than she does!'

Amyas was silent for a minute or two, and then—

'If it were not for you, mother, would God that the Armada would come!'

'What, and run England?'

'No! Curse them! Not a foot will they ever set on English soil, such a welcome would we give them. If I were but in the midst of that fleet, fighting like a man—to forget it all, with a galleon on board of me to starboard, and another to starboard—and then to put a luncheon in the magazine, and go aloft in good company

—I don't care how soon it comes, mother, if it were not for you'

'If I am in your way, Amyas, do not fear that I shall trouble you long'

'Oh, mother, mother, do not talk in that way! I am half-mad, I think, already, and don't know what I say. Yes, I am mad, mad at heart, though not at head. There's a hot burning me up night and day, and nothing but Spanish blood will put it out.'

'Or the grace of God, my poor wilful child! Who comes to the door!—so quickly, too?'

There was a loud hurried knocking, and in another minute a serving-man hurried in with a letter.

'This to Captain Amyas Leigh with haste, haste!'

It was Sir Richard's hand. Amyas tore it open, and a loud laugh laughed he.

'The Armada is coming! My wish has come true, mother!'

'God helps us, it has! Show me the letter.'

'It was a hurried scrawl'

'Dr. Godson,

'Walsingham sends word that the Armada sailed from Lisbon to the Groyne the 18 of May. We know no more but have commandment to stay the ships. Come down, dear lad, and give us counsel, and may the Lord help His Church in this great strait.'

'Your loving godfather, R. G.'

'Forgive me, mother, mother, once for all,' cried Amyas, throwing his arms round her neck.

'I have nothing to forgive, my son, my son! And shall I lose thee, also?'

'If I be killed, you will have two martyrs of your blood, mother!—'

Mrs. Leigh bowed her head, and was silent. Amyas caught up his hat and sword, and darted forth toward Bideford.

Amyas literally danced into Sir Richard's hall, where he stood talking earnestly with various merchants and captains.

'Gloria, gloria! gentles all! The devil is broke loose at last, and now we know where to have him on the hip!'

'Why so merry, Captain Leigh, when all else are sad?' said a gentle voice by his side.

'Because I have been sad a long time, while all else were merry, dear lady. Is the hawk doleful when his hood is pulled off, and he sees the heron flapping right ahead of him?'

'You seem to forget the danger and the woe of us weak women, sir!'

'I don't forget the danger and the woe of one weak woman, Madam, and she the daughter of a man who once stood in this room,' said Amyas, suddenly collecting himself, in a low stern voice.

And I don't forget the danger and the woe of one who was worth a thousand even of her. I don't forget anything, Madam.'

'Nor forgive either, it seems.'

'It will be time to talk of forgiveness after the offender has repented and amended, and does the sailing of the Armada look like that?'

'Alas no! God help us!'

'He will help us, Madam,' said Amyas.

'Admiral Leigh,' said Sir Richard, 'we need you now, if ever. Here are the Queen's orders to furnish as many ships as we can, though from these gentlemen's spirit, I should say the orders were well-nigh needless.'

'Not a doubt, sir, for my part, I will fit my ship at my own charges, and fight her too, as long as I have a leg or an arm left.'

'On a tongue to say, never surrender, I'll warrant!' said an old merchant. 'You put me into us old fellows, Admiral Leigh, but it will be a heavy matter for those poor fellows in Virginia, and for my daughter too, Madam Dare, with her young babe, as I hear, just born.'

'And a very heavy matter,' said some one else, 'for those who have ventured their money in these cargoes, which must be idle, you see, now for a year maybe—and then all the cost of unloading again—'

'My good sir,' said Grenville, 'what have private interests to do with this day? Let us thank God if He only please to leave us the bare fragments of this English soil, the honour of our wives and daughters, and bodies safe from rack and fagot, to wield the swords of freemen in defence of a free land, even though every town and homestead in England were wasted with fire, and we left to rebuild over again all which our ancestors have wrought for us in now six hundred years.'

'Right, sir,' said Amyas. 'For my part, let my Virginian goods rot on the quay, if the worst comes to the worst. I begin unloading the *Vengeance* to-morrow, and to sea as soon as I can fill up my crew to a good fighting number.'

And so the talk ran on, and ere two days were past, most of the neighbouring gentlemen, summoned by Sir Richard, had come in, and great was the bidding against each other as to who should do most. Cary and Brimblecombe, with thirty tall Cheshire men, came across the bay, and without even asking leave of Amyas, took up their berths as a matter of course on board the *Vengeance*. In the meanwhile, the matter was taken up by families. The Fortescues (a numberless clan) offered to furnish a ship; the Churchesters another, the Stakelys a third, while the merchantmen were not backward. The Bucks, the Stranges, the Harbys, joyfully unloaded their Virginian goods, and replaced them with powder and shot, and in a week's time the whole seven were ready once more for sea, and dropped down into Appledore pool, with Amyas as their admiral for the time being (for Sir Richard had gone by land to Plymouth to join the deliberations there), and waited for the first favourable wind to start on the rendezvous in the Sound.

At last, upon the twenty-first of June, the clank of the captains rang merrily across the flats, and amid prayers and blessings, forth sailed that gallant squadron over the bar, to play their

part in Britain's Salamis; while Mrs. Leigh stood watching as she stood once before, beside the churchyard wall but not alone this time, for Ayacucho stood by her side, and gazed and gazed, till her eyes seemed ready to burst from their sockets. At last she turned away with a sob—

'And he never bade me good-bye, nother!'

'God forgive him! Go no home and pray, my child; there is no other rest on earth than prayer for woman's heart!'

They were calling each other mother and daughter then! Yes. The sacred fire of sorrow was fast burning out all Ayacucho's fallen savagery, and, like a Phoenix, the true woman was rising from those ashes, fair, noble, and all-enduring, as God had made her.

CHAPTER XXX

HOW THE ADMIRAL JOHN HAWKINS TESTIFIED AGAINST CROAKERS

'Oh, where be those gay Spaniards,
Which make so great a boast of?
Oh, they shall eat the grey goose feather,
And we shall eat the roast O!'

Cornish song

WHAT if the spectators who last summer gazed with just pride upon the noble port of Plymouth, its vast breakwater spanning the Sound, its arsenals and docks, its two estuaries filled with gallant ships, and watched the great screw-liners turning within their own length by force invisible, or threatening the crowded fleets with the ease of the tiniest boat,—what if, by some magic turn, the nineteenth century, and all the magic influence of its wealth and science, had vanished—as it may vanish hereafter—and they had found themselves thrown back three hundred years into the pleasant summer days of 1588?

Mount Edgecumbe is still there, beautiful as ever but where are the docks, and where is Devonport? No vast dry-dock roofs rise at the water's edge. Drake's island carries but a paltry battery, just raised by the man whose name it bears. Mount Wise is a lone gentleman's house among fields, the citadel is a pop-gun fort, which a third-class steamer would shell into rubble for an afternoon's amusement. And the shipping, where are they? The floating castles of the Hamozes have dwindled to a few crawling lime-hoys, and the Catwater is parked, not as now, with merchant craft, but with the ships who will to-morrow begin the greatest sea-fight which the world has ever seen.

There they lie, a paltry squadron enough in modern eyes; the largest of them not equal in size to a six-and-thirty gun frigate, carrying less weight of metal than one of our new gunboats, and able to employ even that at not more than a quarter of our modern range. Would our modern spectators, just come down by rail for a few hours, to see the cavalry embark, and return to-morrow in time for dinner, have looked

down upon that petty port, and petty fleet, with a contemptuous smile, and begun some flippant speech about the progress of intellect, and the triumphs of science, and our benighted ancestors? They would have done so, doubt it not, if they belonged to the many who gaze on those very triumphs as on a rare-show to feed their silly wonder, or use and enjoy them without thankfulness or understanding, as the ox eat the clover thrust into his rack, without knowing or caring how it grew. But if any of them were of the class by whom those very triumphs have been achieved, the thinkers and the workers, who, instead of entering lazily into other men's labours, as the mob does, labour themselves, who know by hard experience the struggles, the self-restraints, the disappointments, the slow and staggering steps, by which the discoverer reaches to his prize, then the smile of those men would not have been one of pity, but rather of filial love. For they would have seen in those outwardly paltry armaments the potential germ of that mightier one which now loads the Black Sea waves, they would have been aware, that to produce it, with such materials and knowledge as then existed, demanded an intellect, an energy, a spirit of progress and invention, equal, if not superior, to those of which we now so fondly boast.

But if, again, he had been a student of men rather than of machinery, he would have found few nobler companies on whom to exercise his discernment, than he might have seen in the little terrace bowling-green behind the Pelican Inn, on the afternoon of the nineteenth of July. Chatting in groups, or lounging over the low wall which commanded a view of the Sound and the shipping far below, was gathered almost every notable man of the Plymouth fleet, the whole *posse comitatus* of 'England's forgotten worthies.' The Armada has been scattered by a storm. Lord Howard has been out to look for it, as far as the Spanish coast, but the wind has shifted to the south, and fearing lest the Dogs should pass him, he has returned to Plymouth, uncertain whether the Armada will come after all or not. Ship on for a while, like Prince Hal, the drawer's apron come in through the rose-clad door which opens from the tavern, with a tray of long-necked Dutch glasses, and a silver tankard of wine, and look round you at the gallant captains, who are waiting for the Spanish Armada, as lions in their lair might wait for the passing herd of deer.

See those five talking earnestly, in the centre of a ring, which longs to overhear, and yet is too respectful to approach close. Those soft long eyes and pointed chin you recognise already; they are Walter Raleigh's. The fair young man in the flame-coloured doublet, whose arm is round Raleigh's neck, is Lord Sheffield, opposite them stands, by the side of Sir Richard Grenville, a man as stately even as he, Lord Sheffield's uncle, the Lord Charles Howard of Effingham, Lord High Admiral of England, next to him is his son-in-law, Sir Robert Southwell, captain

of the *Elizabeth Jonas* but who is that short, sturdy, plainly-dressed man, who stands with legs a little apart, and hands behind his back, looking up, with keen grey eyes, into the face of each speaker? His cap is in his hands, so you can see the bullet head of crisp brown hair and the wrinkled forehead, as well as the high cheek bones, the short square face, the broad temples, the thick lips, which are yet firm as granite. A coarse plebeian stain of man yet the whole figure and attitude are that of boundless determination, self-possession, energy, and when at last he speaks a few blunt words, all eyes are turned respectfully upon him;—for his name is Francis Drake.

A burly, grizzled elder, in greasy sea-stained garments, contrasting oddly with the huge gold chain about his neck, waddles up, as if he had been born, and had lived ever since, in a gale of wind at sea. The upper half of his sharp dogged visage seems of brick-red leather, the lower of badger's fur, and as he says Drake on the back, and, with a broad Devon twang, shouts, 'Be you a coming to drink your wine, Francis Drake, or be you not?—saving your presence, my Lord,' the Lord High Admiral only laughs, and bids Drake go and drink his wine, for John Hawkins, Admiral of the port, is the Patriarch of Plymouth seamen, if Drake be their hero, and says and does pretty much what he likes in any company on earth, not to mention that to-day's prospect of an Armageddon fight has shaken him altogether out of his usual crabbed reserve, and made him overflow with loquacious good humour, even to his rival Drake.

So they push through the crowd, wherein is many another man whom one would gladly have spoken with face to face on earth. Martin Frobisher and John Davis are sitting on that bench, smoking tobacco from long silver pipes, and by them are Fenton and Withrington, who have both tried to follow Drake's path round the world, and failed, though by no fault of their own. The man who pledges them better luck next time, is George Fenner, known to 'the seven Portuguese,' Leicester's pet, and captain of the galleon which Elizabeth bought of him. That short prim man in the huge yellow ruff, with sharp chin, minute imperial, and self-satisfied smile, is Richard Hawkins, the Complete Seaman, Admiral John's hereafter famous and hapless son. The elder who is talking with him is his good uncle William, whose monument still stands, or should stand, in Deptford Church, for Admiral John set it up there but one year after this time, and on it record how he was, 'A worshipper of the true religion, an especial benefactor of poor sailors, a most judicious arbiter in most difficult causes, and of a singular faith, piety, and prudence.' That, and the fact that he got creditably through some sharp work at Porto Rico, is all I know of William Hawkins—but if you or I, reader, can have as much or half as much said of us when we have to follow him, we shall have no reason to complain.

There is John Drake, Sir Francis' brother,

ancestor of the present stock of Drakes, and there is George, his nephew, a man not overwise, who has been round the world with Amyas, and there is Amyas himself, talking to one who answers him with fierce curt sentences, Captain Barker of Bristol, brother of the hapless Andrew Barker who found John Oxenham's guns, and, owing to a mutiny among his men, perished by the Spaniards in Honduras, twelve years ago. Barker is now captain of the *Victory*, one of the Queen's best ships; and he has his accounts to settle with the Dona, as Amyas has, so they are both growling together in a corner, while all the rest are as merry as the flies upon the wine above their heads.

But who is the aged man who sits upon a bench, against the sunny south wall of the tavern, his long white beard flowing almost to his waist, his hands upon his knees, his palmated head moving slowly from side to side, to catch the scraps of discourse of the passing captains? His great-grandchild, a little maid of six, has laid her curly head upon his knees, and his grand-daughter, a buxom black-eyed dame of thirty, stands by him and tends him, half as nurse, and half, too, as showman, for he seems in object of curiosity to all the captains, and his fair nurse has to entreat again and again, 'Bless you sir, please now, don't give him no liquor, poor old soul, the doctor says.' It is old Martin Cockrem, father of the ancient host, aged himself beyond the years of man, who can recollect the bells of Plymouth ringing for the coronation of Henry the Eighth, and who was the first Englishman, perhaps, who ever set foot on the soil of the New World. There he sits, like an old Druid Tor of primeval granite amid the tall wheat and rich clover crops of a modern farm. He has seen the death of old Europe and the birth-throes of the new. Go to him, and question him, for his senses are quick as ever, and just now the old man seems uneasy. He is peering with rheumy eyes through the groups, and seems listening for a well-known voice.

'There 'a be again! Why don't 'a come, then?'

'Quiet, Gramfer, and don't trouble his worship.'

'Here an hour, and never speak to poor old Martin! I say, sir!—and the old man feebly plucks Amyas's cloak as he passes. 'I say, captain, do'e tell young master old Martin's looking for him.'

'Marcy, Gramfer, where's your manners! Don't be vexed, sir, he'm a'most a babe, and tajous at times, mortal.'

'Young master who?' says Amyas, bending down to the old man, and smiling to the dame to let him have his way.

'Master Hawkins; he'm never been a-near me all day.'

Off goes Amyas; and, of course, lays hold of the sleeve of young Richard Hawkins; but as he is in act to speak, the dame lays hold of his, laughing and blushing.

'No, sir, not Mr Richard, sir; Admiral John, sir, his father; he always calls him young master, poor old soul!' and she points to the grizzled beard and the face scarred and tanned with fifty years of fight and storm.

Amyas goes to the Admiral, and gives his message.

'Mercy on me! Where be my wits? Iss, I'm a coming,' says the old hero in his broadest Devon, waddles off to the old man, and begins lugging at a pocket. 'Here, Martin, I've got mun, I've got mun, man alive, but his Lordship kept me so. Lookee here, then! Why, I do get so lusty of late, Martin, I can't get to my pockets!'

And out struggle a piece of tarred string, a bundle of papers, a tumbler, a piece of pudding-tubacco, and last of all, a little paper of Muscovado sugar—then as great a delicacy as any French bouillons would be now—which he thrusts into the old man's eager and trembling hand.

Old Martin begins dipping his finger into it, and rubbing it on his toothless gums, smiling and nodding thanks to his young master, while the little maid at his knee, murelaked, takes her share also.

'There, Admiral Leigh, both ends meet—grammery and babies! You and I shall be like to that one day, young Samson!'

'We shall have slain a good many Philistines first, I hope!'

'Amun! so be it, but look to mun! so fine a sailor as ever drank liquor, and now greedy after a bit of sweet trade! 'tis jocosus like, but I bring mun a bit whenever I come, and he looks for it. He's one of my own flesh like, is old Martin. He sailed with my father Captain Will, when they was both two little cracka aboard of a trawler, and my father went up, and here I am—he didn't, and there he is. We're up now, we Hawkinses. We may be down again some day!'

'Never, I trust,' said Amyas.

'Thun't no use trusting, young man! you go and do. I do fear too much of that there from my lad. Let they ministers preach till they're black in the face, works is the trade!' with a nudge in Amyas's ribs. 'Faith can't save, nor charity nether. There, you tell with him, while I go play bowls with Drake. He'll tell you a sight of stories. You ask him about good King Hal, now, just—'

And off waddled the Port Admiral.

'You have seen good King Henry, then, father!' said Amyas, interested.

The old man's eyes lighted at once, and he stopped mumbling his sugar.

'Seed mun? Iss, I reckon. I was with Captain Will when he went to meet the Frenchman there to Calais—at the Field, the Field—'

'The Field of the Cloth of Gold, Gramfer,' suggested the dame.

'That's it. Seed mun? Iss, foga. Oh, he was a king! The face o' mun like a rising sun, and the back o' mun so broad as that there'

(and he held out his palsied arms), 'and the voice of mun! Oh, to hear mun swear if he was merry, oh, 'twas royal!—Seed mun? Iss, foga! And I've seed mun do what few has; I've seed mun christle like any child!'

'What—cry?' said Amyas. 'I shouldn't have thought there was much cry in him!'

'You think what you like—'

'Gramfer, Gramfer, don't you be rude, now—'

'Let him go on,' said Amyas.

'I seed mun christle, and, oh dear, how he did put hands on mun's face, and "Oh, my gentlemen," says he, "oy gentlemen! Oh, my gallant men!" Them was his very words!'

'But when?'

'Why, Captain Will had just come to the Harb—that's to Portsmouth—to speak with mun, and the barge Royal lay again the Harb—so, and our boat alongside—so, and the king he standth as it might be there, above my head, on the quay edge, and she come in near abreast of us, looking most royal to behold, poor dear! and went to cast about. And Captain Will, saith he, "Them lower ports is cruel near the water", for she had not more than a sixteen inches to spare in the fifth r overloop, as I heard after. And saith he, "That won't do for going to windward in a say, Martin." And as the words came out of mun's mouth, your worship, there was a bit of a flaw from the westward, sharp like, and overboard goeth my cap, and hitth against the wall, and as I stooped to pick it up, I heard a cry, and it was all over!'

'He is telling of the *Mary Rose*, sir!'

'I guessed so!'

'All over—and the cry of mun, and the scream of mun! Oh, sir, up to the very heavens! And the king he screeched right out like any maid, "Oh, my gentlemen, oh, my gallant men!" and as she lay on her beam ends, sir, and just a-setting, the very last son's I seen was that man's father, and that man's. I knowed mun by their armour!'

And he pointed to Sir George Carew and Sir Richard Grenville.

'Iss! Iss! Drowned like rattens! Drowned like rattens!'

'Now; you mustn't trouble his worship any more!'

'Trouble? Let him tell till midnight, I shall be well pleased,' said Amyas, sitting down on the bench by him. 'Drawer! ale and a parcel of tobacco!'

And Amyas settled himself to listen, while the old man purred to himself—

'Iss. They likes to hear old Martin. All the captains look upon old Martin!'

'Hillo, Amyas!' said Cary, 'who's your friend? Here's a man been telling me wonders about the River Plate. We should go thither for luck there next time!'

'River Plate?' said old Martin; 'It's I knows about the River Plate, none so well. Who'd ever been there, nor heard of it nether, before Captain Will and me went, and I lived among the savages a whole year; and audacious

civil I found 'em if they'd had but shirts to their backs, and so was the prince o' mun, that Captain Will brought home to King Henry, leastwise he died on the voyage, but the wild folk took it cruel well, for you see, we was always as civil with them as Christians, and if we hadn't been, I should not have been here now.'

'What year was that?'

'In the fifteen thirty but I was there afore, and learnt the speech o' mun, and that's why Captain Will left me to a hostage, when he tuked their prince.'

'Before that?' said Cary, 'why, the country was hardly known before that.'

The old man's eyes flashed up in triumph.

'Knowed? Ies, and you may well say that! Look ye here! Look to mun!' and he waved his hand round—'There's captains! and I'm the father of 'em all now, now poor Captain Will's in gloomy, I, Martin Cockrom! Ies, I've seen a change! I mind when Tavistock Abbey was so full o' friars, and goulden idols, and sich noxious trade, as ever was a wheat rick of rata. I mind the sight off Brest in the French wars—Oh, that was a fight, surely!—when the *Regent* and the French Carack were burnt side by side, being fast grappled, you see, because of Sir Thomas Knivet, and Captain Will gave him warning as he ran a-past us, saying, says he—'

'But,' said Amyas, seeing that the old man was wandering away, 'what do you mind about America?'

'America? I should think so! But I was a-going to tell you of the *Regent*—and seven hundred Englishmen burnt and drowned in her, and nine hundred French in the Brest ship, besides what we picked up. Oh dear! But about America.'

'Yes, about America. How are you the father of all the captains?'

'How? you ask my young master! Why, before the fifteen thirty, I was 'up the Plate with Cabot (and a cruel fractious ontrustful fellow he was, like all they Portugals), and bid there a year and more, and up the Paraguito with him, discovering no end, whereby, gentle, I was the first Englishman, I hold, that ever set a foot on the New Wold, I was!'

'Then here's your health, and long life, sir!' said Amyas and Cary.

'Long life? Ies, fegs, I reckon, long enough a'ready! Why, I mind the beginning of it all, I do. I mind when there wasn't a master mariner to Plymouth, that thought there was nought west of the Land's End except herrings. Why, they held them, pure wratches, that if you sailed right west away far enough, you'd surely come to the edge, and fall over cleve Ies—'Twas dark parts round here, till Captain Will arose, and the first of it I mind was inside the bar of San Lucar, and he and I were boys about a ten year old, aboard of a Dartmouth ship, and went for wine; and there come in over the bar he that was the beginning of it all.'

'Columbus?'

'Ies, fegs, he did, not a pistol-shot from us; and I saw mun stand on the poop, so plain as I see you, no great shakes of a man to look to nether, there's a sight better here, to please me, and we was disappointed, we lads, for we surely expected to see mun with a goulden crown on, and a sceptre to a's hand, we did, and the ship o' mun all over like Solomon's temple for gloomy. And I mind that same year, too, seeing Vasco de Gama, as was going out over the bar, when he found the Bona Speranza, and sailed round it to the Indies. Ah, that was the making of they rascally Portugals, it was!'

And our crew told what they seen and heard but nobody minded sich things. 'Twas dark parts, and Popish, then, and nobody knowed nothing, nor got no schooling, nor cured for nothing, but scruttling up and down alongshore like to prawns in a pile. Ies, sitting in darkness, we was, and the shadow of death, till the day-spring from on high arose, and shined upon us poor out o'-the-way folk. The Lord be praised! And now, look to mun!' and he waved his hand all round—'Look to mun! Look to the works of the Lord! Look to the captains! Oh blessed sight! And one's been to the Brazils, and one to the Indies, and the Spanish Main, and the North-West, and the Rooshias, and the Chinas, and up the Straits, and round the Cape, and round the world of God, too, bless His holy name, and I seed the beginning of it, and I'll see the end of it too, I will! I was born into the old times but I'll see the wondrous works of the new, yet, I will! I'll see they bloody Spaniards swept off the seas before I die, if my old eyes can reach so far as outside the Sound. I shall, I knows it. I says my prayers for it every night, don't I, Mary? You'll bate mun, sure as Judgment, you'll bate mun! The Lord'll fight for ye. Nothing'll stand against ye. I've seed it all along—ever since I was with young master to the floodgates. They can't bide the push of us! You'll bate mun off the face of the seas, and be masters of the round world, and all that therein is. And then, I'll just turn my old face to the wall, and depart in peace, according to His word.'

'Deary me, now, while I've been telling with you, here's this little maid born and ate up all my sugar!'

'I'll bring you some more,' said Amyas, whom the childish bathos of the last sentence moved rather to sighs than laughter.

'Will ye, then? There's a good soul, and come and tell with old Martin. He likes to see the brave young gentlemen, a-going to and fro in their ships, like Leviathan, and taking of their pastime therein. We had no such ships to our days. Ah, 'tis grand times, beautiful times, surely—and you'll bring me a bit sugar!'

'You were up the Plate with Cabot!' said Cary, after a pause. 'Do you mind the fair lady Miranda, Sebastian de Hurtado's wife?'

'What! her that was burnt by the Indians? Mind her? Do you mind the sun in heaven?'

Oh, the beauty! Oh, the ways of her! Oh, the speech of her! Never was, nor never will be! And she to die by they villainous, and all for the goodness of her! Mind her! I minded nought else when she was on deck!

'Who was she?' asked Amiyas of Cary

'A Spanish angel, Amiyas'

'Humph!' said Amiyas. 'So much the worse for her, to be born into a nation of devils.'

'They're not all so bad as that, yer honour. Her husband was a proper gallant gentleman, and kind as a maid, too, and couldn't alodo that De Solis's murderous doings.'

'His wife must have taught it him, then,' said Amiyas, rising. 'Where did you hear of these black swans, Cary?'

'I've heard of them, and that's enough,' answered he, unwilling to stir sad recollections.

'And little enough,' said Amiyas. 'Will, don't talk to me. The devil has not grown white because he has trod in a lime-heap.'

'Or an angel black' because she came down a chimney,' said Cary, and so the talk ended, or rather was cut short, for the talk of all the group was interrupted by an explosion from old John Hawkins.

'Fail! Fail! What a murmur do you here, to talk of failing! Who made you a prophet, you scurvies, hanging in-the-wind, croaking, white-livered son of a curlew-row?'

'Heaven help us, Admiral Hawkins, who has put me to your pulverins in this fashion?' said Lord Howard.

'Who? my Lord! Croakers! my Lord! Here's a fellow calls himself the captain of a ship, and her Majesty's servant, and talks about failing, as if he were a Harlequin loose-kirtle, trying to keep her apud squires ashore. Blunt for him, sneak-up! say I.'

'Admiral John Hawkins,' quoth the offender, 'you shall answer this language with your sword.'

'I'll answer it with my foot, and buy me a pair of horn-tips to my shoes, like a wraxling man. Fight a croaker! Fight a frog, an owl! I fight those that dare fight, Sir.'

'Sir, sir, moderate yourself. I am sure this gentleman will show himself as brave as any, when it comes to blows; but who can blame mortal man for trembling before so fearful a chance as this?'

'Let mortal man keep his tremblings to himself, then, my Lord, and not be like Solomon's malmen, casting abroad fire and death, and saying, it is only in sport. There is more than one of my Lords, your Lordship, who have not been ashamed to play Mother Shipton before their own sailors, and damp the poor fellows' hearts with crying before they're hurt, and this is one of them. I've heard him at it afore, and I'll present him with a vengeance, though I'm no churchwarden.'

'If this is really so, Admiral Hawkins—'

'It is so, my Lord! I heard only last night, down in a tavern below, such unbelieving talk as made me mad, my Lord, and if it had not been after supper, and my hand was not over-

steady, I would have let out a pottle of Aleant from some of their hockpots, and sent them to Dick Surgeon, to wrap them in swaddling-clouts, like whining babies as they are. Marry? come up, what says Scripture? "He that is fearful and faint-hearted among you, let him go and"—what? son Dick there? Thou'rt pious, and read'st thy Bible. What's that text? A mortal hme one it is, too.'

"He that is fearful and faint-hearted among you, let him go back," quoth the Complete Seaman. 'Captain Merryweather, as my father's command, as well as his years, forbid him answering your challenge, I shall reject it an honour to cuttaran his quarrel myself—place, time, and weapons being at your choice.'

'Well spoken, son Dick—and like a true courtier, too! Ah! thou hast the palabras, and the knee, and the cap, and the quip, and the mummie, and the true town fashion of it all—no old tarry bricks of a sea-log, like thy dad! My Lord, you'll let them fight?'

'The Spaniard, sir, but no one else. But, captains and gentlemen, consider well my friend the Port Admiral's advice, and if any man's heart misgives him, let him, for the sake of his country and his Queen, have so much government of his tongue to hide his fears in his own bosom, and leave open complaining to rishals and women. For if the sailor be not cheered by his commander's cheerfulness, how will the ignorant man find comfort in himself? And without faith and hope, how can he fight worthily?'

'There is no croaking aboard of us, we will warrant, said twenty voices, 'and shall be none, as long as we command on board our own ships.' Hawkins, having blown off his steam, went back to Drake and the bows.

'Fill my pipe, drawer—that croaking fellow's made me let it out, of course! Spoil sports! The father of all manner of troubles on earth, be they noxious trade of croakers! Better to meet a bear robbed of her whelps," Francis Drake, as Solomon saith, than a fool who can't keep his mouth shut. What brought Mr. Andrew Barker to his death but croakers?'

What stopped Feuton's China voyage in the '82, and lost your nephew John, and my brother Will, glory and hard cash too, but croakers! What sent back my Lord Cumberland's armada in the '86, and that after they'd proved their strength, too, sixty o' mun against six hundred Portugals and Indians, and yet weren't ashamed to turn round and come home empty-handed, after all my Lord's expenses that he had been at? What but these same beggarly croakers, that be only fit to be turned into yellow-hammers up to Dartmoor, and sit on a tor all day, and cry "Very little bit of bread, and no cheese-see!" Marry, sneak-up! say I again.'

'And what,' said Drake, 'would have kept me, if I'd let 'em, from ever sailing round the world, but these same croakers? I hanged my best friend for croaking, John Hawkins, may God forgive me if I was wrong, and I threatened a week after to hang thirty more; and I'd have

done it, too, if they hadn't clapped tompons into their muzzles pretty fast.'

'You're right, Frank. My old father always told me—and old King Hal (bless his memory!) would take his counsel among a thousand.—"And, my son," says he to me, "whatever you do, never you stand no croaking, but hang mun, son Jack, hang mun up for an ensign. There's Scripture for it," says he (he was a mighty man to his Bible, after bloody Mary's days, leastwise), "and 'tis written," says he, "It's expedient that one man die for the crew, and that the whole crew perish not, so show you no mercy, son Jack, or you'll find none, leastwise in they manner of cattle, for if you fail, they stamp on you, and if you succeeds, they takes the credit of it to themselves, and goes to heaven in your shoes." Those were his words, and I've found mun true.—Who com'th here now?'

'Captain Fleming, as I'm a sinner.'

'Fleming? Is he tired of life, that he com'th here to look for a halter? I've a warrant out against mun, for robbing of two Flushingers on the high seas now this very last year. Is the fellow mazed or drunk, then? or does he seem a ghost? Look to mun!'

'I think so, truly,' said Drake. 'His eyes are near out of his head.'

The man was a rough-bearded old sea-dog, who had just burst in from the tavern through the low hatch, upsetting a drawer with all his glasses, and now came panting and blowing straight up to the High Admiral—

'My Lord, my Lord! They're coming! I saw them off the Lizard last night!'

'Who? my good sir, who seem to have left your manners behind you?'

'The Armada, your worship—the Spaniard, but as for my manners, 'tis no fault of mine, for I never had none to leave behind me.'

'If he has not left his manners behind,' quoth Hawkins, 'look out for your purses, gentlemen all! He's manner enough, and very bad ones they be, when he com'th across a quiet Flushing.'

'If I stole Flushing's wines, I never stole negurs' souls, Jack Hawkins, so there's your answer. My Lord, hang me if you will, life's short and death's easy, specially to seamen, but if I didn't see the Spanish fleet last sundown, coming along half-moon wise, and full seven mile from wing to wing, within a four mile of me, I'm a sinner.'

'Sirrah,' said Lord Howard, 'is this no fetch, to cheat us out of your pardon for these piracies of yours?'

'You'll find out for yourself before nightfall, my Lord High Admiral. All Jack Fleming says is, that this is a poor sort of an answer to a man who has put his own neck in the halter for the sake of his country.'

'Perhaps it is,' said Lord Howard. 'And after all, gentlemen, what can this man gain by a lie, which must be discovered ere a day is over, except a more certain hanging?'

'Very true, your Lordship,' said Hawkins,

mollified. 'Come here, Jack Fleming—what wilt drain, man? Hippocras or Alecant, Sack or John Barleycorn, and a pledge to thy repentance and amendment of life.'

'Admiral Hawkins, Admiral Hawkins, this is no time for drinking.'

'Why not, then, my Lord? Good news should be welcomed with good wine. Frank, send down to the sexton, and set the bells a-ringing to cheer up all honest hearts. Why, my Lord, if it were not for the gravity of my office, I could dance a galliard for joy!'

'Well, you may dance, Port Admiral, but I must go and plan, but God give to all captains such a heart as yours this day!'

'And God give all generals such a head as yours! Come, Frank Drake, we'll play the game out before we move. It will be two good days before we shall be fit to tackle them, so an odd half-hour don't matter.'

'I must command the help of your counsel, Vice Admiral,' said Lord Charles, turning to Drake.

'And it's this, my good Lord,' said Drake, looking up, as he aimed his bowl. 'They'll come soon enough for us to show them sport, and yet slow enough for us to be ready, so let no man hurry himself. And as example is better than precept, here goes.'

Lord Howard shrugged his shoulders, and departed, knowing two things, first, that to move Drake was to move mountains, and next, that when the self-taught hero did bestir himself, he would do more work in an hour than any one else in a day. So he departed, followed hastily by most of the captains, and Drake said in a low voice to Hawkins—

'Does he think we are going to knock about on a lee-shore all the afternoon and run our noses at night—and dead up wind, too—into the Dons' mouths? No, Jack, my friend! Let Orlando-Furioso-punctate the fire-eaters go and get their knuckles rapped. The following game is the game, and not the meeting one. The dog goes after the sheep, and not afore them, lad. Let them go by, and go by, and stick to them well to windward, and pick up stragglers, and pickings, too, Jack—the prizes, Jack!'

'Trust my old eyes for not being over-quick at seeing signals, if I be hanging in the skirts of a fat-looking Don. We're in the eagles, Drake, and where the carcass is, is our place, eh?'

And so the two old sea-dogs chatted on, while their companions dropped off one by one, and only Amyas remained.

'Eh, Captain Leigh, where's my boy Dick?'

'Gone off with his lordship, Sir John.'

'On his punctate too, I suppose, the young slashed-breaks. He's half a Don, that fellow, with his fine scholarship, and his fine manners, and his fine clothes. He'll get a taking down before he dies, unless he mends. Why ain't you gone too, sir?'

'I follow my leader,' said Amyas, filling his pipe.

'Well said, my big man,' quoth Drake. 'If

I could lead you round the world, I can lead you up channel, can't I?—Eh? my little bantam-cock of the Orinoco? Drink, lad! You're over-sad to-day.'

'Not a whit,' said Amyas. 'Only I can't help wondering whether I shall find him after all.'

'Whom? That Don? We'll find him for you, if he's in the fleet.' Well squeezes it out of our prisoners somehow. Eh, Hawkins? I thought all the captains had promised to send you news if they heard of him.'

'Ay, but it's ill looking for a needle in a haystack. But I shall find him. I am a coward to doubt it,' said Amyas, setting his teeth.

'There, Vice-Admiral, you're beaten, and that's the rubber. Lay up three dollars, old high-flyer, and go and earn more, like an honest adventurer.'

'Well,' said Drake, as he pulled out his purse, 'we'll walk down now, and see about these young hotheads. As I live, they are setting to tow the ships out already.' Breaking the men's backs over-night, to make them fight the lustier in the morning! Well, well, they haven't sailed round the world, Jack Hawkins.

'Or had to run home from St Juan d'Ulloa with half a crew.'

'Well if we haven't to run out with half crews. I saw a sight of our lads drunk about this morning.'

'The more reason for waiting till they be sober. Besides if everybody's carousing about to once, each after his own men, nobody'll find nothing in such a scrimmage as that. Bye, bye, Uncle Martin. We'm going to blow the Dons up now in earnest.'

CHAPTER XXXI

THE GREAT ARMADA

'Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain wave,
Her home is on the deep.'
CAMPELLE, *Ye Mariners of England*

AND now began that great sea-fight which was to determine whether Popery and despotism, or Protestantism and freedom, were the law which God had appointed for the half of Europe, and the whole of future America. It is a twelve days' epic, worthy, as I said in the beginning of this book, not of dull prose, but of the thunder-roll of Homer's verse—but having to tell it, I must do my best, rather using, where I can, the words of contemporary authors than my own.

'The Lord High Admirall of England, sending a pinnace before, called the *Defiance*, denounced war by discharging her ordnance; and presently approaching within musquet-shot, with much thundering out of his own ship, called the *Arkroyall* (alias the *Triumph*), first set upon the Admirall's, as he thought, of the

Spaniards (but it was Alfonso de Leon's ship). Soon after, Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher played stoutly with their ordnance on the hindmost squadron, which was commanded by Recalde. The Spaniards soon discover the superior 'numbleness' of the English ships, and Recalde's squadron, finding that they are getting more than they gave, in spite of his endeavours, hurry forward to join the rest of the fleet. Medina the Admiral, finding his ships scattering fast, gathers them into a half moon; and the Armada tries to keep solemn way forward, like a stately herd of buffaloes, who march on across the prairie, disdaining to notice the wolves which snarl around their track. But in vain. There are no wolves, but cunning hunters, swiftly horsed, and keenly armed, and who will 'shamefully shuffle' (to use Drake's own expression) that vast herd from the Lizard to Portland, from Portland to Calais Roads; and who, even in this short two hours' fight, have made many a Spaniard question the boasted invincibility of this Armada.

One of the four great galleasses is already riddled with shot, to the great disarrangement of her 'pulpits, chapels, and friars therein assistant. The fleet has to close round her, or Drake and Hawkins will sink her, in effecting which manœuvre, the 'principal galleon of Seville,' in which are Pedro de Valdez and a host of blue-blooded Dons, runs foul of her neighbour, carries away her foremast, and is, in spite of Spanish chivalry, left to her fate. This does not look like victory, certainly. But courage! though Valdez be left behind, 'our Lady,' and the Saints, and the Bull Corná Doinnu (dictated by one whom I dare not name here), are with them still, and it were blasphemous to doubt. But in the meanwhile, if they have fared no better than this against a third of the Plymouth fleet, how will they fare when those forty belated ships, which are already whitening the blue between them and the Newstone, enter the scene to play their part?

So ends the first day. Not an English ship, hardly a man, is hurt. It has destroyed for ever in English minds the prestige of boastful Spain. It has justified utterly the policy which the good Lord Howard had adopted by Raleigh's and Drake's advice, of keeping up a running fight, instead of 'clapping ships together without consideration,' in which case, says Raleigh, 'he had been lost, if he had not been better advised than a great many malignant fools were, who found fault with his demeanour.'

Be that as it may, so ends the first day, in which Amyas and the other Boleford ships have been right busy for two hours knocking holes in a huge galleon, which carries on her poop a maiden with a wheel, and bears the name of *Sta. Catharina*. She had a coat of arms on the flag at her stern, probably those of the commandant of soldiers; but they were shot away early in the fight, so Amyas cannot tell whether they were De Soto's or not. Never-

theless, there is plenty of time for private revenge, and Amyas, called off at last by the Admiral's signal, goes to bed and sleeps soundly.

But ere he has been in his hammock an hour, he is awakened by Cary's coming down to ask for orders.

'We were to follow Drake's lantern, Amyas; but where it is I can't see, unless he has been taken up aloft there among the stars for a new Drakinn Silus.'

Amyas turns out grumbling, but no lantern is to be seen, only a sudden explosion and a great fire on board some Spaniard, which is gradually got under, while they have to lie to the whole night long, with nearly the whole fleet.

The next morning finds them off Torbay; and Amyas is hailed by a pinnace, bringing a letter from Drake, which (saving the spelling, which was somewhat arbitrary, like most men's in those days) ran somewhat thus—

'DEAR LAD,

'I have been wool-gathering all night after five great hulks, which the Pixies transfigured overnight into galleons, and this morning again into German merchantmen. I let them go with my blessing, and coming back, fell in (God be thanked!) with Valdez' great galleon, and in it good booty, which the Dons his fellows had left behind, like faithful and valiant comrades, and the Lord Howard had let slip past him, thinking her deserted by her crew. I have sent to Dartmouth a sight of noblemen and gentlemen, maybe a half hundred, and Vellier himself, who when I sent my pinnace aboard must needs stand on his punctilios, and propound conditions. I answered him, I had no time to tell with him, if he would needs die, then I was the very man for him, if he would live, then, buena guerra. He sends again, boasting that he was Dr. Pedro Valdez, and that it stood not with his honour, and that of the Dons in his company. I replied, that for my part, I was Francis Drake, and my matches burning. Whereon he finds in my name salve for the wounds of his own, and comes aboard, kissing my fist, with Spanish lies of holding himself fortunate that he had fallen into the hands of fortunate Drake, and much more, which he might have kept to cool his porridge. But I have much news from him (for he is a leaky tub), and among others, this, that your Don Guzman is aboard of the *Sa. Catharina*, commandant of her soldiery, and has his arms flying at her sprit, beside *Sa. Catharina* at the poop, which is a maiden with a wheel, and is a lofty built ship of 3 tier of ordnance, from which God preserve you, and send you like luck with

'Your deare Friend and Admirall,

F DRAKE.

'She sails in this squadron of Recalde. The Armada was minded to smoke us out of Plymouth, and God's grace it was they tried not. but their orders from home are too strait,

and so the slaves fight like a bull in a tether, no farther than their rope, finding thus the devil a hard master, as do most in the end. They cannot compass our quick handling and tacking, and take us for very witches. So far so good, and hetter to come. You and I know the length of their foot of old. Time and light will kill any hare, and they will find it a long way from Start to Quirkirk.'

'The Admiral is in a gracious humour, Leigh, to have vouchsafed you so long a letter.'

'*Sa. Catharina*' why, that was the galleon we hammered all yesterday!' said Amyas, stamping on the deck.

'Of course it was. Well, we shall find her again, doubt not. That cunning old Drake! how he has contrived to keep his own pockets, even though he had to keep the whole fleet waiting for him.'

'He has given the Lord High Admiral the dor, at all events.'

'Lord Howard is too high-hearted to stop, and plunder, Papist though he is, Amyas.'

Amyas answered by a growl, for he worshipped Drake, and was not too just to Papists.

The fleet did not find Lord Howard till night-fall, he and Lord Sheffield had been holding on steadfastly the whole night after the Spanish lanterns, with two ships only. At least there was no doubt now of the loyalty of English Roman Catholics, and, indeed, throughout the fight, the Howards showed (as if to wipe out the slurs which had been cast on their loyalty by fanatics) a desperate courage, which might have thrust less prudent men into destruction, but led them only to victory. Soon a large Spaniard drifts by, deserted and partly burnt. Some of the men are for leaving their place to board her, but Amyas stoutly refuses. He has 'come out to fight, and not to plunder, so let the nearest ship to her have her luck with out grudging.' They pass on, and the men pull long faces when they see the galleon snatched up by their next neighbour, and towed off to Weymouth, where she proves to be the ship of Miguel d'Orquenda, the Vice-Admiral, which they saw last night, all but blown up by some desperate Netherland gunner, who, being 'misused,' was minded to pay off old scores on his tyrants.

And so ends the second day, while the Portland rises higher and clearer every hour. The next morning finds them off the island. Will they try Portsmouth, though they have spared Plymouth? The wind has shifted to the north, and blows clear and cool off the white-walled downs of Weymouth Bay. The Spaniards turn and face the English. They must mean to stand off and on until the wind shall change, and then to try for the Needles. At least, they shall have some work to do before they round Purbeck Isle.

The English go to the westward again. but it is only to return on the opposite tack; and now begins a series of manœuvres, each fleet trying to get the wind of the other, but the

struggle does not last long, and ere noon the English fleet have slipped close-hauled between the Armada and the land, and are coming down upon them right before the wind.

And now begins a fight most fierce and fell 'And fight they did confusedly, and with variable fortunes, while, on the one hand, the English manfully rescued the ships of London, which were hemmed in by the Spaniards, and, on the other side, the Spaniards as stoutly delivered Recalde, being in danger.' Never was heard such thundering of ordnance on both sides, which notwithstanding from the Spaniards flew for the most part over the English without harm. Only Cock, an Englishman (whom Prince claims, I hope rightfully, as a worthy of Devon), 'died with honour in the midst of the enemies in a small ship of his. For the English ships, being far the lesser, charged the enemy with marvellous agility, and having discharged their broadsides, flew forth presently into the deep, and levelled their shot directly, without missing, at those great and unwieldy Spanish ships. 'This was the most furious and bloody skirmish of all' (though ending only, it seems, in the capture of a great Venetian and some small craft), 'in which the Lord Admiral fighting amidst his enemies' fleet, and seeing one of his captains afar off (Fenner by name, he who fought the seven Portuguese at the Azores), cried, "O George, what doest thou? Wilt thou now frustrate my hope and opinion conceived of thee? Wilt thou forsake me now?" With which words he being enflamed, approached, and did the part of a most valiant captain; and, indeed, did all the rest.

Night falls upon the floating volcano, and morning finds them far past Poulbeck, with the white peak of Freshwater ahead; and pouring out past the Needles, ship after ship, to join the gallant chase. For now from all havens, in vessels fitted out at their own expense, flock the chivalry of England; the Lords Oxford, Northumberland, and Cumberland, Pallacorn, Brooke, Carew, Raleigh, and Blunt, and many another honourable name, 'as to a set field, where immortal fame and honour was to be attained.' Spain has staked her chivalry in that mighty cast, not a noble house of Arragon or Castile but has lent a brother or a son—and shall mourn the loss of one, and England's gentlemen will measure their strength once for all against the cavaliers of Spain. Lord Howard has sent forward light craft into Portsmouth for ammunition, but they will scarce return to-night, for the wind falls dead, and all the evening the two fleets drift helpless with the tide, and shout idle defiance at each other with trumpet, fife, and drum.

The sun goes down upon a glassy sea, and rises on a glassy sea again. But what day is this? The twenty-fifth, St. James's day, sacred to the patron saint of Spain. Shall nothing be attempted in his honour by those whose forefathers have so often seen him with their bodily eyes, charging in their van upon his snow-white

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steed, and scattering Paynims with celestial lance? He might have sent them, certainly, a favouring breeze, perhaps he only means to try their faith, at least the galleys shall attack; and in their van three of the great galleasses (the fourth lies half-crippled among the fleet) thrash the sea to foam with three hundred oars apiece, and see, not St. James leading them to victory, but Lord Howard's *Triumph*, his brother's *Lion*, Southwell's *Elizabeth Jonas*, Lord Sheffield's *Bea*, Parker's *Victory*, and George Fenner's *Invester*, tower stoutly out, to meet them with such salvos of chain-shot, smashing oars, and cutting rigging, that had not the wind spring up again toward noon, and the Spanish fleet come up to rescue them, they had shared the fate of Valdez and the Bowyan. And now the fight becomes general. Frobisher leaps down the Spanish Admiral's mainmast; and, attacked himself by Mexia and Recalde, is rescued by Lord Howard, who, himself endangered in his turn, is rescued in his turn, 'while after that day' (so weakened were they of the English gunnery), 'no galliasses would adventure to fight.'

And so, with variable fortune, the fight thunders on the livelong afternoon, beneath the virgin cliffs of Freshwater, while myriad sea-fowl rise screaming up from every ledge, and spot with their black wings the snow-white wall of chalk, and the lone shepherd hurries down the slopes above to peer over the dizzy edge, and forgets the wheatear fluttering in his snare, while he gazes trembling upon glimpses of tall masts and gorgeous flags, piercing at times the league broad veil of sulphur-smoke which welters far below.

So fares St. James's day, as Bauls did on Carmel in old time, 'Father he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or he is adventuring he sleepeth, and what he saith.' At least, the only fire by which he has answered his votaries has been that of English cannon, and the Armada, 'gathering itself into a roundel,' will fight no more, but make the best of its way to Calus, where perhaps the Guises faction may have a French force ready to assist them, and then to Dunkirk, to join with Parma and the great flotilla of the Netherlands.

So on, before 'a fair Etesian gale,' which follows clear and bright out of the south south west, glide forward the two great fleets, past Brighton Cliffs and Beachy Head, Hastings and Dungeness. Is it a battle or a triumph? For by sea Lord Howard, instead of fighting is rewarding, and after Lord Thomas Howard, Lord Sheffield, Townsend, and Frobisher have received at his hands that knighthood, which was then more honourable than a peerage, old Admiral Hawkins kneels and rises up Sir John, and shaking his shoulders after the accolade, observes to the representative of majesty, that his 'old woman will hardly know he fell again, when folks call her My Lady.'

And meanwhile the cliffs are lined with pikemen and musketeers, and by every countryman

and groom who can bear arms, led by their squares and sheriffs, marching eastward as fast as their pious let them, towards the Dover shore. And not with them alone. From many a mile inland come down women and children, and aged folk in waggons, to join their feeble shouts, and prayers which are not feeble, to that great cry of mangled faith and fear which ascends to the throne of God from the spectators of Britain's Salamis.

Let them pray on. The danger is not over yet, though Lord Howard has had news from Newhaven that the Galleons will not stir against England, and Seymour and Winter have left their post of observation on the Flemish shores, to make up the number of the fleet to an hundred and forty sail—larger, slightly, than that of the Spanish fleet, but of not more than half the tonnage, or one third the number of men. The Spaniards are dispirited and battered, but unbroken still, and as they slide to their anchorage in Calais Roads on the Saturday evening of that most memorable week, all prudent men know well that England's hour is come, and that the bells which will call all Christendom to church upon the morrow morn, will be either the death-knell or the triumphal peal of the Reformed faith throughout the world.

A solemn day that Sabbath must have been in country and in town. And many a light-hearted coward, doubtless, who had scoffed (us many did) at the notion of the Armada's coming, because he dare not face the thought, gave himself up to alject fear, 'as he now plainly saw and heard that of which before he would not be persuaded.' And many a brave man, too, as he knelt beside his wife and daughters, felt his heart sink to the very pavement, at the thought of what these beloved ones might be enduring a few short days hence, from a profligate and fanatic soldiery, or from the more deliberate fiendishness of the Inquisition. The massacre of St. Bartholomew, the fires of Smithfield, the immolation of the Moors, the extermination of the West Indians, the fantastic horrors of the Piedmontese persecution, which make unreadable the too truthful pages of Morland,—these were the spectres, which, not as now, dim and distant through the mist of centuries, but recent, bleeding from still gaping wounds, flitted before the eyes of every Englishman, and filled his brain and heart with fire.

He knew full well the fate in store for him and his. One false step, and the unspeakable doom which, not two generations afterwards, befell the Lutherans of Magdeburg, would have befallen every town from London to Carlisle. All knew the hazard, as they prayed that day, and many a day before and after, throughout England and the Netherlands. And none knew it better than she who was the guiding spirit of that devoted land, and the especial mark of the invaders' fury, and who, by some Divine inspiration (as men then not unwisely held), devised herself the daring stroke which was to anticipate the coming blow.

But where is Amyas Leigh all this while? Day after day he has been seeking the *St. Catharina* in the thickest of the press, and cannot come at her, cannot even hear of her. One moment he dreams that she has sunk by night, and balked him of his prey, the next, that she has repaired her damages, and will escape him after all. He is moody, discontented, restless, even (for the first time in his life) peevish with his men. He can talk of nothing but Don Guzman, he can find no better employment, at every spare moment, than taking his sword out of the sheath, and handling it, fondling it, talking to it even, bidding it not to fail him in the day of vengeance. At last, he has sent to Squire, the armourer, for a whetstone, and, half-ashamed of his own folly, whets and polishes it in bye- corners, muttering to himself. That one fixed thought of selfish vengeance has possessed his whole mind, he forgets England's present need, her past triumph, his own safety, everything but his brother's blood. And yet this is the day for which he has been longing ever since he brought home that magic horn as a fifteen years' boy, the day when he should find himself face to face with an invader, and that invader Antichrist himself. He has believed for years with Drake, Hawkins, Grenville, and Raleigh, that he was called and sent into the world only to fight the Spaniard, and he is fighting him now, in such a cause, for such a stake, within such battle lists, as he will never see again. And yet he is not content, and while throughout that gallant fleet, whole crews are receiving the Communion side by side, and rising with cheerful hearts to shake hands, and to rejoice that they are shurers in Briton's Salamis, Amyas turns away from the holy elements.

'I cannot communicate, Sir John. Charity with all men? I hate, if ever man hated on earth.'

'You hate the Lord's foes only, Captain Leigh.'

'No, Jack, I hate my own as well.'

'But no one in the fleet, sir?'

'Don't try to put me off with the same Jesuit's quibble which that false knave Parson Fletcher invented for one of Doughty's men, to drug his conscience withal when he was plotting against his own admiral. No, Jack, I hate one of whom you know, and somehow that hatred of him keeps me from loving any human being. I am in love and charity with no man, Sir John. Unhumblecombe—not even with you! Go your ways in God's name, sir! and leave me and the devil alone together, or you'll find my words are true.'

Jack departed with a sigh, and while the crew were receiving the Communion on deck, Amyas sat below in the cabin sharpening his sword, and after it, called for a boat and went on board Drake's ship to ask news of the *St. Catharina*, and listened scowling to the loud chants and tinkling bells, which came across the water from the Spanish fleet. At last, Drake was summoned by the Lord Admiral,

and returned with a secret commission, which ought to bear fruit that night, and Amyas, who had gone with him, helped him till nightfall, and then returned to his own ship as Sir Amyas Leigh, Knight, to the joy and glory of every soul on board, except his moody self.

So there, the livelong summer Sabbath day, before the little high-walled town and the long range of yellow sandhills, he those two mighty armaments, scowling at each other, hardly out of gunshot. Messenger after messenger is hurrying towards Binger to the Duke of Parma, for light craft which can follow these humble English somewhat better than their own floating castles, and, above all, entreating him to put to sea at once with all his force. The duke is not with his forces at Dunkirk, but on the future field of Waterloo, paying his devotions to St. Mary of Halle in Hainault, in order to make all sure in his faith, and already sees in visions of the night that gentle-sailed and pore-bipped saint, Cardinal Allen, placing the crown of England on his head. He repins for answer, first, that his vessel is not ready, next, that his Dutch sailors, who have been kept at their post for many a week at the sword's point, have run away like water, and finally, that over and above all, he cannot come, so 'strangely provided of great ordnance and musketers' are those five-and-thirty Dutch ships, in which round-shouldered and stubborn-hearted heretics watch, like terriers at a rat's hole, the entrance of Antwerp and Dunkirk. Having ensured the pirate patronage of St. Mary of Halle, he will return to-morrow to make experience of its effects. But only hear across the flats of Brinvillate the thunder of the fleets, and at Dunkirk the open cursing of his officers. For while he has been praying and nothing more, the English have been praying and something more, and all that is left for the Prince of Parma is, to hang a few purveyors, as peace-offerings to his sulking army, and then 'dash,' as Drake says of himself, 'like a bear robbed of her whelps.'

For Lord Henry Seymour has brought Lord Howard a letter of command from Elizabeth's self, and Drake has been carrying it out so busily all that Sunday long, that by two o'clock on the Monday morning, eight fire-ships 'be smeared with wildfire, brimstone, pitch, and resin and all their ordnance charged with bullets and with stones,' are stealing down the wind straight for the Spanish fleet, guided by two valiant men of Devon, Young and Prowse (let their names live long in the land!). The ships are fired, the men of Devon steal back, and in a moment more, the heaven is red with glare from Dover Cliffs to Gravelines Tower, and weary-hearted Belgian bores far away inland, plundered and dragooned for many a hideous year, leap from their beds, and fancy (and not so far wrongly either) that the day of judgment is come at last, to end their woes, and hurl down vengeance on their tyrants.

And then breaks forth one of those disgraceful panics, which so often follow overweening presumption, and shrieks, oaths, prayers, and reproaches, make night hideous. There are those too on board who recollect well enough Jenebell's fire-ships at Antwerp three years before, and the wreck which they made of Parma's bridge across the Scheldt. If these should be like them! And cutting all cables, hoisting any sails, the Invincible Armada goes lumbering wildly out to sea, every ship foul of her neighbour.

The largest of the four gallies loses her rudder, and drifts helplessly to and fro, lumbering and confusing. The duke having (so the Spaniards say) weighed his anchor deliberately instead of leaving it behind him, runs in again after a while, and fires a signal for return. But his timid sheep are deaf to the shepherd's pipe, and swearing and jervyng by turns, he runs up Channel towards Gravelines, picking up stragglers on his way, who are struggling as they best can among the flats and shallows. But Drake and Finner have arrived as soon as he. When Monday's sun rises on the quaint old castle and muddy dykes of Gravelines town, the thunder of the cannon recommences, and is not hushed till night. Drake can hang coolly enough in the rear to plunder when he thinks fit, but when the battle needs it, none can fight more furiously, among the foremost, and there is need now, if ever. That Armada must never be allowed to reform. If it does, its left wing may yet keep the English at bay, while its right drives off the blockading Hollanders from Dunkirk port, and sets Parma and his fleet free to join them, and to sail in doubled strength across to the mouth of Thames.

So Drake has weighed anchor, and away up Channel with all his squadron. The moment that he saw the Spanish fleet come up, and with him Finner burning to redeem the honour which, indeed, he had never lost, and ere Fenton, Beeston, Crosse, Ryma, and Lord Southwell can join them, the Devon ships have been worrying the Spaniards for two full hours into confusion worse confounded.

But what is that heavy firing behind them? Ah! for the great gallies! She lies, like a huge stranded whale, upon the sands where you stand a *Glas pier*, and Amyas Preston, the future hero of La Guaya, is pounding her into submission, while a flight of boys and drummers look on and help, as jackals might the lion.

Soon, on the south west horizon, loom up larger and larger two mighty ships, and behind them sail on still. As they near a shout greets the *Triumph* and the *Bear*, and on and in the Lord High Admiral glides stately into the thick of the fight.

True, we have still but some three-and-twenty ships which can cope at all with some ninety of the Spaniards, but we have dash, and daring,

and the inspiration of utter need. Now, or never, must the mighty struggle be ended. We worried them off Portland; we must rend them in pieces now, and in rushes ship after ship, to smash her broadsides through and through the wooden castles, 'sometimes not a pike's length asunder,' and then out again to reload, and give place meanwhile to another. The smaller are fighting with all sails set, the few larger, who, once in, are careless about coming out again, fight with topsails loose, and their main and foreyards close down on deck, to prevent being boarded. The duke, Oquenda, and Recalde, having with much ado got clear of the shallows, bear the brunt of the fight to seaward, but in vain. The day goes against them more and more, as it runs on. Seymour and Winter have battered the great *San Philip* into a wreck, her masts are gone by the board, Pimentelli in the *San Matthew* comes up to take the mactiffs off the fantail, and finds them fasten on him instead, but the Evangelist, though smaller, is stouter than the Deacon, and of all the shot poured into him, not twenty 'lackt him thorough.' His masts are tottering, but sink or strike he will not.

'Go ahead, and pound his tough hide, Leigh,' roars Drake off the poop of his ship, while he hammers away at one of the great gallasses. 'What right has he to keep us all waiting!'

Amyas slips in as best he can between Drake and Winter, as he passes he shouts to his ancient enemy:—

'We are with you, sir, all friends to-day!' and slipping round Winter's bows, he pours his broadside into those of the *San Matthew*, and then glides on to reload, but not to return. For, not a pistol shot to leeward, worried by three or four small craft, lies an immense galley, and on her poop—can he believe his eyes for joy!—the maiden and the wheel which he has sought so long!

'There he is!' shouts Amyas, springing to the starboard side of the ship. The men, too, have already caught sight of that hated sign, a cheer of fury bursts from every throat.

'Steady, men!' says Amyas in a suppressed voice. 'Not a shot! Reload, and be ready, I must speak with him first,' and silent as the grave, amid the infernal din, the *Vengeance* glides up to the Spaniard's quarter.

'Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor, de Soto!' shouts Amyas from the mizzen rigging, loud and clear amid the roar.

He has not called in vain. Fearless and graceful as ever, the tall, mail-clad figure of his foe leaps up upon the poop-railing, twenty feet above Amyas's head, and shouts through his vi or—

'At your service, sir! whosoever you may be.'

A dozen muskets and arrows are levelled at him, but Amyas frowns them down. 'No man strikes him but I spare him, if you kill every other soul on board. Don Guzman! I

am Captain Sir Amyas Leigh, I proclaim you a traitor and a ravisier, and challenge you once more to single combat, when and where you will.'

'You are welcome to come on board me, sir,' answers the Spaniard in a clear, quiet tone; 'bringing with you this answer, that you lie in your throat', and hugging a moment, out of bravado, to arrango his scarf, he steps slowly down again behind the bulwarks.

'Coward!' shouts Amyas at the top of his voice.

The Spaniard reappears instantly. 'Why that name, Señor, of all others!' asks he in a cool, stern voice.

'Because we call men cowards in England, who leave their wives to be burnt alive by pirates.'

The moment the words had passed Amyas's lips, he felt that they were cruel and unjust. But it was too late to recall them. The Spaniard started, clenched his sword hilt, and then lashed back through his closed vizor—

'For that word, sirrah, you hang at my yard-arm, if Saint Mary gives me grace.'

'See that your halber be a siken one, then,' laughed Amyas, 'for I am just dubbed knight.' And he stepped down as a storm of bullets rang through the rigging round his head, the Spaniards are not as punctilious as he.

'Fire!' His ordinance crash through the stern-works of the Spaniard; and then he sails onward, while her balls go humming harmlessly through his rigging.

Half an hour has passed of wild noise and fury, three times has the *Vengeance*, as a dolphin might, sailed clean round and round the *Sta. Catharina*, pouring in broadside after broadside, till the guns are leaping to the deck-beams with their own heat, and the Spaniard's sides are slit and spotted in a hundred places. And yet, so high has been his fire in return, and so strong the deck defences of the *Vengeance*, that a few spars broken, and two or three men wounded by musketry, are all her loss. But still the Spaniard endures, magnificent as ever, it is the battle of the threshier and the whale, the end is certain, but the work is long.

'Can I help you, Captain Leigh?' asked Lord Henry Seymour, as he passes within our's length of him, to attack a ship ahead. 'The *San Matthew* has had his dinner, and is gone on to Medina to ask for a digestive to it.'

'I thank your Lordship, but this is my private quarrel, of which I spoke. But if your Lordship could lend me powder—'

'Would that I could! But no, I fear, says every other gentleman in the fleet.'

A puff of wind clears away the sulphureous veil for a moment, the sea is clear of ships towards the land; the Spanish fleet are moving again up Channel, Medina bringing up the rear; only some two miles to their right hand, the vast hull of the *San Philip* is drifting up the

shore with the tide, and somewhat nearer the *San Mattheo* is hard at work at her pumps. They can see the white stream of water pouring down her side.

'Go in, my Lord, and have the pair,' shouts Amyas.

'No, sir! Forward is a Seymour's cry. We will leave them to pay the Flushingers' expenses.' And on went Lord Henry, and on shore went the *San Philip* at Ostend, to be plundered by the Flushingers, while the *San Mattheo*, whose captain, 'on a hault courage,' had refused to save himself and his gentlemen on board Medina's ship, went blundering merrily into the hungry mouths of Captain Peter Vanderbuss and four other valiant Antelimen, who, like prudent men of Holland, contrived to keep the galleon aloft till they had emptied her, and then 'hung up her banner in the great church of Leyden, being of such a length, that being fastened to the roof, it reached unto the very ground.'

But in the meanwhile, long ere the sun had set, comes down the darkness of the thunderstorm, attracted, as to 'a volcano's mouth, to that vast mass of sulphur-smoke which cloaks the sea for many a mile, and heaven's artillery above makes answer to man's below. But still, through smoke and rain, Amyas clings to his prey. She too has seen the northward movement of the Spanish fleet, and sets her topmasts, Amyas calls to the men to fire high, and crumple her rigging, but in vain for three or four belated galleys, having forced their way at last over the shallows, come flashing and sputtering up to the combatants, and take his fire off the galleon. Amyas grinds his teeth, and would fain hustle into the thick of the press once more, in spite of the galleys' beaks.

'Most heroic! captain,' says Cary, pulling a long face, 'if we do, we are stove and sunk in five minutes, not to mention that Yeo says he has not twenty rounds of great cartridge left.'

So, surely, and silent, the *Vengeance* sheers off, but keeps as near as she can to the little squadron, all through the night of rain and thunder which follows. Next morning the sun rises on a clear sky, with a strong west north-west breeze, and all hearts are asking what the day will bring forth.

They are long past Dunkirk now, the German Ocean is opening before them. The Spaniards, sorely battered, and lessened in numbers, have, during the night, regained some sort of order. The English hang on their skirts a mile or two behind. They have no ammunition, and must wait for more. To Amyas's great disgust, the *Sta. Catharina* has rejoined her fellows during the night.

'Never mind,' says Cary; 'she can neither dive nor fly, and as long as she is above water, we—What is the Admiral about?'

He is signalling Lord Henry Seymour and his squadron. Soon they tack, and come down the wind for the coast of Flanders. Parma

must be blockaded still, and the Hollanders are likely to be too busy with their plunder to do it effectually. Suddenly there is a stir in the Spanish fleet. Medina and the rearmost ships turn upon the English. What can it mean? Will they offer battle once more? If so, it were best to get out of their way, for we have nothing wherewith to fight them. So the English lie close to the wind. They will let them pass, and return to their old tactic of following and harassing.

'Good-bye to Seymour,' says Cary, 'if he is caught between them and Parma's flotilla. They are going to Dunkirk.'

'Impossible! They will not have water enough to reach his light craft. Here comes a big ship right upon us! Give him all you have left, lads, and if he will fight us, lay him alongside, and die boarding.'

They gave him what they had, and hulled him with every shot, but his huge side stood silent as the grave. He had not wherewithal to return the compliment.

'As I live,' he is cutting loose the foot of his mainsail! the villain means to run.'

'There go the rest of them! Vittoria!' shouted Cary, as one after another, every Spaniard set all the sail he could.

There was silence for a few minutes throughout the English fleet, and then cheer upon cheer of triumph rent the skies. It was over. The Spaniard had refused battle, and thinking only of safety, was pressing downward toward the Straits again. The Invincible Armada had cast away its name, and England was saved.

'But he will never get there, sir,' said old Yeo, who had come upon deck to murmur his *Nunc Domine*, and gaze upon that sight beyond all human faith or hope. 'Never, never will he weather the Flanders shore, against such a breeze as is coming up. Look to the eye of the wind, sir, and see how the Lord is fighting for His people.'

Yes, down it came, fresher and stiffer every minute out of the grey north-west, as it does so often after a thunderstorm; and the sea began to rise high and white under the 'Claro Aquilone,' till the Spaniards were fain to take in all spare canvas, and lie to as best they could, while the English fleet, lying-to also, awaited an event which was in God's hands and not in theirs.

'They will be all ashore on Zealand before the afternoon,' murmured Amyas, 'and I have lost my labour! Oh, for powder, powder, powder! to go in and finish it at once!'

'Oh, sir,' said Yeo, 'don't murmur against the Lord in the very day of His mercies. It is hard, to be sure, but His will be done.'

'Could we not borrow powder from Drake there?'

'Look at the sea, sir!'

And, indeed, the sea was far too rough for any such attempt. The Spaniards neared and neared the fatal dunes, which fringed the shore

for many a dreary mile, and Amyas had to wait weary hours, growling like a dog who has had the bone snatched out of his mouth, till the day wore on, when, behold, the wind began to fall as rapidly as it had risen. A savage joy rose in Amyas's heart.

'They are safe! safe for us! Who will go and beg us powder? A cartridge here and a cartridge there!—anything to set to work again!'

Cary volunteered, and returned in a couple of hours with some quantity, but he was on board again only just in time, for the south-wester had recovered the mastery of the skies, and Spaniards and English were moving away, but this time northward. Whither now? To Scotland? Amyas knew not, and cared not, provided he was in the company of Don Guzman de Sota.

The Armada was defeated, and England saved. But such great undertakings seldom end in one grand melodramatic explosion of fireworks, through which the devil arises in full roar to drag Dr Faustus for ever into the flaming pit. On the contrary, the devil stands by his servants to the last, and tries to bring off his shattered forces with drums beating and colours flying, and, if possible, to lull his enemies into supposing that the fight is ended, long before it really is half over. All which the good Lord Howard of Effingham knew well, and knew, too, that Medina had one last card to play, and that was the filial affection of that dutiful and chivalrous son, James of Scotland. True, he had promised faith to Elizabeth, but that was no reason why he should keep it. He had been banking and dabbling after Spain for years past, for its absolutism was dear to his inmost soul, and Queen Elizabeth had had to warn him, would him, call him a liar, for so doing, so the Armada might still find shelter and provision in the Firth of Forth. But whether Lord Howard knew or not, Medina did not know, that Elizabeth had played her card cunningly, in the shape of one of those appeals to the purse, which, to James's dying day, overweighed all others save appeals to his vanity. 'The title of a dukedom in England, a yearly pension of £5000, a guard at the Queen's charge, and other matters' (probably more bounds and deer), had steeled the heart of the King of Scots, and sealed the Firth of Forth. Nevertheless, as I say, Lord Howard, like the rest of Elizabeth's heroes, trusted James just as much as James trusted others, and therefore thought good to escort the Armada until it was safely past the domains of that most chivalrous and truthful Solomon. But on the 4th of August, his fears, such as they were, were laid to rest. The Spaniards left the Scottish coast and sailed away for Norway, and the game was played out, and the end was come, as the end of such matters generally comes, by gradual decay, petty disaster, and mistake; till the snow-mountain, instead of being blown tragically and heroically to atoms, melts helplessly and pitifully away.

CHAPTER XXXII

HOW AMYAS THREW HIS SWORD INTO THE SEA

'Full fathom deep thy father lies,
(Of his bones are corals made,
Thou art pearls which were his eyes,
Nodding of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange,
Boreas hourly ring his knell,
Hark! I hear them—Ding dong bell.'

The Tempest

Yes, it is over, and the great Armada is vanquished. It is lull for a while, the overhasting war which is in heaven, the battle of Iram and Turan, of the children of light and of darkness, of Michael and his angels against Satan and his fiends, the battle which slowly and seldom, once in the course of many centuries, culminates and ripens into a day of judgment, and becomes palpable and incarnate, no longer a mere spiritual fight, but one of flesh and blood, wherein simple men may choose their sides without mistake, and help God's cause not merely with prayer and pen, but with sharp shot and cold steel. A day of judgment has come, which has divided the light from the darkness, and the sheep from the goats, and tried each man's work by the fire, and, behold, the devil's work, like its maker, is proved to have been, as always, a lie and a sham, and a windy boast, a bladder which collapses at the merest pin prick. Byzantine emperors, Spanish Agnadas, triple-crowned Popes, Russian Despotisms, this is the way of them, and will be to the end of the world. One brave blow at the big bullying phantasm, and it vanishes in sulphur steam, while the children of Israel, as of old, see the Egyptians dead in the marshes, — they scarce know how, save that God has done it,—and sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb.

And now, from England and the Netherlands, from Germany and Geneva, and those poor Vaudois shepherd swains, whose burials for generations past

'Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,

to be, indeed, the soul of the Church, and a germ of new life, liberty, and civilisation, even in these very days retaining good for evil to that Piedmont which has hunted them down like the partridges on the mountains;—from all of Europe, from all of mankind, I had almost said, in which lay the seed of future virtue and greatness, of the destinies of the new-discovered world, and the triumphs of the coming age of science, arose a shout of holy joy, such as the world had not heard for many a weary and bloody century, a shout which was the prophetic birth-cries of North America, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, of free commerce and free colonisation over the whole earth.

'There was in England, by the commandment of her Majesty,' says Van Meteren, 'and likewise in the United Provinces, by the direction

of the States, a solemn festival day publicly appointed, wherein all persons were solemnly enjoined to resort unto y^e Church, and there to render thanks and praises unto God, and y^e preachers were commanded to exhort y^e people thereunto. The aforeward solemnity was observed upon the 29th of November which day was wholly spent in fasting, prayer, and giving of thanks.

'Take wise the Queen's Majesty herself, imitating y^e ancient Romans, rode into London in triumph, in regard of her own and her subjects' glorious deliverance. For being attended upon very solemnly by all y^e principal Estates and officers of her Realm, she was carried through her said City of London in a triumphant Chariot, and in robes of triumph, from her Palace unto y^e said Cathedral Church of St. Paul, out of y^e which y^e Ensigns and Colours of y^e vanquished Spaniards being displayed. And all y^e Citizens of London, in their liveries, stood on either side y^e street, by their several Companies, with their ensigns and banners, and the streets were hanged on both sides with blue ('luff', which, together with y^e foresaid banners, yielded a very stately and gallant prospect. Her Majesty being entered into y^e Church together with her Clergy and Nobles, gave thanks unto God, and caused a public Sermon to be preached before her at Paul's Cross, wherein none other argument was handled, but that praise, honour, and glory might be rendered unto God, and that God's Name might be extolled by thanksgiving. And with her own joyful voice she most Christingly exhorted y^e people to do y^e same, whereunto y^e people, with a loud acclamation, wished her a most long and happy life to y^e confusion of her foes.'

Yea, as the melads struck on the occasion said, 'It came, it saw, and it fled!' And whither? Away and northward, like a herd of frightened deer, past the Orkneys and Shetlands, catching up a few hapless fishermen as guides, past the coast of Norway, there, too, refused water and food by the brave descendants of the Vikings, and on northward ever towards the lonely Feroes, and the everlasting dawn which heralds round the Pole the midnight sun.

Their water is failing, the cattle must go overboard, and the wild northern sea echoes to the shrieks of drowning horses. They must homeward at least, somehow, each as best he can. Let them meet again at Cape Finistère, if indeed they ever meet. Medina Sidonia, with some five-and-twenty of the swiftest and best victualled ships, will lead the way, and leave the rest to their fate. He is soon out of sight, and forty more, the only remnant of that mighty host, come wandering wearily behind, hoping to make the south-west coast of Ireland, and have help, or, at least, fresh water there, from their fellow Romanists. Alas for them!—

'Make Thou their way dark and slippery,
'And follow them up ever with Thy storm.'

For now comes up from the Atlantic, gale on

gale, and few of that hapless remnant reached the shores of Spain.

And where are Amvas and the *Vengeance* all this while?

At the fifty-seventh degree of latitude, the English fleet, finding themselves growing short of provision, and having been long since out of powder and ball, turn southward toward home, 'thinking it best to leave the Spaniards to these mouth and hoisterous northern seas.' A few pinnaces are still sent onward to watch their course and the English fleet, caught in the same storms which scattered the Spaniards, 'with great danger and industry reached Harwich port, and there provide themselves of victuals and ammunition,' in case the Spaniards should return, but there is no need for that caution. Parma indeed, who cannot believe that the idol at Halle, after all his compliments to it, will play him so many a trick will watch for weeks on Dunkirk dunes, hoping against hope for the Armada's return, casting anchors, and spinning rigging to repair their losses.

'But long long may his labours sit,
With the ~~the~~ fates until their hate,
Before they see the Patrick Span
Come sailing to the light.'

The Armada is away on the other side of Scotland, and Amvas is following in its wake.

For when the Lord High Admiral determined to return, Amvas asked leave to follow the Spaniard, and asked, too, of Sir John Hawkins, who happened to be at hand, such ammunition and provision as could be afforded him, promising to repay the same like an honest man, out of his plunder if he lived, out of his estate if he died, longing for that purpose falls in the hands of Sir John, who, as a man of business, took them, and put them in his pocket among the thimbles, string, and tobacco, after which Amvas, calling his men together, reminded them once more of the story of the Rose of Tarride and Don Grzman de Soto, and then asked—

'Men of Bideford, will you follow me? There will be plunder for those who love plunder, revenge for those who love revenge, and for all of us (for we all love honour) the honour of having never left the chase as long as there was a Spanish flag in English seas.'

And every soul on board replied, that they would follow Sir Amvas high around the world.

There is no need for me to detail every incident of that long and weary chase—how they found the *Sta Catharina*, attacked her, and had to sheer off, she being rescued by the rest, how when Medina's squadron left the crippled ships behind, they were all but taken or sunk, by thrusting into the midst of the Spanish fleet to prevent her escaping with Medina, how they crippled her, so that she could not beat to windward out into the ocean, but was fain to run south, past the Orkneys, and down through the Minch, between Cape Wrath and Lewis, how the younger hands were ready to mutiny, because Amvas, in his stubborn haste, ran past two or

three noble prizes which were all but disabled, among others one of the great galliasses, and the two great Venetians, *La Ratta* and *La Belanzara* which were afterwards, with more than thirty other vessels, wrecked on the west coast of Ireland, how he got fresh water, in spite of certain 'Hebridean Scots' of Skye, who, after reviling him in an unknown tongue, fought with him a while, and then embraced him and his men with howls of affection, and were not much more decently clad, nor more civilised, than his old friends of California, how he pacified his men by letting them pick the bones of a great Venetian which was going on shore upon Islay (by which they got booty enough to repay them for the whole voyage), and offended them again by refusing to land and plunder two great Spanish wrecks on the Mull of Cantire (whose crews, by the bye, James tried to smuggle off secretly into Spain in ships of his own, wishing to play, as usual, both sides of the game at once, but the Spaniards were stopped at Yarmouth till the council's pleasure was known - which was, of course, to let the poor wretches go on their way, and be hanged elsewhere), how they passed a strange island, half black, half white, which the wild people called Raghary, but Cary christened it 'the drowned magpie', how the *Sia Catharina* was near lost on the Isle of Man, and then put into Castleton (where the Maux-men slew a whole boat's-crow with their arrows), and then put out again, when Amyas fought with her a whole day, and shot away her mainyard, how the Spaniard blundered down the coast of Wales, not knowing whither he went, how they were both nearly lost on Holyhead, and again on Bardsey Island, how they got on a lee shore in Cardigan Bay, before a heavy westerly gale, and the *Sia Catharina* ran aground on St. David, one of those strange subaqueous feeble dykes which are said to be the remnants of the lost land of Gwalior, destroyed by the carelessness of Prince Seithenn the drunkard, at whose name each loyal Welshman shudders, how she got off again at the rising of the tide, and fought with Amyas a fourth time; how the wind changed, and she got round St. David's Head, - these, and many more moving incidents of this eventful voyage, I must pass over without details, and go on to the end, for it is time that the end should come.

It was now the sixteenth day of the chase. They had seen, the evening before, St. David's Head, and then the Welsh coast round Milford Haven, looming out black and sharp before the blaze of the inland thunderstorm, and it had lightened all round them during the fore part of the night, upon a light south-western breeze.

In vain they had strained their eyes through the darkness, to catch, by the fitful glare of the flashes, the tall masts of the Spaniard. Of one thing at least they were certain, that with the wind as it was, she could not have gone far to the westward, and to attempt to pass them again, and go northward, was more than she dare do. She was probably lying to ahead of

them, perhaps between them and the land; and when, a little after midnight, the wind chopped up to the west, and blew stiffly till daybreak, they felt sure that, unless she had attempted the desperate expedient of running past them, they had her safe in the mouth of the Bristol Channel. Slowly and wearily broke the dawn, on such a day as often follows heavy thunder, a sunless, drizzly day, roofed with low dingy cloud, barred and netted, and festooned with black, a sign that the storm is only taking breath a while before it hursts again; while all the narrow horizon is dim and spongy with vapour drifting before a chilly breeze. As the day went on, the breeze died down, and the sea fell to a long glassy foam-flecked roll, while overhead brooded the inkky sky, and round them the leaden mist shut out alike the shore and the chase.

Amyas paced the slopely deck fretfully and fiercely. He knew that the Spaniard could not escape, but he cursed every moment which lingered between him and that one great revenge which blackened all his soul. The men sat sulkily about the deck, and whistled for a wind, the sails flapped idly against the masts, and the ship rolled in the long troughs of the sea, till her yard-arms almost dipped right and left.

'Take care of those guns. You will have something loose next,' growled Amyas.

'We will take care of the guns, if the Lord will take care of the wind,' said Yeo.

'We shall have plenty before night,' said Cary, 'and thunder too.'

'So much the better,' said Amyas. 'It may roar till it splits the heavens, if it does but let me get my work done.'

'He's not far off, I warrant,' said Cary. 'One lift of the cloud, and we should see him.'

'To windward of us, as likely as not,' said Amyas. 'The devil fights for him, I believe. To have been on his heels sixteen days, and not sent this through him yet!' And he shook his sword impatiently.

So the morning wore away, without a sign of living thing, not even a passing gull, and the black melancholy of the heaven reflected itself in the black melancholy of Amyas. Was he to lose his prey after all? The thought made him shudder with rage and disappointment. It was intolerable. Anything but that.

'No, God!' he cried, 'let me but once feel this in his accursed heart, and then - strike me dead, if Thou wilt!'

'The Lord have mercy on us,' cried John Brimblecombe. 'What have you said?'

'What is that to you, sir? There, they are going to dinner. Go down. I shall not come.'

And Jack went down, and talked in a half-tormented whisper of Amyas's ominous words.

All thought that they portended some bad luck, except old Yeo.

'Well, Sir John,' said he, 'and why not? What better can the Lord do for a man than take him home when he has done his work? Our captain is wilful and spiteful, and must

needs kill his man himself; while for me, I don't care how the Don goes, provided he does go. I owe him no grudge, nor any man. May the Lord give him repentance, and forgive him all his sins. but if I could but see him once safe ashore, as he may be ere nightfall, on the Mortestone or the back of Lundy, I would say, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," even if it were the lightning which was sent to fetch me."

"But, Master Yeo, a sudden death?"

"And why not a sudden death, Sir John? Even fools long for a short life and a merry one, and shall not the Lord's people pray for a short death and a merry one? Let it come as it will to old Yeo. Hark! there's the captain's voice!"

"Here she is!" thundered Amyas from the deck, and in an instant all were scrambling up the hatchway as fast as the frantic rolling of the ship would let them.

Yes! There she was. The cloud had lifted suddenly, and to the south a rugged bore of blue sky let a long stream of sunshine down on her tall masts and stately hull, as she lay rolling some four or five miles to the eastward but as for land, none was to be seen.

"There she is; and here we are," said Cary, "but where is here? and where is there? How is the tide, master?"

"Running up Channel by this time, sir."

"What matters the tide?" said Amyas, devouring the ship with terrible and cold blue eyes. "Can't we get at her?"

"Not unless some one jumps out and shoves behind, said Cary. "I shall down again and smash that mackerel, if this roll has not chucked it to the cockroaches under the table."

"Don't jest, Will! I can't stand it," said Amyas, in a voice which quivered so much that Cary looked at him. His whole frame was trembling like an aspen. Cary took his aim, and drew him aside.

"Dear old Will," said he, as they leaned over the bulwarks, "what is this? You are not yourself, and have not been these four days."

"No. I am not Amyas Leigh. I am my brother's avenger. Do not reason with me, Will! when it is over I shall be merry old Amyas again," and he passed his hand over his brow.

"Do you believe," said he, after a moment, "that men can be possessed by devils?"

"The Bible says so."

"If my cause were not a just one, I should fancy I had a devil in me. My throat and heart are as hot as the pit. Would to God it were done, for done it must be! Now go!"

Cary went away with a shudder. As he passed down the hatchway he looked back. Amyas had got the hilt out of his pocket, and was whetting away again at his sword-edge, as if there was some dreadful doom on him, to whet, and whet for ever.

The weary day wore on. The strip of blue sky was curtained over again, and all was dimmed as before, though it grew sulkier every moment,

and now and then a distant mutter shook the air to westward. Nothing could be done to lessen the distance between the ships, for the *Vengeance* had had all her boats carried away but one, and that was much too small to tow her. And while the men went down again to finish dinner, Amyas worked on at his sword, looking up every now and then suddenly at the Spaniard, as if to satisfy himself that it was not a vision which had vanished.

About two Yeo came up to him.

"He is ours safely now, sir. The tide has been running to the eastward for this two hours."

"Safe as a fox in a trap. Satan himself can not take him from us!"

"But God may," said Brimblecombe simply.

"Who spoke to you, sir? If I thought that He -- There comes the thunder at last!"

And as he spoke, an angry growl from the westward heavens seemed to answer his wild words, and rolled and loudened nearer and nearer, till right over their heads it crashed against some cloud-cliff far above, and all was still.

Each man looked on the other's face but Amyas was unmoved.

"The storm is coming," said he, "and the wind in it. It will be Eastward-ho now, for once, my merry men all!"

"Eastward-ho never brought us luck," said Jack in an undertone to Cary. But by this time all eyes were turned to the north-west, where a black line along the horizon began to define the boundary of sea and air, till now all dim in mist.

"There comes the breeze!"

"And there the storm, too!"

And with that strangely accelerating pace which some storms seem to possess, the thunder, which had been growing slow and seldom far away, now rang peal on peal along the cloudy floor above their heads.

"Here comes the breeze. Round with the yards, or we shall be taken aback!"

The yards creaked round, the sea grew crisp around them, the hot air swept their cheeks, tightened every rope, filled every sail, bent her over. A cheer burst from the men as the helm went up, and they staggered away before the wind, right down upon the Spaniard, who lay still becalmed.

"There is more behind, Amyas," said Cary.

"Shall we not shorten sail a little?"

"No. Hold on every stitch," said Amyas.

"Give me the helm, man! Boatswain, pipe away to clear for fight!"

It was done, and in ten minutes the men were all at quarters, while the thunder rolled louder and louder overhead, and the breeze freshened fast.

"The dog has it now. There he goes!" said Cary.

"Right before the wind. He has no hking to save us."

"He is running into the jaws of destruction," said Yeo. "An hour more will send him either

right up the Channel, or swack on shore somewhere.

'There 'ho has put his helm down I wonder if he sees land?'

'He is like a March hare beat out of his country,' said Cary, 'and don't know whither to run next.'

Cary was right. In ten minutes more the Spaniard fell off again, and went away dead down wind, while the *Vengeance* gained on him fast. After two hours more, the four miles had diminished to one, while the lightning flashed nearer and nearer as the storm came up, and from the vast mouth of a black cloud-arch poured so fierce a breeze that Amyas yielded unwillingly to hints which were growing into open warnings, and bado shortened sail.

On they rushed with scarcely lessened speed, the black arch following fast, curtained by one flat grey sheet of pouring rain, before which the water was boiling in a long white line, while every moment behind the watery veil, a keen blue spark leapt down into the sea, or darted zigzag through the rain.

'We shall have it now, and with a vengeance, this will try your tackle, master,' said Cary.

The functionary answered with a shrug, and turned up the collar of his rough frock, as the first drops flew stinging round his ears. Another minute and the squall burst full upon them, in rain, which cut like hail—hail which lashed the sea into froth, and wind which whirled off the heads of the surges, and swept the waters into one white seething waste. And above them, and behind them, and before them, the lightning leapt and ran, dazzling and blinding, while the deep roar of the thunder was changed to sharp, ear-piercing cracks.

'Get the arms and ammunition under cover, and then below with you all,' shouted Amyas from the helm.

'And heat the pokors in the galley fire,' said Yeo, 'to be ready if the rain puts our linestocks out. I hope you'll let me stay on deck, sir, in case—'

'I must have some one, and who better than you? Can you see the chase?'

No; she was wrapped in the grey whirlwind. She might be within half a mile of them, for aught they could have seen of her.

And now Amyas and his old hegeman were alone. Neither spoke, each knew the other's thoughts, and knew that they were his own. The squall blew fiercer and fiercer, the rain poured heavier and heavier. Where was the Spaniard?

'If he has laid-to, we may overshoot him, sir!'

'If he has tried to lay-to, he will not have a sail left in the bolt-ropes, or perhaps a mast on deck. I know the stiff-neckedness of those Spanish tubs. Hurrah! there he is, right on our larboard bow!'

There also was indeed, two musket-shots off, staggering away with canvas split and flying.

He has been trying to hull, sir, and caught

a buffet,' said Yeo, rubbing his hands. 'What shall we do now?'

'Range alongside, if it blow live mips and witches, and try our luck once more. Pah! how this lightning dazzles!'

On they swopt, gaining fast on the Spaniard. 'Call the men up, and to quarters, the rain will be over in ten minutes.'

Yeo ran forward to the gangway; and sprang back again, with a face white and wild—

'Land right ahead! Port your helm, sir! For the love of God, port your helm!'

Amyas, with the strength of a bull, jammed the helm down, while Yeo shouted to the men below.

She swung round. 'The masts bent like whips, crack went the foremast like a cannon. What matter? Within two hundred yards of them was the Spaniard, in front of her, and above her, a huge dark bank rose through the dense hail, and mingled with the clouds, and at its foot, plumed every moment, pulails and spouts of leaping foam.

'What is it, Morte? Hatland?'

It might be anything for thirty miles.

'Landy!' said Yeo. 'The south end! I see the head of the Shutter in the breakers! Haul a-port yet, and get her close-hauled as you can, and the Lord may have mercy on us still! Look at the Spaniard!'

Yes, look at the Spaniard!

On their left hand, as they borehead-to, the wall of granite sloped down from the clouds to ward an isolated peak of rock, some two hundred feet in height. This a hundred yards of roaring breaker, upon a sunken shelf, across which the race of the tide poured like a cataract, then, round a column of salt smoke, the Shutter, like a huge black lang, rose waiting for its prey, and between the Shutter and the land, the great galleon loomed dimly through the storm.

He, too, had seen his danger, and tried to broach-to. But his clumsy mass refused to obey the helm, he struggled a moment, half hid in foam, fell away again, and, raked upon his down.

'Lost! lost! lost!' cried Amyas madly, and throwing up his hands, let go the tiller. Yeo caught it just in time.

'Sir! sir! What are you at? We shall clear the rock yet.'

'Yes!' shouted Amyas in his frenzy, 'but he will not!'

Another minute. The galleon gave a sudden jar, and stopped. Then one long heave and bound, as if to free herself. And then her bows lighted clean upon the Shutter.

An awful silence fell on every English soul. They heard not the roaring of wind and surge; they saw not the blinding flashes of the lightning, but they heard one long ear-piercing wail to every saint in heaven rise from five hundred human throats, they saw the mighty ship heel over from the wind, and sweep headlong down the cataract of the race, plunging her yards into the foam, and showing her whole black side over

to her keel, till she rolled clean over, and vanished for ever and ever.

'Shame!' cried Amvas, hurling his sword far into the sea, 'to lose my right, my right! when it was in my very grasp! Unmerciful!'

A crack which rent the sky, and made the granite ring and quiver; a bright world of flame, and then a blank of utter darkness, against which stood out, glowing red-hot, every mast, and sail, and ruck, and Salvation Yeo as he stood just in front of Amvas, the tiller in his hand. All red-hot, transmuted into fire, and behind, the black, black night.

A whisper, a rustling close beside him, and Bramblecombe's voice said softly—

'Give him more wine, Will, his eyes are opening.'

'Hic-day?' said Amvas faintly, 'not past the Shutter yet! How long she lugs in the wind!'

'We are long past the Shutter, Sir Amvas,' said Bramblecombe.

'Are you mad? Cannot I trust my own eyes?'

There was no answer for a while.

'We are past the Shutter, indeed,' said Cary very gently, 'and lying in the cove at Landy.'

'Will you tell me that that is not the Shutter, and that the Devil a-huekin, and that the cliff that villain Spaulward only gone—and that Yeo is not standing here by me, and Cary there forward, and why, by the bye, where are you, Jack Bramblecombe, who were talking to me this minute?'

'Oh, Sir Amvas Leigh, dear Sir Amvas Leigh,' muttered poor Jack, 'put out your hand, and feel where you are, and pray the Lord to forgive you for your wilfulness!'

A great trembling fell upon Amvas Leigh, half lamely he put out his hand, he felt that he was in his hammock, with the deck beams close above his head. The vision which had been left upon his eye-balls vanished like a dream.

'What is this? I must be asleep! What has happened? Where am I?'

'In your cabin, Amvas,' said Cary.

'What? And where is Yeo?'

'Yeo is gone where he longed to go, and as he longed to go. The same fish which struck you down, struck him dead!'

'Dead? Lightning? Any more hurt? I must go and see. Why, what is this?' and Amvas passed his hand across his eyes. 'It is all dark—dark, as I live!' And he passed his hand over his eyes again.

There was another dead silence. Amvas broke it.

'O God!' shrieked the great proud sea-captain, 'O God, I am blind! blind! blind!' And writhing in his great horror, he called to Cary to kill him and put him out of his misery, and then waited for his mother to come and help him, as if he had been a boy once more; while Bramblecombe and Cary, and the sailors

who crowded round the cabin-door, wept as if they too had been boys once more.

Soon his fit of frenzy passed off, and he sank back exhausted.

They lifted him into their remaining boat, rowed him ashore, carried him painfully up the hill to the old castle, and made a bed for him on the floor, in the very room in which Don Gurman and Rose Salterne had pledged their troth to each other, five wild years before.

Three miserable days were passed within that lonely tower. Amvas, utterly unvisited by the horror of his misfortune, and by the over-excitement of the last few weeks, was incessantly delirious, while Cary, and Bramblecombe, and the men nursed him by turns, as sailors and wives only can nurse, and listened with awe to his pitious self reproaches and entreaties to Heaven to remove that woe, which, as he shrieked again and again, was a just judgment on him for his wilfulness and ferocity. The surgeon talked, of course, learnedly about melancholic humours, and his liver's being 'adust' by the over-pungency of the animal spirits, and then fell back on the universal panacea of blood-letting, which he effected with fear and trembling during a short interval of prostration, encouraged by which he attempted to administer a large bolus of aloes, was knocked down for his pains, and then thought it better to let Mr. Nature to her own work. In the meanwhile, Cary had sent off one of the island skiffs to Clovelly, with letters to his father, and to Mrs. Leigh, entreating the latter to come off to the island, but the heavy westerly winds made that as impossible, as it was to move Amvas on board, and the men had to do their best, and did it well enough.

On the fourth day his raving ceased. But he was still too weak to be moved. Toward noon, however, he called for food, ate a little, and seemed revived.

'Will,' he said, after a while, 'this room is as stifling as it is dark. I feel as if I should be a sound man once more if I could but get one snuff of the sea breeze.'

The surgeon shook his head at the notion of moving him, but Amvas was peremptory.

'I am captain still, Tom Surgeon, and will sail for the Indies, if I choose. Will Cary, Jack Bramblecombe, will you obey a blind general?'

'What you will in reason,' said they both at once.

'Then lead me out, my masters, and over the down to the south end. To the point at the south end I must go, there is no other place will suit.'

And he rose firmly to his feet, and held out his hands for theirs.

'Let him have his humour,' whispered Cary. 'It may be the working off of his madness.'

'This sudden strength is a note of fresh fever,' Mr. Lieutenant, said the surgeon, 'and the rules of the art prescribe rather a fresh blood-letting.'

Amvas overheard the last word, and broke out—

'Then pig-sticking Philistine, wilt thou make sport with blind Samson? Come near me to let blood from my arm, and see if I do not let blood from thy oxcomb. Catch him, Will, and bring him me here!'

The surgeon vanished as the blind giant made a step forward, and they set forth, Amyas walking slowly, but firmly, between his two friends.

'Whither?' asked Cary.

'To the south end. The crag above the Devil's-hinniklu. No other place will suit.'

Jack gave a murmur, and half stopped, as a frightful suspicion crossed him.

'That is a dangerous place!'

'What of that?' said Amyas, who caught his meaning in his tone. 'Dost think I am going to leap over cliff? I have not heart enough for that. On, lads, and set me safe among the rocks.'

So, slowly and painfully, they went on, while Amyas murmured to himself—

'No, no other place will suit, I can see all thence.'

So on they went to the point, where the cyclopean wall of granite cliff which forms the western side of Lundy ends sheer in a precipice of some three hundred feet, topped by a pile of snow-white rock, bespangled with golden helens. As they approached, a raven, who sat upon the topmost stone, black against the bright blue sky, flapped lazily away, and sank down the abysses of the cliff, as if he scented the corpses underneath the surge. Below them from the Gull-rock rose a thousand birds, and filled the air with sound, the crouches cackled, the hacketts wailed, the great black backs laughed querulous defiance at the intruders, and a single falcon, with an angry hawk, dashed out from beneath their feet, and hung poised high aloft, watching the sea-fowl which swung slowly round and round below.

It was a glorious sight upon a glorious day. To the northward the glens rushed down toward the cliff, crowned with grey crags, and carpeted with purple heather and green fern, and from their feet stretched away to the westward the sapphire rollers of the vast Atlantic, crowned with a thousand crests of flying foam. On their left hand, some ten miles to the south, stood out against the sky the purple wall of Hartland cliffs, sinking lower and lower as they trended away to the southward along the lonely ironbound shores of Cornwall, until they faded, dim and blue, into the blue horizon forty miles away.

The sky was flecked with clouds, which rushed toward them fast upon the roaring south-west wind; and the warm ocean-breeze swept up the cliffs, and whistled through the heather-bells, and howled in cranny and in crag.

'Till the pillars and clefts of the granite
Bang like a God-swept lyre,

while Amyas, a proud smile upon his lips, stood breathing that genial stream of airy wine with

swelling nostrils and fast-heaving chest, and seemed to drink in life from every gust. All three were silent for a while; and Jack and Cary, gazing downward with delight upon the glory and the grandeur of the sight, forgot for a while that their companion saw it not. Yet when they started sadly, and looked into his face, did he not see it? So wide and eager were his eyes, so bright and calm his face, that they fancied for an instant that he was once more even as they.

A deep sigh undressed them. 'I know it is all here—the dear old sea, where I would live and die. And my eyes feel for it, feel for it—and cannot find it, never, never will find it again for ever! God's will be done!'

'Do you say that?' asked Brimblecombe eagerly.

'Why should I not? Why have I been raving in hell-fire for I know not how many days, but to find out that, John Brimblecombe, thou better man than I?'

'Not that last—but Amen! Amen! and the Lord has indeed had mercy upon thee!' said Jack, through his honest tears.

'Amen!' said Amyas. 'Now set me where I can rest among the rocks without fear of falling—for life is sweet still, even without eyes, friends—and leave me to myself a while.'

It was no easy matter to find a safe place, for from the foot of the crag the heathery turf slopes down all but upright, on one side to a cliff which overhangs a shoreless cove of deep dark sea, and on the other to an abyss even more hideous, where the solid rock has sunk away, and opened inland in the hillside a smooth-walled pit, some sixty feet square and some hundred and fifty in depth, aptly known then, as now, as the Devil's hinniklu, the mouth of which, as old wives say, was once closed by the Shutter rock itself, till the fiend in malice hurled it into the sea, to be a pest to mariners. A narrow and intricate cavern at the bottom connects it with the outer sea, they could even then hear the mysterious hummer and gurgle of the surge in the subterranean adit, as it rolled huge boulders to and fro in darkness, and forced before it gusts of pent-up air. It was a spot to curdle weak blood, and to make weak heads reel—but all the better on that account for Amyas and his fancy.

'You can sit here as in an armchair,' said Cary, helping him down to one of those square natural seats so common in the granite tors.

'Good, now turn my face to the Shutter. Be sure and exact. So—Do I face it full?'

'Full,' said Cary.

'Then I need no eyes where-with to see what is before me,' said he, with a sad smile. 'I know every stone and every headland, and every wave too, I may say, far beyond sight that eye can reach. Now go, and leave me alone with God and with the dead!'

They retired a little space and watched him. He never stirred for many minutes, then leaned his elbows on his knees, and his head

upon his hands, and so was still again. He remained so long thus, that the pair became anxious, and went towards him. He was asleep, and breathing quick and heavily.

'He will take a fever,' said Brimblocombe, 'if he sleeps much longer with his head down in the sunshine.'

'We must awake him gently, if we wake him at all.' And Cary moved forward to him.

As he did so, Amyas lifted his head, and turning it to right and left, felt round him with his sightless eyes.

'You have been asleep, Amyas.'

'Have I? I have not slept back my eyes, then. Take up this great useless canvas of mine, and lead me home. I shall buy a dog when I get to Burrough, I think, and make him tow me in a string. So! Give me your hand. Now march!'

His guides heard with surprise this new cheerfulness.

'Thank God, sir, that your heart is so light already,' said good Jack, 'it makes me feel quite upraised myself, like.'

'I have reason to be cheerful, Sir John, I have left a heavy load behind me. I have been villain, and proud, and a blasphemer, and swollen with cruelty and pride, and God has brought me low, for it, and cut me off from my evil delight. No more Spamard-lusting for me now, my masters. And will send no such fools as I upon His errands.'

'You do not repent of fighting the Spamards.'

'Not I. But of hating even the worst of them. Listen to me, Will and Jack. If that man wronged me, I wronged him likewise. I have been a fiend when I thought myself the grandest of men, yea, a very avenging angel out of heaven. But God has shown me my sin, and we have made up our quarrel for ever.'

'Made it up?'

'Made it up, thank God. But I am weary. Set me down a while, and I will tell you how it befell.'

Wondering, they set him down upon the heather, while the bees hummed round them in the sun, and Amyas felt for a hand of each, and clasped it in his own hand, and began—

'When you left me there upon the rock, ladies, I looked away and out to sea, to get one last snuff of the merry sea breeze, which will never sail me again. And as I looked, I tell you truth, I could see the water and the sky, as plain as ever I saw them, till I thought my sight was come again. But soon I knew it was not so, for I saw more than man could see, right over the ocean, as I live, and away to the Spanish Main. And I saw Barbador, and Grenada, and all the isles that we ever sailed by, and La Guayra in Caracas, and the Silla, and the house beneath it where she lived. And I saw him walking with her on the barbeu, and he loved her then. I saw what I saw, and he loved her; and I say he loves her still.'

'Then I saw the cliffs beneath me, and the Gull-rock, and the Shutter, and the Ledge, I

saw them, William Cary, and the weeds beneath the merry blue sea. And I saw the grand old galleon, Will, she has righted with the sweeping of the tide. She lies in fifteen fathoms, at the edge of the rocks, upon the sand, and her men are all lying around her, asleep until the judgment-day.'

Cary and Jack looked at him, and then at each other. His eyes were clear, and bright, and full of meaning, and yet they knew that he was blind. His voice was shaping itself into a song. Was he inspired? Insane? What was it? And they listened with awe-struck faces, as the giant poured down into the blue depths far below, and went on.

'And I saw him sitting in his cabin, like a vibrant gentleman of Spain, and his officers were sitting round him, with their swords upon the table at the wine. And the prawns and the crayfish and the rockling, they swam in and out above their heads. But Don Guzman he never heeded, but sat still, and drank his wine. Then he took a locket from his bosom, and I heard him speak, Will, and he said, "Here's the picture of my fair and true lady, drink to her, Schor, all." Then he spoke to me, Will, and called me, right up through the oar-weed and the sea. "We have had a fair quarrel, Schor, it is time to be friends once more. My wife and your brother have forgiven me, so your honour takes no stain." And I answered, "We are friends, Don Guzman, God has judged our quarrel, and not we." Then he said, "I sinned, and I am punished." And I said, "And, Schor, so am I." Then he held out his hand to me, Cary, and I stooped to take it, and awoke.'

He ceased, and they looked in his face again. It was exhausted, but clear and gentle, like the face of a new-born babe. Gradually his head dropped upon his breast again. He was either swooning or sleeping, and they had much ado to get him home. There he lay for eight and forty hours, in a quiet dove, then arose suddenly, called for food, ate heartily, and seemed, saving his eyesight, as whole and sound as ever. The surgeon bade them get him home to Northam as soon as possible, and he was willing enough to go. So the next day the *Vengeance* sailed, leaving behind a dozen men to save and keep in the Queen's name any goods which should be washed up from the wreck.

CHAPTER XXXIII

HOW AMYAS LET THE APPLE FALL.

'Would you hear a Spanish lady,
How she woo'd an Englishman?
Garments gay and rich as may be,
Deck'd with jewels had she on.'

Elizabethan Ballad

It was the first of October. The morning was bright and still, the skies were dappled modestly from east to west with soft grey autumn cloud,

as if all heaven and earth were resting after those fearful summer months of battle and of storm. Silently, as if ashamed and sad, the *Vengetrice* slid over the bar, and passed the sleeping sandhills and dropped her anchor off Appledore, with her flag floating half-mast high, for the cause of Salvation Yeo was on board!

A boat pulled off from the ship, and away to the western end of the strand, and Cary and Brimblecombe helped out Amyas Leigh, and led him slowly up the hill toward his home.

The crowd clustered round him, with cheers and blessings, and sighs of pity from kind-hearted women, for all in Applelopie and Bideford knew well by this time what had befallen him.

'Spare me, my good friends,' said Amyas. 'I have landed here that I might go quietly home, without passing through the town, and being made a gazing stock. Think not of me, good folks, nor talk of me, but come behind me decently, as Christian men, and follow to the grave the body of a better man than I.'

And, as he spoke, another boat came off, and in it, covered with the flag of England, the body of Salvation Yeo.

The people took Amyas at his word, and a man was sent on to Burrough, to tell Mrs. Leigh that her son was coming. When the coffin was landed and lifted, Amyas and his friends took their places behind it as chief mourners, and the crew followed in order, while the crowd fell in behind them, and gathered every moment, till, ere they were half-way to Northam town, the funeral train might number full five hundred souls.

They had sent over by a fishing-skiff the day before to bid the sexton dig the grave, and when they came into the churchyard, the parson stood ready waiting at the gate.

Mrs. Leigh stayed quietly at home, for she had no heart to face the crowd, and though her heart yearned for her son, yet she was well content (when was she not content?) that he should do honour to his ancient and faithful servant, so she sat down in the bay-window, with Ayacanora by her side, and when the tolling of the bell ceased, she opened her Prayer-book, and began to read the Burial-service.

'Ayacanora,' she said, 'they are burying old Master Yeo, who loved you, and sought you over the wide, wide world, and saved you from the teeth of the crocodile. Are you not sorry for him, child, that you look so gay to-day?' 'I

Ayacanora blushed, and hung down her head, she was thinking of nothing, a poor child, but Amyas.

The Burial-service was done, the blessing said, the parson drew back, but the people lingered and crowded round to look at the coffin, while Amyas stood still at the head of the grave. It had been dug, by his command, at the west end of the church, near by the foot of the tall grey wind-weep tower, which watches for a beacon far and wide over land and sea. Perhaps the old man might like to look at the sea, and

see the ships come out and in across the bar, and hear the wind, on winter nights, roar through the belfry far above his head. Why not? It was but a fancy, and yet Amyas felt that he too should like to be buried in such a place, so Yeo might like it also.

Still the crowd lingered, and looked first at the grave and then at the dead giant who stood over it, as if they felt, by instinct, that something more ought to come. And something more did come. Amyas drew himself up to his full height, and waved his hand majestically, as one about to speak, while the eyes of all men were fastened on him.

Thus he essayed to begin; and twice the words were choked upon his lips, and then—

'Good people all, and seafarers, among whom I was bred, and to whom I come home blind this day, to dwell with you till death—Here lieth the flower and pattern of all bold mariners, the truest of friends, and the most terrible of foes, unchangeable of purpose, earnest of counsel, and swift of execution, in triumph most solar, in failure (as God knows I have found full many a day) of endurance beyond mortal man. Who first of all Britons helped to humble the pride of the Spaniard at Rio de la Hacha and Nombre, and first of all sailed upon those South Seas, which shall be heretofore, by God's grace, as free to English keels as is the bay outside. Who having afterwards been purged from his youthful sins by strange afflictions and torments unspeakable, suffered at the hands of the Popish enemy, learned therefrom, my masters, to fear God, and to fear naught else, and having acquitted himself worthily in his place and calling as a righteous scourge of the Spaniard, and a faithful soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, is now exalted to his reward, as Elijah was of old, in a chariot of fire unto heaven. Letting fall, I trust and pray, upon you who are left behind the mantle of his valour and his godliness, that so these shores may never be without brave and pious mariners, who will count their lives as worthless in the cause of their Country, their Isle, and their Queen. Amen.'

And feeling for his companions' hands, he walked slowly from the churchyard, and across the village street, and up the lane to Burrough gates, while the crowd made way for him in solemn silence, as for an awful being, shut up alone with all his strength, valour, and fame, in the dark prison-house of his mysterious doom.

He seemed to know perfectly when they had reached the gates, opened the lock with his own hands, and went boldly forward along the gravel path, while Cary and Brimblecombe followed him trembling; for they expected some violent burst of emotion, either from him or his mother, and the two good fellows' tender hearts were fluttering like a girl's. Up to the door he went, as if he had seen it; felt for the entrance, stood there in, and called quietly 'Mother!'

In a moment his mother was on his bosom.

Neither spoke for a while. She sobbing inwardly, with tearless eyes, he standing firm and

cheerful, with his great arms clasped around her.

'Mother!' he said at last, 'I am come home, you see, because I feels must come. Will you take me in, and look after this useless carcass? I shall not be so very troublesome, mother—shall I?' and he looked down, and smiled upon her, and kissed her brow.

She answered not a word, but passed her arm gently round his waist, and led him in.

'Take care of your head, dear child, the doors are low.' And they went in together.

'Will I Jack?' called Amyas, turning round, but the two good fellows had walked busily off.

'I'm glad we are away,' said Cary, 'I should have made a baby of myself in another minute, watching that night of a woman. How her fire worked and how she kept it in!'

'Ah, well!' said Jack, 'there goes a brave servant of the Queen's cut off before his work was a quarter done. Heigho! I must home now, and see my old father and then—'

'And then home with me,' said Cary. 'You and I never part again! We have pulled in the same hunt too long, Jack, and you must not go spending your prize money in riotous living. I must so after you, old duck ashore, or we shall have you treating half the town in taverns for a week to come.'

'Oh, Mr. Cary!' said Jack, scandalised.

'Come home with me, and we'll poison the parson, and my father shall give you the tincture.'

'Oh, Mr. Cary!' said Jack.

So the two went off to Clovelly together that very day.

And Amyas was sitting all alone. His mother had gone out for a few minutes to speak to the scullion who had brought up Amyas's luggage, and set them down to eat and drink, and Amyas sat in the old bay-window, where he had sat when he was a little tiny boy, and read *King Arthur*, and Fox's *Wolves*, and *The Cruelties of the Spaniards*. He put out his hand and felt for them, there they lay side by side, just as they had lain twenty years before.

The window was open, and a cool air brought in as of old the scents of the four season roses, and rosemary, and autumn gilliflowers. And there was a dish of apples on the table. He knew it by the small, the very same old apples which he used to gather when he was a boy. He put out his hand, and took them, and felt them over, and played with them, just as if the twenty years had never been, and as he fingered them, the whole of his past life rose up before him, as in that strange dream which is said to flash across the imagination of a drowning man, and he saw all the places which he had ever seen, and heard all the words which had ever been spoken to him—till he came to that fery island on the Mota; and he heard the roar of the cataract once more, and saw the green tops of the palm-trees sleeping in the sunlight far above the spray, and steep amid the smooth palm-trunks across the flower-fringed

boulders, and leaped down to the gravel beach beside the pool, and then again rose from the fern-grown rocks the beautiful vision of Ayacanora—Where was she? He had not thought of her till now. How he had wronged her! Let her, he had been punished, and the account was squared. Perhaps she did not care for him any longer. Who would care for a great blind ox like him, who must be fed and tended like a baby for the rest of his lizy life? Tnt! How long his mother was away! And he began playing again with his apples, and thought about nothing but them, and his chumbs with Frank in the orchard years ago.

At last one of them slipped through his fingers, and fell on the floor. He stooped and felt for it, but he could not find it. Vexatious! He turned hastily to search in another direction, and struck his head sharply against the table.

Was it the pain, or the little disappointment? or was it the sense of his blindness brought home to him in that ludicrous commonplace way, and for that very reason all the more humiliating? or was it the sudden revelation of overstrained nerves, produced by that slight shock? Or had he become indeed a child once more? I know not, but so it was, that he stamped on the floor with pettishness, and then checking himself, burst into a violent flood of tears.

A quick rustle passed him, the apple was replaced in his hand, and Ayacanora's voice sobbed out—

'There! there it is! Do not weep! Oh, do not weep! I cannot bear it! I will get you all you want! Only let me fetch and carry for you, tend you, feed you, lead you, like your slave, your dog! Say that I may be your slave!' and falling on her knees at his feet, she seized both his hands, and covered them with kisses.

'Yes!' she cried, 'I will be your slave! I must be! You cannot help it! You cannot escape from me now! You cannot go to sea! You cannot turn your back upon poor wretched me! I have you safe now! Safe!' and she clutched his hands triumphantly. 'Ah! and what a wretch I am, to rejoice in that! To torment him with his blindness! Oh forgive me! I am but a poor wild girl—a wild Indian savage, you know—but—but—' and she burst into tears.

A great spasm shook the body and soul of Amyas Leigh—he sat quite silent for a minute, and then said solemnly—

'And is this still possible? Then God have mercy upon me a sinner!'

Ayacanora looked up in his face inquiringly, but before she could speak again, he had bent down, and lifting her as the lion lifts the lamb, pressed her to his bosom, and covered her face with kisses.

The door opened. There was the rustle of a gown, Ayacanora sprang from him with a little cry, and stood, half-trembling, half-defiant, as if to say—'He is mine now, no one dare part him from me!'

'Who is it?' asked Amyas.

'Your mother'

'You see that I am bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, mother,' said he, with a smile.

Ho heard her approach. Then a kiss and a sob passed between the women, and he felt Ayacanora sink once more upon his bosom.

'Amyas, my son,' said the silver voice of Mrs. Leigh, low, dreamy, like the far-off chimes of angels' bells from out the highest heaven; 'Fear not to take her to your heart again, for it is your mother who has laid her there.'

'It is true after all,' said Amyas to himself

'What God has joined together, man cannot put asunder.'

From that hour Ayacanora's power of song returned to her, and day by day, year after year, her voice rose up within that happy home, and soared, as on skylark's wings, into the highest heaven, bearing with it the peaceful thoughts of the blind giant back to the Paradaises of the West, in the wake of the heroes who from that time forth sailed out to colonise another and a vaster England, to the heaven-prospered cry of Westward! Ho!

THE END

Y E A S T

'THE DAYS WILL COME WHEN YE SHALL DESIRE TO SEE ,
ONE OF THE DAYS OF THE SON OF MAN, •
AND YE SHALL NOT SEE IT'

Y E A S T

A Problem

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY

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PREFACE

TO THE FOURTH EDITION

THIS book was written nearly twelve years ago, and so many things have changed since then, that it is hardly lan to send it into the world afresh without some notice of the improvement it has then had which has taken place meanwhile in those southern counties of England with which alone this book deals.

I believe that things are improved. Twelve years more of the new Poor Law have taught the labouring men greater self-help and independence, I hope that these virtues may not be destroyed in them once more by the boundless and indiscriminate almsgiving which has become the fashion of the day in most parishes where there are no able gentry. It half the money which is now given away in different forms to the agricultural poor could be spent in making their dwellings fit for honest men to live in, then life, morals, and posterities would be saved to an immense amount. But as I do not see how to carry out such a plan, I have no right to complain of others for not seeing.

Meanwhile cottage improvement and sanitary reform, throughout the country districts, are going on at a fearfully slow rate. Here and there high-hearted landlords, like the Duke of Bedford, are doing their duty like men, but in general, the apathy of the educated classes is most disgraceful.

But the labourers, during the last ten years are altogether better off. Free trade has increased their food, without lessening their employment. The politician who wishes to know the effect on agricultural life of that wise and just measure, may find it in Mr. Grey of Dilston's answers to the queries of the French Government. The country parson will not need to seek so far. He will see it (if he be an observant man) in the new and figures of his school children. He will see a rounder, fatter, longer boned race growing up, which bids fair to surpass in bulk the puny and ill-fed generation of 1815-16, and equal, perhaps, in strength and sinew, to the men who saved Europe in the old French war.

It should be so (as God grant it may) there is little fear but that the labouring men of England will find their aristocracy able to lend them in the battle-field, and to develop the agriculture of the land at home, even better than did their grandfathers of the old war time.

To a thoughtful man, no part of the social horizon is more full of light than the altered temper of the young gentlemen. They have their faults and follies still—for when will young blood be other than hot blood? But when one finds, more and more, swearing banished from the hunting field, foul songs from the universities, drunkenness and gambling from the barracks when one finds everywhere, whether at a camp or by the cover side more of the young men desirous to learn their duty as Englishmen, and it possible to do it when one hears their altered tone toward the middle classes, and that word 'snob' (thanks very much to Mr. Thackeray, used by them in its true sense, without regard of rank) when one witnesses, as at Aldershot the care and kindness of officers toward their men, and over and above all this when one finds in every profession in that of the soldier as much as any) young men who are not only in the world but in religious philosophy of the world living God fearing, virtuous, and useful lives, as Christian men should then indeed one looks forward with hope and confidence to the day when these men shall settle down in life and become as holders of the land, the leaders of agricultural progress, and the guides and guardians of the labouring man.

I am bound to speak of the farmer as I know him in the South of England. In the North he is a man of altogether higher education and breeding but he is, even in the South a much better man than it is the fashion to believe him. No doubt he has given heavy cause of complaint. He was demoralised as much, if not as deeply, as his own labourers by the old Poor Law. He was bewildered to see the mildest term by promises of Protection from men who knew better. But his worst fault after all has been that, young or old he has copied his landlord too closely and acted on his maxims and example. And now that his landlord is growing wiser, he is growing wiser too. Experience of the new Poor Law, and experience of Free-trade, are helping him to show himself what he always was at heart, an honest Englishman. All his brave persistence and industry, his sturdy independence and self-help, and last but not least, his strong sense of justice and his vast good-

nature, are coming out more and more, and working better and better upon the land and the labourer, while among his sons I see many growing up brave, manly, prudent young men, with a steadily increasing knowledge of what is required of them, both as manufacturers of food and employers of human labour.

The country clergy, again, are steadily improving. I do not mean merely in morality, for public opinion now demands that as *sine quâ non* but in actual efficiency. Every fresh appointment seems to me, on the whole, a better one than the last. They are gaining more and more the love and respect of their flocks, they are becoming more and more centres of civilisation and morality to their parishes. They are working, for the most part, very hard, each in his own way, indeed then great danger is, that they should trust too much in that outward 'business' work which they do so heartily, that they should fancy that the administration of schools and churches is then their business, and literally leave the World of God to serve tables. Would that we clergymen could learn (some of us are learning already) that influence over our people is not to be gained by perpetual interference in their private affairs, too often inquisitorial, meddling, and meddling to both parties, but by showing ourselves their personal friends, of like passions with them. Let a priest do that. Let us make our people feel that we speak to them, and feel to them, as men to men, and then the more cottages we enter the better. If we go into our neighbours' houses only as judges, inquisitors, or at best gossipers we are lost—as too many are at home in our studies. Would, too, that we would recollect this: that our duty is, among other things, to preach the Gospel, and consider firstly whether what we commonly preach be any Gospel or good news at all, and not rather the worst possible news, and secondly, whether we preach at all, whether our sermons are not utterly unintelligible (being delivered in an unknown tongue), and also of a diffuseness not to be surpassed, and whether, therefore, it might not be worth our while to spend a little time in studying the English tongue, and the art of touching human hearts and minds.

But to return: this improved tone (if the truth must be told) is owing, far more than people themselves are aware, to the triumphs of those liberal principles for which the Whigs have fought for the last forty years, and of that sounder natural philosophy of which they have been the consistent patrons. England has become Whig, and the death of the Whig party is the best proof of its victory. It has ceased to exist, because it has done its work, because its principles are accepted by its ancient enemies, because the political economy and the physical science, which grew up under its patronage, are leavening the thoughts and acts of Anglican and of Evangelical alike, and supplying them with methods for carrying out their own schemes. Lord Shaftesbury's truly noble speech on Sanitary Reform at Liverpool is a striking proof of

the extent to which the Evangelical leaders have given in their adherence to those scientific laws, the original preachers of which have been called by the Landship's party heretics and infidels, materialists and rationalists. Be it so. Provided truth be preached, what matter who preaches it? Provided the leaven of sound inductive science leaven the whole lump, what matter who sets it working? Better, perhaps, because more likely to produce practical success, that these novel truths should be instilled into the minds of the educated classes by men who share somewhat in their prejudices and superstitions, and doled out to them in such measure as will not terrify or disgust them. The child will take its medicine from the nurse's hand trustfully enough, when it would send its mother into convulsions at the sight of the doctor, and so do itself more harm than the medicine would do it good. The doctor meanwhile (unless he be one of Hesiod's 'tools, who know not how much more hurt is than the whole') is content enough to see any part of his prescription got down, by any hands whatsoever.

But there is another cause for the improved tone of the Landlord class, and of the young men of what is commonly called the aristocracy, and that is, a growing moral earnestness, which is in great part owing (that justice may be done on all sides) to the Anglican movement. How much soever Neo Anglicanism have failed as an Ecclesiastical or Theological system, how much soever it may have proved itself, both by the national dislike of it and by the defection of all its master-minds, to be radically un-English, it has at least awakened hundreds, perhaps thousands, of cultivated men and women to ask themselves whether God sent them into the world merely to eat, drink, and be merry, and to have 'their souls saved' upon the Sponge method, after they do, and has taught them in answer to that question not unworthy of English historians.

The Anglican movement, when it dies out, will leave behind it at least a legacy of grand old authors disinterested, of art, of music, of churches too, schools, cottages, and charitable institutions, which will form so many centres of future civilisation, and will entitle it to the respect, if not to the adoration, of the future generation. And more than this, it has sown in the hearts of young gentlemen and young ladies seed which will not perish, which, though it may develop into forms little expected by those who sowed it, will develop at least into a virtue more stately and reverent, more chivalrous and self-sacrificing, more grand and human, than can be learnt from that religion of the Stock Exchange which reigned triumphant—for a year and a day—in the peopled pulpits.

I have said that Neo Anglicanism has proved a failure, as seventeenth century Anglicanism did. The causes of that failure this book has tried to point out, and not one word which is spoken of it therein, but has been drawn from personal and too intimate experience. But now

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

- peace to its ashes. Is it so great a sin, to have been dazzled by the splendour of an impossible ideal? Is it so great a sin, to have had courage and conduct enough to attempt the coloring of that ideal, in the face of the prejudices of a whole nation? And if that ideal was too narrow for the English nation, and for the modern needs of mankind, is that either so great a sin? Are other extant ideals, then, so very comprehensive? Does Mr Spurgeon, then, take so much broader or milder views of the capacities and destinies of his race than that great genius, John Henry Newman? If the world cannot answer that question now, it will answer it promptly enough in another five-and-twenty years. And meanwhile let not the party and the system which has conquered boast itself too humbly. Let it take warning by the Whigs, and suspect (as many a looker on more than suspects) that its triumph may be, as with the Whigs, its ruin; and that, having done the work for which it was sent into the world, there may only remain for it, to decay and die.

And do it surely will, if (as seems too probable) three succorless to this late thirty years of peace a thirty years of storm.

For it has lost all hold upon the young, the active, the daring. It has sunk into a compromise between originally opposite dogmas. It has become a religion for Jacob the smooth man, adapted to the maxims of the market, and leaving him full liberty to supplant his brother by all methods lawful in that market. No longer can it embrace and explain all known facts of God and man, in heaven and earth, and satisfy utterly such minds and hearts as those of Cromwell's Ironsides, or the Scotch Covenanters, or even of a Newton and a Colonel Gardiner. Let it make the most of its Hedley Vicars and its Haverock, and sound its own trumpet as loudly as it can, in sounding theirs, for they are the last specimens of heroism which it is likely to begot. It failed it did in any true sense begot them: and if their gallantry was really owing to their creed, and not to the simple fact of their being like others English gentlemen. Well may Jacob's chaplains cackle in delighted surprise over their noble memories, like geese who have unwittingly hatched a swan!

But on Esau in general, - on poor rough Esau, who sells Jacob's ships, digs Jacob's mines, burns Jacob's colonies, pours out his blood for him in those wars which Jacob himself has stirred up - while his sleek brother sits at home in his counting-house, enjoying at once 'the means of grace' and the produce of Esau's labour - on him Jacob's chaplains have less and less influence, for him they have less and less good news. He is afraid of them, and they of him, the two do not comprehend one another, sympathise with one another, they do not even understand one another's speech. The same social and moral guilt has opened between them as parted the cultivated and wealthy Pharisee of Jerusalem from the rough fishers of the Galilean Lake, and yet the Galilean fishers (if we are to trust Josephus and the Gospels) were trusty, generous, affectionate - and it was not from among the Pharisees, it is said, that the Apostles were chosen.

Be that as it may, Esau has a birthright, and this book, like all books which I have ever written, is written to tell him so, and, I trust, has not been written in vain. But it is not this book, or any man's book, or any man at all, who can tell Esau the whole truth about himself, his powers, his duty, and his tool. Woman must do it, and not man. His mother, his sister, the maid whom he may love - and taking all those as they often will fail him, in the will wandering life which he must live, those human angels of whom it is written -

The barren hath many more children than she who has an husband. And such will not be wanting. As long as England can produce at once two such women as Florence Nightingale and Catherine Marshall, there is good hope that Esau will not be defrauded of his birthright, and that by the time that Jacob comes crowning to him to defend him against the enemies who are now at hand, Esau, first ~~about~~ for saving Jacob's religion, may be able to teach Jacob his, and the two brothers free together the superstition and anarchy of Europe, in the strength of a lofty and enlightened Christianity, which shall be thoroughly human, and therefore thoroughly divine.

C. K.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS little tale was written between two and three years ago, in the hope that it might help to call the attention of wiser and better men than I am to the questions which are now agitating the minds of the rising generation, and to the absolute necessity of solving them at once and earnestly, unless we would see the faith of our forefathers crumble away beneath the combined influence of new truths which are fancied to be incompatible with it, and new mistakes as to its real essence. That this can be done I believe and know. If I had not believed it, I would never have put pen to paper on the subject.

I believe that the ancient Creed, the Eternal Gospel, will stand, and conquer, and prove its might in this age, as it has in every other for eighteen hundred years, by claiming, and subduing, and organising those young anarchic forces which now, unconscious of their parentage, rebel against Him to whom they owe their being.

But for the time being, the young men and women of our day are fast parting from their parents and each other, the more thoughtful are wandering, either towards Rome, towards sheer materialism, or towards an unchristian and unphilosophic spiritualism. Egotism which, in my eyes, is the worst evil spirit of the three, precisely because it looks at first sight most like an angel of light. The mass, again, are fancying that they are still adhering to the old creeds, the old church, to the honoured patriarchs of English Protestantism. I wish I could agree with them in their belief about themselves. To me they seem—with a small sprinkling of those noble and cheering exceptions to popular error which are to be found in every age of Christ's church—to be losing most fearfully and rapidly the living spirit of Christianity, and to be, for that very reason, clinging all the more convulsively—and who can blame them?—to the outward letter of it, whether High Church or Evangelical, unconscious, all the while, that

they are sinking out of real living belief, into that dead self-deceiving belief in believing, which has been always heretofore, and is becoming in England now, the parent of the most blind, dishonest, and pitiless bigotry.

In the following pages I have attempted to show what some at least of the young in these days are really thinking and feeling. I know well that my sketch is inadequate and partial. I have every reason to believe, from the criticisms which I have received since its first publication, that it is, as far as it goes, correct. I put it as a problem. It would be the height of arrogance in me to do more than indicate the direction in which I think a solution may be found. I fear that my elder readers may complain that I have no right to start doubts without answering them. Let an only answer,—Would that I had started them! would that I was not seeing them daily around me, under some form or other, in just the very hearts for whom one would most wish the peace and strength of a lived and healthy faith. To the young this book can do no harm, for it will put into their minds little but what is there already. To the elder it may do good, for it may teach some of them, as I earnestly hope, something of the real, but too often utterly unsuspected, state of their own children's minds, something of the reasons of that calamitous estrangement between themselves and those who will succeed them, which is often too painful and oppressive to be confessed to their own hearts. Whatever amount of obloquy this book may bring upon me, I shall think that a light prior to pay, if by it I shall have helped, even in a single case, to 'turn the hearts of the parents to the children, and the hearts of the children to the parents, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come,' as come it surely will, if we persist much longer in substituting denunciation for sympathy, instruction for education, and Pharisaism for the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

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YEAST: A PROBLEM

CHAPTER I

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FOX-HUNTING

As thus my story will probably run counter to more than one fashion of the day, literary and other, it is prudent to bow to those fashions whenever I honestly come, and therefore to begin with a scrap of description.

The edge of a great fox-covey, a flat wilderness of low leafless oaks bordered by a bog, dray, thorn-cropped clay ditch, with sour red water oozing out at every yard, a broken gate leading into a straight wood-side, ragged with dead grasses and black with fallen leaves, the centre washed into a quagmire by innumerable horse-hoofs, some forty red coats and some four black, a sprinkling of young farmers' resplendent in gold buttons and green, a pair of sleek drab stude-kiepers, showing off horses for sale, the surgeon of the union, in mackintosh and antigraclois, two holiday schoolboys with trousers strapped down to bursting point, like a penny steamer's safety-valve, a milkman, the only merry one in the hold, lurching about on a trotting, sweating hack, with its nose a foot above its ears, and Lancelot Smith, who then kept two good horses, and 'rode forward' as a fine young fellow of three-and-twenty who could afford it, and 'has nothing else to do' has a very good right to ride.

But what is a description without a sketch of the weather?—In those Ponghest days especially, when a hero or heroine's moral state must entirely depend on the barometer, and authors talk as if Christians were cabbages, and a man's soul as well as his lungs might be saved by sea-brizes and sunshine, or his character developed by wearing guano in his shoes, and training himself against a south wall—no must have a weather description, though, as I shall presently show, one in that contradiction of the popular theory. Luckily for our information, Lancelot was very much given to watch both the weather and himself, and had indeed, while in his teens, combined the two in a sort of a soul-algebra on the principles just mentioned—somewhat in this style—

'Monday, 21st—Wind S W, bright sun,

mercury at 30½ inches. Felt my heart expanded towards the universe. Organs of veneration and benevolence pleasingly excited, and gave a shilling to a tramp. An inexpressible joy bounded through every vein, and the soft in-breathed purity and self-sacrifice through my soul. As I watched the beetles, those children of the sun, who, as divine Shelley says, "I laden with light and odour, pass over the gleam of the living grass," I gained an Eden-glance of the pleasures of virtue.

'A B' Found the tramp drunk in a ditch. I could not have degraded myself on such a day. Ah! how could he?

'Tuesday 22d—Barometer rapidly falling. Heavy clouds in the south-east. My heart sank into gloomy forebodings. Rael *Uggsed*, and doubted whether I should live long. Theuben weight of destiny seemed to rush down my aching forehead, till the thunderstorm burst, and peace was restored to my troubled soul.'

This was very bad, but to do justice to Lancelot, he had grown out of it at the time when my story begins. He was now in the fifth act of his 'Written in *starry*' that ontimental measles, which all clever men must catch once in their lives, and which, generally, like the physical measles if taken early, settles their constitution for good or evil, if taken late, goes far towards killing them. Lancelot had found Byron and Shelley pall on his taste, and commenced devouring Bulwer and worshipping *Frank Maltravers*. He had left Bulwer for old ballads and romances, and Mr Carlyle's reviews, was next alternately chivalry-mad and Germany-mad, was now riding hard at physical science, and, on the whole, trying to become a great man, without any very clear notion of what a great man ought to be. Real education he never had had. Bred up at home under his father, a rich merchant, he had gone to college with a large stock of general information, and a particular amount for dried plants, fossils, butterflies, and sketching, and some such creed as this—

That he was very clever.

That he ought to make his fortune.

That a great many things were very pleasant.

Beautiful things among the rest.

That it was a fine thing to be 'superior,' gentleman-like, generous, and courageous. That a man ought to be religious.

And left college with a good smattering of classics and mathematics, picked up in the intervals of boat-racing and hunting, and much the same creed as he brought with him, except in regard to the last article. The scenery-industrial-history mania was now somewhat at a discount. He had discovered a new natural object, including in itself all—more than all—yet fount beauties and wonders—woman!

Draw, draw the veil and woe, guardian angel! if such there be. What was to be expected? Pleasant things were pleasant—there was no doubt of that, whatever else might be doubtful. He had read Byron by stealth, he had been flogged into reading Ovid and Tibullus, and commanded by his private tutor to read Martial and Juvenal 'for the improvement of his style.' All conversation on the subject of love had been prudishly avoided, as usual, by his parents and teacher. The joys of the Bible which spoke of it had been always kept out of his sight. Love had been to him, practically, ground tabooed and 'carnal.' What was to be expected? Just what happened—if woman's beauty had nothing holy in it, why should his fondness for it? Just what happens every day—that he had to sow his wild oats for himself, and eat the fruit thereof, and the dirt thereof also.

O fathers! fathers! and you clergymen, who monopolise education! either tell boys the truth about love or do not put into their hands, without note or comment, the foul devil's lies about it which make up the mass of the Latin poets—and then go, fresh from teaching Juvenal and Ovid, to declaim at Exeter Hall against poor Peter Dennis's well meaning puritanism! Had we not better take the beam out of our own eye before we criticise with the mote in the peasant's?

But where is my description of the weather all this time?

I cannot, I am sorry to say, give any very cheerful account of the weather that day. But what matter? Are Englishmen hedge gnats, who only take their sport when the sun shines? Is it not, on the contrary, symbolical of our national character that almost all our field amusements are wintry ones? Our fowling, our hunting, our punt-shooting (pastime for Byron himself and the frost gnats)—our golf and skating, our very cricket, and boat-racing, and jack and grayling fishing, carried on till we are fairly frozen out. We are a stern people, and winter suits us. Nature then retires modestly into the background, and spares us the intrusive glitter of summer, leaving us to think and work, and therefore it happens that in England it may be taken as a general rule that whenever all the rest of the world is indoors we are out and busy, and on the whole, the worse the day, the better the deed.

The weather that day, the first day Lancelot ever saw his beloved, was truly national! A

silent, dim, distanceless, steaming, rotting day in March. The last brown oak-leaf which had stood out the winter's frost spun and quivered plump down, and then lay, as if ashamed to have broken for a moment the ghostly stillness, like an awkward guest at a great dumb dinner party. A cold suck of wind just proved its existence, by toothaches on the north side of all faces. The spiders, having been weather-bewitched the night before, had unanimously agreed to cover every brake and brier with gossamer-cradles, and never a fly to be caught in them; like Manchester cotton spinners indily glutting the markets in the teeth of 'no demand.' The steam crawled out of the dank turf, and reeked off the flanks and nostrils of the shivering horses, and hung with clammy paws to frosted hats and dripping boughs. A soulless, skyless, catarrhal day, as if that bustling dowager, old mother Earth—what with teeth making in spring, and *files cham-pêtres* in summer, and disorder giving in autumn—was fairly worn out, and put to bed with the influenza, under wet blankets and the cold-water cure.

There sat Lancelot by the coverside, his knees aching with cold and wet, thanking his stars that he was not one of the whippers-in who were lashing about in the dripping cover, laying up for themselves, in catering for the amusement of their betters, a probable old age of bed ridden torture, in the form of rheumatic gout. Not that he was at all happy—indeed, he had no reason to be so. For, first, the hounds would not find, next, he had left half finished at home a review article on the Silurian System, which he had solemnly promised an abject and beseeching editor to send to post that night, next, he was on the windward side of the cover, and dare not light a cigar, and, lastly, his innocent acquaintance in general was not in the happiest condition, seeing that he had been during the evening before with Mr Vanden of Rotterdam, a young gentleman of a convivial and melodious turn of mind, who sang and played also—'as singing men are wont'—in more senses than one, and had 'ladies and gentlemen' down from town to stay with him, and they sang and played too, and so somehow, between vintage and champagne-punch, Lancelot had not arrived at home till seven o'clock that morning, and was in a fit state to appreciate the feelings of our grandfathers, when, after the third bottle of port, they used to put the black silk tights into their pockets, slip on the leathers and boots, and ride the crop-tailed buck thirty miles on a winter's night, to meet the hounds in the next county by ten in the morning. They are 'gone down to Hades, even many stalwart sons of heroes,' with John Warde of Squemmes at their head—the fathers of the men who conquered at Waterloo, and we their degenerate grandsons are left instead, with jummy arms, and polished leather boots, and a considerable taint of hereditary disease, to sit in club-houses and celebrate the progress of the species.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FOX-HUNTING

Whether Lancelot or his horse, under these depressing circumstances, fell asleep; or whether thoughts pertaining to such a life, and its fitness for a clever and ardent young fellow in the nineteenth century, became gradually too painful, and had to be peremptorily shaken off, this document sayeth not, but certainly, after five- and thirty minutes of uselessness and shivering, Lancelot opened his eyes with a sudden start, and struck spurs into his hunter without due cause shown, wheratt Shiver-the-tumbler, who was no Griselda in temper (Lancelot had bought him out of the Pytchley for half his value, as miraculously vicious, when he had killed a groom and fallen backwards on a rough rider the first season after he came up from Horn-castle)—respected by a furious kick on two, threw his head up, put his foot into a drain, and squawled down all but on his nose, pitching Lancelot man and horse shamefully on the pommel of his saddle. A certain fatality, by the bye, had lately attended all Lancelot's efforts to shine, he never bought a new coat without tearing it mysteriously next day, or tried to make a joke without bursting out coughing in the middle and now the whole field were looking on at his mishap, between disgust and the start he turned almost sick, and felt the blood rush into his cheeks, and forehead as he heard a shout of coarse jovial laughter burst out close to him, and the old master of the hounds, Squire Lamington, roared aloud:

'A pretty sportsman you are, Mr Smith, to fall asleep by the cover side and let your horse down—and your pockets, too! What's that look on the ground? Squaring and studying still? I let nobody come out with my hounds with their pocket full of learning. Mind it up, here, Tom, we'll see what it is. French, as I am no scholar.' Translate for us, Colonel Brauchbridge!

And, amid shouts of laughter, the gay Guardsman read out—

'St Francis de Sales *Introduction to a Devout Life*'

Poor Lancelot! Wishing himself a thousand underground, ashamed of his book, still more ashamed of himself for his shame, he had to sit there ten physical seconds, or spiritual years, while the colonel solemnly returned him the book, complimenting him on the proofs of its purifying influence which he had given the night before, in helping to throw the turnpike gate into the river.

But 'all things do end,' and so did this, and the silence of the hounds also, and a faint but knowing whimper drove St Francis out of all heads, and Lancelot began to stalk slowly with a dozen horsemen up the wood-rail, to a trifling accompaniment of wandering hound-music, where the choristers were as invisible as nightingales among the thick cover. And hark! just as the book was returned to his pocket, the sweet lullaby suddenly crashed out into one jubilant shriek, and then swept away fainter and fainter among the trees. The walk became a trot—the

trot a canter. Then a faint melancholy shout at a distance, answered by a 'Stole away!' from the fields, a doleful 'toot!' of the horn, the dull thunder of many horse-hoofs rolling along the farther wood-side. Then red coats, flashing like sparks of fire across the gray gap of mist at the rider's mouth, then a whizzer-in, bringing up a belated hound, burst into the pathway, smashing and plunging, with shut eyes, through ash-saplings and hassock grass, then a fat farmer, sedulously pommeling through the mud, was overtaken and bespattered in spite of all his struggles,—until the line streamed out into the wide rusky pasture, starting up pewits and curlews, as horsemen poured in from every side, and cunning old farmers rode off at inexplicable angles to some well-known haunts of pig and right ahead, churning and jangling sweet madness, the dappled pack glanced and wavered through the veil of soft gray mist.

'What's the nag of this hurry?' growled Lancelot. 'They will all be back again. I never have the luck to see a run.'

But no, on and on—down the wind and down the vale, and the canter became a gallop, and the gallop a long straining stride, and a hundred horse-hoofs crinkled like flame among the stubbles, and thundered fitlock-deep along the heavy meadows, and every fence flumed the cavalry side, till the madness began to stir all bloods, and with grim, earnest, silent faces the initiated few settled themselves to their work, and, with the colonel and Lancelot at their head, took their pleasure sally, after the manner of their nation, as old Froissart has it:

'Thorough hough, though brer,
Thorough park, though pal.'

till the rolling grass-lands spread out into flat black open fallows, crossed with grassy baulks, and here and there a long melancholy line of tall elms, while before them the high chalk ranges gleamed above the mist like a vast wall of emerald enamelled with snow, and the winding river glittered at their feet.

'A polite fox,' observed the colonel. 'He is leading the squire straight home to Whitford, just in time for dinner.'

'They were in the last meadow, with the stream before them. A line of struggling heads in the swollen and milky current showed the hounds' opinion of Reynard's course. The sportsmen galloped off towards the nearest bridge. Brauchbridge looked back at Lancelot, who had been keeping by his side in silky rivalry, following him successfully through all manner of desperate places, and more and more angry with himself and the guiltless colonel because he only followed, while the colonel's quicker and unembarrassed wit, which lived wholly in the present moment, saw long before Lancelot how to cut out his work in every field.

'I shan't go round,' quietly observed the colonel.

'Do you fancy I shall?' growled Lancelot.

who took for granted—poor thin-skinned soul—that the words were meant as a hit at himself.

'You're a brace of geese,' politely observed the old squire, 'and you'll haul it out in rheumatic fever. There—"one fool makes many!" You'll kill Smith before you're done, colonel!' and the old man wheeled away up the meadow, as Bracebridge shouted after him—

'Oh, he'll make a fine rider—in time!'

'In time!' Lancelot could have knocked the unsuspecting colonel down for the word. It just expressed the contrast, which had fretted him ever since he began to hunt with the Whitford Priory hounds. The colonel's long practice and consummate skill in all he took in hand,—his experience of all society, from the prairie Indian to Crookford's, from the prizing to the continental marts,—his varied and ready store of information and anecdote,—the harmony and completeness of the man,—his consistency with his own small ideal, and his consequent apparent superiority everywhere and in everything to the huge awkward Titan-cub, who, though immeasurably beyond Bracebridge in intellect and heart, was still in a state of convulsive dyspepsia, 'swallowing turmoil,' and duly well might choked, disengaged through-out with that morbid self-consciousness and lust of praise for which God prepares, with His elect, a better cure. Alas! poor Lancelot! an unhelmed bear, 'with all his sorrows before him!'

'Come along,' quoth Bracebridge, between sulkiness and a tune, his coolness maddening Lancelot. 'Old Lavington will find us six clothes, a bottle of port, and a brace of charming daughters at the Priory. In with you, little Mustang of the prairie! Neck or nothing!'

And in an instant the small wary Ancon in and the huge Hornetath-land hunter were wallowing and slugging in the yeasty stream till they floated into a deep reach, and swam steadily down to a low place in the bank. They crossed the stream, passed the Priory Shrubberies, leapt the gate into the park, and then on and upward, called by the unseen Ariel's music before them—Up, into the hills, past white crumpling chalk juts, fringed with feathered juniper and tufted rug ashes, their floors strewn with knolls of fallen soil and vegetation, like wooded islets in a sea of milk—Up, between steep ridges of turf crested with black fir-woods and silver beech, and here and there a huge yew standing out alone, the advanced sentry of the forest, with its luscious fretwork of green velvet, like a mountain of Gothic spires and pinnacles, all glittering and steaming as the sun drank up the dew-drops. The lark sprang upward into song, and called merrily to the new-opened sunbeams, while the wraths and flakes of mist lingered reluctantly about the hollows, and clung with dewy fingers to every knoll and belt of pine—Up, into the labyrinthine bosom of the hills,—but who can describe them? Is not all nature indescribable? every leaf infinite and transcendental? How much more those mighty downs,

with their enormous sheets of spotless turf, where the dizzy eye loses all standard of size and distance before the awful majesty, the delicate vastness, of those grand curves and swells, soft as the outlines of a Greek Venus, as if the great goddess-mother Hertha had laid herself down among the hills to sleep, her Titan limbs wrapped in a thimble of silvery green.

Up, into a vast amphitheatric of sward, whose walls banked out the narrow sky above. And here, in the focus of the huge ring, an object appeared which stared strange melancholy in Lancelot,—a little chapel, ivy-grown, gabled with a few yews and cypresses, and grassy graves. A climbing rose over the porch and iron railings round the churchyard told of human care, and from the graveyard itself burst up one of those noble springs known as winterbottoms in the chalk ranges, which, awakened in autumn from the abysses to which it had shrunk during the summer's drought, was hurrying down upon its six months' course, a liquid sheet of only silver, over a tanquary channel of smooth green sward.

The hounds had clocked in the woods behind, now they poured down the hill-side, so close together 'that you might have covered them with a sheet,' straight for the little chapel.

A saddened tone of feeling spread itself through Lancelot's heart. There were the everlasting hills around, even they had grown and grown to countless ages, beneath the still depths of the primeval chalk ocean, in the milky youth of this great English land. And here was he, the insect of a day, fox-hunting upon them!—felt ashamed, and more ashamed when inner voice whispered—'Fox hunting is not the shame—then art the shame! If thou art the insect of a day, it is thy sin that thou art one.'

And his sadness, foolish as it may seem, grew as he watched a brown speck fleet rapidly up the opposite hill, and heard a grey view halloo burst from the colonel at his side. The chase lost its charm for him the moment the game was seen. Then vanished that mysterious delight of pursuing an invisible object, which gives to hunting and fishing their numinous and almost spiritual charm, which made Shakespeare a nightly preacher, Dryden and Chaucery the patriarchs of fly-fishing; by which the twelve-foot rod is transfigured into an enchanter's wand, potent over the unseen wonders of the watery world, to 'call up spirits from the vasty deep,' which will really 'come it you do call for them'—at least if the conjuration be orthodox—and they there. That spell was broken by the sight of poor wratted pug, his once gracefully-floating limbs all dragged and drooping, as he toiled up the sheep-paths towards the open down above.

But Lancelot's sadness reached its crisis as he met the hounds just outside the churchyard. Another moment—they had hapt the rails and there they swept round under the gravewall, leaping and yolling like berserk hounds

among the frowning tombstones, over the cracks of the quiet dead.

Lancelot shuddered—the thing was not wrong—'it was no one's fault'—but there was a ghastly discord in it. Peace and strife, time and eternity—the mad noisy flesh and the silent immortal spirit—the frivolous game of life's outside show and the terrible earnest of its inward abysses, jarred together without and within him. He pulled his horse up violently, and stood as if rooted to the place, gazing at he knew not what.

The hounds caught sight of the fox, burst into one frantic shriek of joy—and then a sudden and ghostly stillness, as, mute and breathless, they took up the hillside, gazing on a victim not every stride. The patter of the horse hoofs and the rattle of rolling flints died away above. Lancelot looked up, startled at the silence, laughed aloud, he knew not why, and sat, regardless of his pawing and stomping horse, still staring at the chapel and the graves.

On a sudden the chapel door opened, and a figure trundled yet loftily stepped out without observing him, and, suddenly turning round, met him full face to face, and stood fixed with surprise as completely as Lancelot himself.

That face and figure, and the spirit which spoke through them, entered his heart at once, never again to leave it. Her features were aquiline and graceful, without a shade of harshness. Her eyes shone out like twin lakes of still azure, beneath a broad marble cliff of polished forehead, her rich chestnut hair rippled downward round the towering neck. With her perfect masque and queenly figure, and earnest upward gaze, she might have been the very model from which Raphael conceived his glorious St. Catherine—the ideal of the highest womanly genius, softened into self-forgiveness by girlish devotion. She was simply, almost coarsely dressed, but a glance told him that she was a lady, by the courtesy of man as well as by the will of God.

They gazed one moment more at each other—but what is time to spirits? With them, as with their Father, 'one day is as a thousand years.' But that eye-wedlock was cut short the next instant by the decided interference of the horse, who, thoroughly disgusted at his master's whole conduct, gave a significant shake of his head, and, shunning frightened (as both women and horses will do when only cross), commenced a war-dance, which drove Argemone Lavington into the porch and gave the bewildered Lancelot an excuse for dashing noddily up the hill after his companions.

'What a horrible ugly face!' said Argemone to herself, 'but so clever and so unhappy!'

First pity! true mother of that graceless scamp, young Love, who is ashamed of his real pedigree, and swears to this day that he is the child of Venus!—the coxcomb!

[Here, for the sake of the reader, we omit, or rather postpone, a long dissertation on the famous

Erototheogonic chorus of Aristophanes' *Birds*, with illustrations taken from all earth and heaven, from the Vedas and Proclus to Jacob Boehme and Saint Theresa.]

'The dichotomy of Lancelot's personality,' as the Germans would call it, returned as he dashed on. His understanding was trying to ride, while his spirit was left behind with Argemone. Hence loose reins and a looser seat. He rolled about like a tipsy man, holding on, in fact, far more by his spurs than by his knees, to the utter information of Shiver-the-tinkers, who kicked and snorted over the down like one of Mephistopheles' Demon-steeds. They had mounted the hill the deer fled before the terror—they entered the park paths. In the road beyond them the hounds were just killing their fox, struggling and growling in huge groups for the red goblets of fun, a panting, steaming ring of horses round them. Half a dozen voices hailed him as he came up.

'Where have you been?' 'He'll tumble off!'

'He's had a fall!' 'No, he hasn't!' 'Ware hounds, man alive!' 'He'll break his neck!'

'He has broken it, at last!' shouted the colonel, as Shiver-the-tinkers rushed at the high pales, out of breath and blind with rage. Lancelot saw and heard nothing till he was awakened from his dream by the long heave of the huge brute's shoulder, and the maddening sensation of sweeping through the air over the fence. He started, checked the curb, the horse threw up his head, fulfilling his name by driving his knees like a hitting ram against the pales.

The top-bar bent like a wither, flew out into a hundred splinters, and man and horse rolled over headlong into the hard flint road.

For one long sickening second Lancelot watched the blue sky between his own knees. Then a crash as if a shell had burst in his face—a horrible grind—a sheet of flame—and the blackness of night. Did you ever feel it, reader?

When he awoke he found himself lying in bed, with Squire Lavington sitting by him. There was real sorrow in the old man's face.

'Come to himself!' and a great joyful oath rolled out. 'The boldest rider of them all!' 'I wouldn't have lost him for a dozen ready-made spick-and-span Colonel Bracebridges!'

'Quite right, squire!' answered a laughing voice from behind the curtain. 'Smith has a clean two thousand a year, and I live by my wits!'

CHAPTER II

SPRING YEARNINGS

I HEARD a story the other day of our most earnest and genial humorist, who is just now proving himself also our most earnest and genial novelist. 'I like your novel exceedingly,' said a lady, 'the characters are so natural—all but the baronet, and he surely is overdrawn. It is

impossible to find such coarseness in his rank of life!

The artist laughed. 'And that character,' said he, 'is almost the only exact portrait in the whole book.'

So it is. People do not see the strange things which pass them every day. 'The romance of real life' is only one to the romantic spirit. And then they set up for critics, instead of pupils, as if the artist's business was not just to see what they cannot see—to open their eyes to the harmonies and the discords, the miracles and the absurdities, which seem to them one uniform gray fog of commonplaces.

Then let the reader believe that whatsoever is commonplace in my story is my own invention. Whatsoever may seem extravagant or startling is most likely to be historic fact, else I should not have dared to write it down, finding God's actual dealings here much too wonderful to dare to invent many fresh ones for myself.

Lancelot, who had had a severe concussion of the brain and a broken leg, kept his bed for a few weeks, and his room for a few more. Colonel Bracebridge installed himself at the Priory, and nursed him with unflagging good-humour and few thanks. He brought Lancelot his breakfast before him, described the run to him when he returned, read him to sleep, told him stories of grizzly bear and bullalo-hunts, made him laugh in spite of himself at extemporaneous comic medleys, kept his table covered with flowers from the conservatory, warmed his children and even his bed. Nothing came amiss to him, and he to nothing. Lancelot longed at first every hour to be rid of him, and eyed him about the room, as a bulldog does the monkey who rides him. In his dreams he was Sunbad the Sailor, and Bracebridge the Old Man of the Sea, but he could not hold out against the colonel's merry-distinguishing kindness, and the almost womanish tenderness of his nursing. The ice thawed rapidly, and one evening it split up altogether, when Bracebridge, who was sitting drawing by Lancelot's sofa, instead of amusing himself with the ladies below, suddenly threw his pencil into the fire, and broke out, *à propos de rien*—

'What a strange pair we are, Smith! I think you just the best fellow I ever met, and you hate me like poison—you can't deny it.'

There was something in the colonel's tone so utterly different from his usual courtly and measured speech, that Lancelot was taken completely by surprise, and stammered out—

'I—I—I—no—no. I know I am very foolish—ungrateful. But I do hate you,' he said, with a sudden impulse, 'and I'll tell you why.'

'Give me your hand,' quoth the colonel. 'I like that. Now we shall see our way with each other, at least.'

'Because,' said Lancelot slowly, 'because you are lovelier than I, readier than I, superior to me in every point.'

The colonel laughed, not quite merrily.

Lancelot went on, holding down his shaggy brows.

'I am a brute and an ass!—And yet I do not like to tell you so. For if I am an ass, what are you?'

'Hevday!'

'Look here—I am wasting my time and brains on ribaldry, but I am worth nothing better—at least, I think so at times, but you, who can do anything you put your hand to, what business have you, in the devil's name, to be throwing yourself away on games and fox-hunting tooley? Heavens! If I had your talents I'd be—I'd make a name for myself before I died, if I died to make it.'

The colonel gripped his hand hard, rose, and looked out of the window for a few minutes. There was a dead, brooding silence, till he turned to Lancelot—

'Mr Smith, I thank you for your honesty, but good advice may come too late. I am no saint, and God only knows how much less of one I may become, but mark my words, if you are ever tempted by passion, and vanity, and fine ladies, to form liaisons, as the Jesuits call them, snags, and nets, and labyrinths of blind ditches, to keep you down through life, stumbling and grovelling, hating yourself and hating the chain to which you cling—in that hour pray—pray as if the devil had you by the throat, to Almighty God—help you out of that cursed slough! There is nothing else for it!—pray, I tell you!'

There was a terrible earnestness about the Guardsman's face which could not be mistaken. Lancelot looked at him for a moment, and then dropped his eyes, ashamed, as if he had intruded on the speaker's confidence by witnessing his emotion.

In a moment the colonel had returned to his smile and his polish.

'And now, my dear invalid, I must beg your pardon for sermonising. What do you say to a game of *carte*? We must play for love, or we shall excite ourselves, and scandalise Mrs. Lavington's party.' And the colonel pulled a pack of cards out of his pocket, and seeing that Lancelot was too thoughtful for play, commenced all manner of juggler's tricks, and chuckled over them like any schoolboy.

'Happy man!' thought Lancelot, 'to have the strength of will which can thrust its thoughts away once and for all.'

No, Lancelot! more happy are they whom God will not allow to thrust their thoughts from them till the bitter draught has done its work.

From that day, however, there was a cordial understanding between the two. They never alluded to the subject, but they had known the bottom of each other's heart. Lancelot's sick-room was now pleasant enough, and he drank in daily his new friend's perpetual stream of anecdote, till March and hunting were past, and April was half over. The old squire came up after dinner regularly (during March he had

SPRING YEARNINGS

hunted every day and slept every evening), and the two chatted along merrily enough, by the help of whist and backgammon, upon the surface of this little island of life, which is, like Surland's, after all only the back of a floating whale, ready to dive at any moment. And then? —

But what was Argemone doing all this time? Argemone was busy in her boudoir (too often a true boudoir to her) among books and statuettes and dried flowers, fancying herself, and not unfairly, very intellectual. She had four new manes every year, her last winter's one had been that bottle-and-squirt mania, now called chemistry; her spring madness was for the Greek drama. She had devoured Schlegel's lectures, and thought them divine, and now she was hard at work on Sophocles, with a little help from translations, and thought she understood him every word. Then she was somewhat High Church in her notions, and used to go up every Wednesday and Friday to the chapel in the hills, where Lancelot had met her, for in hours of mystic devotion, set off by a little grateful asceticism. As for Lancelot, she never thought of him but as an empty-headed booby who had met with his deserts, and the brilliant accounts which the all-smoothing colour gave of Lancelot's physical well-doing and agreeable conversation only made her set him down the sooner as a twin clever-donkey to the despised Brackledge, whom she hated for keeping her father in a ton of laughter.

But her sister, little Honoria, had all this while been busy mending and cooking with her own hands for the invalid, and almost fell in love with the colonel for his watchful kindness. And here a word about Honoria, to whom Nature, according to her wont with sisters, had given almost everything which Argemone wanted, and denied almost everything which Argemone had, except beauty. And even in that the many-sided mother had made her a perfect contrast to her sister, tiny and hesitating, dark-eyed and dark-haired, as full of wild simple passion as in Italian, thinking little, except where she felt much — which was, indeed, everywhere, for she lived in a perpetual April shower of exuberant sympathy for all suffering, whether in novels or in life, and only gave the lie to that shallow old chimney, that 'volitions sorrows harden the heart to real ones'.

Argemone was almost angry with her sometimes, when she trotted whole days about the village from school to sick room — perhaps conscience hunted to her that her duty, too, lay rather there than among her luxurious day-dreams. But alas! though she would have indignantly repelled the accusation of selfishness, yet in self and for self alone she lived, and while she had force of will for any social 'self denial,' and would bust herself cross and stumped, and quite rumpy-kneeling thinly clad and barefoot on the freezing chapel floor

on a winter's morning, yet her fastidious delicacy revolted at sitting, like Honoria, beside the bed of the ploughman's consanguine daughter, in a reeking, stifling, lean-to garret, in which had slept the night before the father, mother, and two grown-up boys, not to mention a new married couple, the sick girl, and, alas! her baby. And of such bedchambers there were too many in Whitford Priory.

The first evening that Lancelot came down stairs, Honoria clapped her hands outright for joy as he entered, and ran up and down for ten minutes, fetching and carrying endless unnecessary cushions and footstools, while Argemone greeted him with a cold distant bow and a fine-lady drawl of carefully commonplace congratulations. Her heart smote her though, as she saw the wan face and the wild, melancholy, moon-struck eyes, some more glaring through and through her, she found a comfort in thinking, his story unpertinent, drew herself up, and turned away. Once, indeed, she could not help listening, as Lancelot thanked Mrs. Lavington for all the poems and edifying books with which the good lady had kept his room rather than his own furnished for the last six weeks, he was going to say more, but he saw the colonel's quaint frown eyeing it him, remembered St. Francis de Sales, and held his tongue.

But, as her destiny was, Argemone found herself, in the course of the evening, alone with Lancelot at the open window. It was a still, hot, heavy night, after long eastern drought, short lightning glimmered on the far horizon over the dark woodlands, the coming shower had set forward, and thus herald a whispering draught of fragrant air.

'What a delicious shiver is creeping over those limbs!' said Lancelot, hilt to hilt.

The expression struck Argemone — it was the right one, and it seemed to open vistas of feeling and observation in the speaker which she had not suspected. There was a rich melancholy in the voice. She turned to look at him.

'Ay,' he went on, 'and the same heat which crisps those thirsty leaves must breed the thunder shower which cools them! But so it is throughout the universe — every yearning proves the existence of an object meant to satisfy it — the same law exists both the giver and the receiver, the longing and its home.'

It one could but know sometimes what it is for which one is longing! said Argemone, without knowing that she was speaking from her inmost heart. But thus does the soul involuntarily lay bare its most unspoken depths in the presence of its yet unknown mate, and then shudders at its own *abandon* as it first tries on the wedding garment of Paradise.

Lancelot was not yet past the era at which young gentlemen are apt to 'talk book' at little.

'For what?' he answered, flashing up according to his fashion. 'To be, — to be great,

to have done one mighty work before we die, and live, unloved or loved, upon the lips of men. For thus all men who are not mere apes and wall flies.'

'So lounge the founders of Babel,' answered Argemone carelessly to this tirade. She had risen a strange fish, the enaming beauty, and now she was trying her fancy on him one by one.

'And were they so far wrong?' answered he. 'From the Babel society sprang our architecture, our astronomy, politics, and colonisation. No doubt the old Hebrew sheiks thought them unpious enough for daring to build brick walls instead of keeping to the good old-fashioned tents, and gathering themselves into a nation instead of remaining a very tiny horde, and gave them own account of the myth, just as the antediluvian savages gave theirs of that strange Eden scene, by the common interpretation of which the devil is made the first inventor of modesty. Men are all conservatives, every thing new is unpious till we get accustomed to it, and if it fails, the gods justly discover a divine vengeance in the mischance, from Babel to Catholic Emancipation.'

Lancelot had stammered horribly during the latter part of this most heterodox outburst, for he had begun to think about himself, and try to say a hue thing, suspecting all the while that it might not be true. But Argemone did not remark the stammering, the new thoughts startled and pained her, but there was a daring grace about them. She tried, as women will, to answer him with arguments, and failed, as women will fail. She was accustomed to lay down the law à la Madame de Staël to *esquints* and *non-servants* and be heard with reverence, as a woman should be. But poor truth-seeking Lancelot did not see what sex had to do with logic, he thrust her as if she had been a very barrister, and hunted her mercilessly up and down through all sorts of charming sophisms, as she begged the question and shifted her ground, as thoroughly right in her conclusion as she was wrong in her reasoning, till she grew quite confused and pettish. And then Lancelot suddenly struck into his shell, claws and all, like an affrighted soldier-crab, hugging down his head, and stammered out some incoherencies, 'N-n-not accustomed to talk to women—ladies, I mean. Excuse myself. Pray forgive me.' And he looked up, and his eyes, half-amused, met hers, and she saw that they were filled with tears.

'What have I to forgive?' she said, more gently, wondering on what sort of strange sportsman she had fallen. 'You treat me like an equal; you will deign to argue with me. But men in general—oh, they hide their contempt for us, if not their own ignorance, under that mask of chivalrous deference.' And then in the usual *fin-de-ladies* key, which was her shell, as latter *brunettes* was his, she added, with an Amazon queen's toss of the head, 'You must come and see us often. We shall

suit each other, I see, better than most whom we see here.'

A sneer and a blush passed together over Lancelot's ugliness.

'What, better than the glib Colonel Braceridge yonder?'

'Oh, he is witty enough, but he lives on the surface of every thing. He is altogether shallow and base. His goodnature is the hint of want of feeling, between his generosity and his sneering persillage he is a perfect Mephistopheles-Apollo.'

'What a snare a decently good nickname is! Out it must come, though it carry a lie on its back. But the truth was, Argemone thought herself infinitely superior to the colonel, for which simple reason she could not in the least understand him.'

[By the bye, how shrewdly Mr. Tennyson has embodied all this in *The Princess*. How he shows us the woman, when she takes her stand on the false masculine ground of intellect, working out her own moral punishment by destroying in herself the tender heart of flesh, which is either woman's highest blessing or her bitterest curse, how she loses all feminine sensibility to the modernment of feeling in us poor world-worn, case-hardened men, and falls from pride to stumess, from stumess to sheer inhumanity. I should have honoured myself by pilfering guilty to stealing much of Argemone's character from *The Princess*, had not the plot been concerned and fairly worked out long before the appearance of that noble poem.]

They said no more to each other that evening. Argemone was called to the piano, and Lancelot took up the *Sporting Magazine* and read himself to sleep till the party separated for the night.

Argemone went up thoughtfully to her own room. The shower had fallen and the moon was shining bright, while every budding bud and knot of mould strewing cool perfume, borrowed from the treasures of the thunder-cloud. All around was working the infinite mystery of birth and growth, of giving and taking, of beauty and use. All things were harmonious; all things accepted without Argemone felt herself needless, lonely, and out of tune with herself and nature.

She sat in the window and listlessly read over to herself a fragment of her own poetry.

SAPPHO

She lay among the myrtles on the cliff
Above her glared the moon, beneath, the sea
I join the white horizon Alder's peak
Weltered in burning haze, all else were dead.
The scales slept among the tamarisks' hair,
The birds sat dumb and drooping. Far below
The lazy sea-wind slept in the sun
The lazy sea-fowl dried their stammering wings.
The lazy swallows crept whispering up the ledge,
And such again. Great Pan was laid to rest,
And mother Earth watched by him as he slept,
And looked her myriad children for awhile.

She lay among the myrtles on the cliff,
And sighed for sleep, for sleep that would not hear,
But left her tossing still for night and day
A mighty hunger yearned within her heart,
Till all her veins ran fever, and her cheek,
Her long thin hands, and ivory-chained feet,
Were wasted with the wasting of her soul.
Then peacefully she flung her on her face,
And hid her eyelids from the blinding glare,
And fingered at the grass, and tried to cool
Her crisp hot lips against the crisp hot sword.
And then she raised her head, and upward cast
Wild looks from boundless eyes, whose liquid light
Gleamed out between deep folds of blue-black hair,
As gleams twin lakes between the purple peaks
Of steep mountains, at the monstrous moon
To see her lay a lyre. She smelt the shell,
And waked wild music from its silver strings,
Then tossed it softly by, 'Alas, how?' she cries,
'The idling of the fortune and the mine.'
Why mock my dreams with those torments?
Alas, a thrice Olympian lot be thine,
Only to echo back in every tone,
The words of nobler natures than thine own.'

'No!' she said. 'That soft and rounded
thyms sails ill with Sappho's fitful and way-
ward agonies. She should burst out at once
into wild passionate life-weariness, and disgust at
that universe, with whose beauty she has killed
her eyes in vain, to find it always a dead picture,
unsatisfying, unlovely—as I have found it.'

Sweet self-deceiver! had you no other reason
for choosing as your heroine Sappho, the victim
of the idolatry of intellect, trying in vain to
kill her heart with the friendship of her own
sex, and then sinking into more passion for a
handsome boy, and so down into self-contempt
and suicide?

She was conscious, I do believe, of no other
reason than that she gave, but consciousness
is dim and less—over a deep mine.

'After all,' she said pettishly, 'people will
call it a mere imitation of Shelley's *Atheist*.
And what harm is it in? Is there to be no
little Alister? It is not the woman as good as
right as the man to long after ideal beauty to
pune and die if she cannot find it, and regenerate
herself in its light.'

'You ho-o-o-o!' Youp, youp! 'Oh-hoo-o-o'
rose dolorful through the echoing shrubbery.

Argemone started and looked out. It was
not a hush, but a forgotten fox-hound puppy,
sitting mournfully on the gravel-walk beneath,
staring at the clear ghastly moon.

She laughed and blushed there was a rebuke
in it. She turned to go to rest, and as she
knelt and prayed at her velvet fahstool, among
all the nicknacks which nowadays make a
luxury of devotion, was it strange if, after she
had prayed for the fate of nations and churches,
and for those who, as she thought, were fighting
at Oxford the cause of universal truth and
reverend antiquity, she remembered in her
petitions the poor goddess youth, with her
troubled and trembling eloquence? But it was
strange that she blushed when she mentioned
his name—why should she not pray for him as
she prayed for others?

Perhaps she felt that she did not pray for him
as she prayed for others.

She left the *Kohan* harp in the window, as a

luxury if she should wake, and coiled herself up
among lace pillows and eider blouses, and the
hound coiled himself up on the gravel-walk,
after a solemn vesper-ceremony of three turns
round in his own length, looking vainly for a
'soft stone.' The finest of us are animals after
all, and live by eating and sleeping and taken
as animals, not so badly off either—unless we
happen to be Dorsetshire labourers—or Spital
fields weavers—or colliery children—or marching
soldiers—or, I am afraid, one half of English
souls this day.

And Argemone dreamed,—that she was a fox,
flying for her life through a churchyard, and
Lancelot was a hound, yelling and leaping, in a
red coat and white buckskins, close upon her—
and she felt his hot breath and saw his white
teeth glint. And then her father was
there, and he was an Italian boy, and played
the organ—and Lancelot was a dancing dog, and
stood up and danced to the tune of '*L'amour,
l'amour, l'amour*,' pitifully enough, in his red coat
and she stood up and danced too, but she
found her fox-hound dress insufficient, and begged
hard for a paper doll—which was danced her
when it she cried fiercely and woke—and saw the
Night peeping in with her bright diamond eyes,
and blushed, and hid her beautiful face in the
pillows, and fell asleep again.

What the little nips, who managed this
puppet-show on Argemone's birthday, may
have intended to symbolise thereby, and whether
he stole his actors and stage-properties, and
whether he got up the interlude for his own
private fun, or for that of a chain of brother
tailors-jackets, or finally, for the edification of
Argemone as to her own history, just present
or future, no questions which we must have
unanswered, till physicians have become a little
more of metaphysicians, and have given up their
present plan of ignoring for pure humbug and
ninety-nine pages with most awful and signifi-
cant custom of dreaming. And then in the thirtieth
page talking the boldest materialist twaddle
about it.

In the meantime Lancelot, contrary to the
colonel's express commands, was sitting up to
write the following letter to his cousin, the
Treatin estate—

'You complain that I waste my time in bold
sports—how do you know that I waste my time?
I find within myself certain appetites—and I
suppose that the God whom you say made me
made those appetites as a part of me. Why are
they to be crushed my more than my other
part of me? I am the whole of what I find in
myself—and I to pick and choose myself out of
myself? And besides I feel that the exercise of
freedom, activity, foresight, daring, independent
self-determination, even in a few minutes' burst
across country, strengthens me in mind as well
as in body. It might not do so to you; but you
are of a different constitution, and, from all I
see, the power of a man's muscles, the excit-
ability of his nerves, the shape and balance of
his brain, make him what he is. Else what is

the meaning of physiognomy? Every man's destiny, as the Turks say, stands written on his forehead. One does not need two glances at your face to know that you would not enjoy fox-hunting, that you would enjoy book-reading and "reclined repose," as they are pleased to call it. Every man carries his character in his brow. You all know that, and at it upon it when you have to deal with an incontinent, but your religious dogmas, which make out that every man comes into the world equally brutish and hemish, make you afraid to confess it. I don't quarrel with a "done" like you with a large organ of veneration, for following your bent. But if I am holy, with a huge cerebellum why am I not to follow mine?—For that is what you do, after all, what you like best. It is all very easy for a man to talk of conquering his appetites when he has none to conquer. Try and conquer your organ of veneration, or of benevolence or of calculation, then I will call you in ecstasies. Why not?—The same Power which made the front of one's head made the back, I suppose.

"And, I tell you, hunting does me good. It awakens me out of my dreamy mill round of metaphysics. It awakes a web of self-consciousness, and absorbs me in outward objects, and my red hot Puritan's bull cools in proportion as my horse warms. I tell you I never saw a man who could cut out his way across country who could not cut his way through better things when his turn came. The cleverest and noblest fellows are sure to be the best riders in the long run. And as for bad company and "the world," when you like to going in the first-class carriages for men of meeting a swearing sailor on the second class, when those who have "renounced the world" give up laying and selling in the funds, when my much the pious leader, who will only "associate" with the truly religious, gives up dealing with my soundest or heathen who in "do business" with him—then you may quote pious people's opinions to me. In the *Century*, in the *Stock Exchange*, and in the *Way* struggling, and the advertisements in the *Protestant* *Flu-and-Cry*, and the frantic Munition-hunting which has been for the last fifty years the peculiar pursuit of the majority of Quakers, Dissenters, and Religious Churchmen, are not *The World*, what is? I don't complain of this, though, Puritans have interdicted to them all art, all excitement, all amusement except money-making. It is their *dernær ressource*, poor souls!

"But you must explain to us roughly fox-hunters how all this agrees with the good book. We see plainly enough in the meantime how it agrees with "poor human nature." We see that the "religious world," like the "great world," and the "sporting world," and the "literary world,"

"Compounds for sins she is inclined to
By damning those she has no mind to."

and that because England is a money-making

country, and money-making is an effeminate pursuit, therefore all sedentary and stony sins, like covetousness, shamer, lagotry, and self-interest, are to be cockered and plastered over, while the more masculine vices, and non-vices also, are mercilessly hunted down by your cold-blooded, soft-handed religionists.

"This is a more quick letter than usual from me, my dear coz, for many of your reproaches met me home. They angered me at the time, but I deserve them. I am miserable, self-disgusted, self-helpless, craving for freedom, and yet crying aloud for some one to come and guide me and teach me, and *who is there in this shape who could teach a just man, even if he would try?* He says that is long as you and yours make party a synonym for mind address. You will never convert either me or any other good sportsman."

"By the bye, my dear fellow, was I asleep or awake when I seemed to read in the postscript of your last letter something about "being driven to home after all"? Why this hur of all places in heaven or earth? You know I have no party interest in the question. All creeds are very much alike to me just now. But allow me to ask, in a spirit of the most tolerant animosity, what possible celestial bent either of the useful or the agreeable kind, in the present excellent Pope or his adherents hold out to you in compensation for the solid earthly pudding which you would leave to desert?—I don't say, though that I shall not comprehend your answer when it comes. I am, you know, utterly deficient in that sixth sense of the angels or spiritual beautiful which fills your soul with ecstasy. You, I know, expect and long to become an angel after death. I am under the strange hallucination that my body is part of me, and in spite of old Plotinus look with horror at a disembodiment till the giving of that new body, the great perfection of which, in your eyes, and those of every one else, seems to be that it will be less, and not more of a body than our present one. Is this hope, to me at once inconceivable and contradictory, probably not shuddering enough to send you to that Italian Avernus, to get it made a little more certain? If so, I despair of your making your meaning intelligible to a poor fellow wallowing like me in the Hyde Bantones or whatever else you may choose to call the unfortunate fat of being flesh and blood. Still, write."

CHAPTER III

NEW ACTIONS, AND A NEW STAGE

WHEN Argemone rose in the morning, her first thought was of Lancelot. His face haunted her. The wild brilliance of his intellect struggling through foul smoke-clouds had haunted her still more. She had heard of his prodigious, his bursts of fierce Berserk madness, and yet now these very faults, instead of repelling, seemed

to attract her, and intensify her longing to save him. She would convert him, purify him, harmonise his disorders. And that very wish gave her a peace she had never felt before. She had formed her idea, she had now a purpose for which to live, and she determined to concentrate herself for the work, and binged for the moment when she should meet Lancelot, and begin. Now, she did not very clearly see.

It is an old jest—the fair devotee trying to convert the young rake. Men of the world laugh heartily at it, and so does the devil, no doubt. If any readers wish to be fellow-pesters with that personage, they may, but, as soon as old Saxon woman-worship remains for ever a blessed and healing law of life, the devotee may yet convert the rake—only, perhaps, herself into the bargain.

Argemone looked almost angrily round at her beloved books and drawings, for they spoke a message to her which they had never spoken before, of self-centred ambition. 'Yes,' she said aloud to herself, 'I have been selfish, utterly! Art, poetry, science, I believe, after all, that I have only loved them for my own sake, not for theirs, because they would make me something, feed my conceit of my own talents. How infinitely more glorious to feed my work with his joy, not in dead forms and colours, or yolk and sperm theories, but in a living immortal human spirit! I will study no more, except the human being, and only that to purify and ennoble it.'

True, Argemone, and yet like all resolutions, somewhat less than the truth. That meaning, indeed, her purpose was simple as tools own light. She never dreamed of exciting Lancelot's admiration, even his friendship, for herself. She would have started, as from a snake from the issue which the reader very clearly foresees, that Lancelot would fall in love, not with Young Englishism, but with Argemone Livingston. But yet self is not eradicated even from woman's heart in one morning before breakfast. Besides, it is not 'the love of love,' but love—the real Cupid

this soul dissecting. So we will have a bit of action again, for the sake of variety, if for nothing better.

Of all the species of lovely scenery which England holds, none, perhaps, is more exquisite than the banks of the chalk rivers—the perfect limpidity of the water, the gay and luxuriant vegetation of the banks and ditches, the masses of noble wood embracing the villages, the unique beauty of the water meadows, living sheets of emerald and silver, twinkling and sparkling, cool under the hottest sun, brilliant under the blackest cloud. There, if anywhere, one would have expected to find Arcadia among fertility, loveliness, industry, and wealth. But this for the sad reality! the cool breath of these glittering water meadows too often flows laden with poisonous miasma. These picturesque villages are generally the perched footholds of fever and gain, of squabbling penny, sordid profligacy, dull discontent too subtle for words. There is luxury in the park, wealth in the large farmsteadings, knowledge in the personage, but the poor! those by whose dull labour is that luxury and wealth, even that knowledge, is made possible—what do they? We shall see, please God, ere the story's end.

But of all this Lancelot as yet thought nothing. He too, had to be maintained, is much as Argemone from selfishness, to learn to work trustfully in the living Present, not to gloat sentimentally over the minutes, Past, but his time was not yet come, and he thought of all the work which lay to do to him within a mile of the Priory, as he went to the Priory, going to the Priory, and shut down to the Nuns' pool on his way to the Priory, and back to the Priory.

The Priory, with its winding courts and gardens, stood on a hill in the river. The upper stream flowed in a straight canal channel through the Priory, still and level towards the Priory mill, which just above the Priory mill the river fell over a high wall with all its appendages of banks and ditches, and cellars.

Swept round under the road walls with their tiny, tinny, and gabled and tiled leaded windows, peering out over the stream as it hurried down over the shallows to join the river below the mill. A postern door in the wall opened on an ornamental wooden bridge over the weir head, a favorite haunt of anglers and skaters who were admitted to the dragon-guarded Flushing of Whitford Priory. Lancelot went congratulating himself strange to say, in having escaped the only human being whom he loved on earth.

He found on the weir bridge two of the keepers. The younger one, Tregarva, was a stately, thoughtful looking Cornishman, some six feet three in height with thick and sinews in proportion. He was sitting on the bridge looking over a basket of eel-fines, and listening silently to the chat of his companion.

Old Harry Verney, the other keeper was a

* Touch the chord of self which, to obtain,
Possess in music out of sight.

But a time for all things—and it is now time for Argemone to get down to breakfast, having prepared some dozen imaginary dialogues between herself and Lancelot, in which, of course, her eloquence always had the victory. She had yet to learn that it is better sometimes not to settle in one's heart what we shall speak, for the Everlasting Will has good works ready prepared for us to walk in, by what we call fortunate accident; and it shall be given us in that day and that hour what we shall speak.

Lancelot, in the meantime, shrank from meeting Argemone, and was quite glad of the weakness which kept him upstairs. Whether he was afraid of her, whether he was ashamed of himself or of his crutches, I cannot tell, but I daresay, reader, you are getting tired of all

character in his way, and a very bad character too, though he was a patriarch among all the gamekeepers of the vale. He was a short, wiry, handy-legged, forret-visaged old man, with grizzled hair and a wizened face tanned brown and purple by constant exposure. Between rheumatism and constant handling the rod and gun, his fingers were crooked like a hawk's claws. He kept his left eye always shut, apparently to save trouble in shooting, and squinted and sniffed and peered, with a stooping back and protruded chin, as if he were perpetually on the watch for fish, flesh, and fowl, venison and Christian. The friendship between himself and the Scotch terrier at his heels would have been easily explained by Tassie, for in the transmigration of souls the spirit of Harry Verney had evidently once animated a dog of that breed. He was dressed in a huge thick fustian jacket, scratched, stained, and patched with tawdry, gray pockets, a cast of this round a battered hat, riddled with shot-holes, a dog-whistle at his button-hole, and an old gun cut short over his arm, bespoke his business.

"I seed that 'ere Craww against Ashly Down Plantations last night, I'll be sworn," said he, in a squeaking, sneaking tone.

"Well, what harm was the man doing?"

"Oh, ay, that's the way you young 'uns talk. If he warn't doing mischief, he'd a been glad to have been doing it, I'll warrant. If I'd been as young as you, I'd have picked a quarrel with him some ciongh, and found a cause for tickling him. It's worth a brace of sovereigns with the squire to haul him up. Eh? ch? Ain't old Harry right now?"

"Humph!" growled the younger man.

"There, then, you get me a snare and a hare by to-morrow night, went on old Harry, 'and see if I don't nab him. It won't be long under the plantation afore he picks it up. You mind to snare me a hare to night, now?"

"I'll do no such thing, nor help to launch false accusations against any man!"

"False accusations!" answered Harry, in his grudging way. "Look at that now, for a keeper to say! Why, if he don't happen to have a snare just there, he 's somewhere else, you know. Eh? Ain't old Harry right now, ch?"

"Maybe."

"There, don't say I don't know nothing, then. Eh? What matter who put the snare down, or the hare in, perw ded he takes it up, man? If 'twas his'n he'd be all the better pleased. The most notoriousst poacher as walks unhung!" And old Harry lifted up his crooked hands in pious indignation.

"I'll have no more gamekeeping, Harry. What with hunting down Christians as if they were vermin all night, and being cursed by the squire all day, I'd sooner be a sheriff's runner or a negro slave."

"Ay, ay!" that's the way the young dogs always bark afore they're broke in, and gets to like it, as the eels does skinning. Haven't I bounced pretty near out of my skin many a

time afore now, on this here very bridge, with "Harry, jump in, you stupid hound!" and "Harry, get out, you one-eyed tailor!" And then, if one of the gentlemen lost a fish with their clumsiness—Oh, Father! to hear 'em lot out at me and my lauding net, and curse it to fight the devil! Dash then sarry tongues! Eh? Don't old Harry know their ways? Don't he know 'em, now?"

"Ay," said the young man bitterly. "We break the dogs, and we load the guns, and we find the game, and mark the game,—and then they call themselves sportsmen, we choose the flies, and we bait the spinning hooks, and we show them where the fish lie, and then when they've hooked them, they can't get them out without us and the spoon-net, and then they go home to the ladies and boast of the lot of fish they killed,—and who thinks of the keeper?"

"Oh! ah!" Then don't say old Harry knows nothing, then. How nicely, now, you and I might get a living off this 'ere manor, if the landlords was served like the French ones was. Eh, 'anl?' chuckled old Harry. "Wouldn't we pay our taxes with jocosants and grayling, that's all, ch? Ain't old Harry right now, ch?"

The old fox was fishing for an assent, not for its own sake, for he was a fierce Tory, and would have stood up to be shot at any day, not only for his master's sake, but for the sake of a single pheasant of his masters, but he hated Trigarva for many reasons, and was daily on the watch to entrap him on some of his peculiar points, whereof he had, as we shall find, a good many.

What would have been Trigarva's answer I cannot tell, but Lancelot, who had unintentionally overheard the greater part of the conversation, disliked being any longer a listener, and came close to them.

"Here's your gudgeons and minnows, sir, as you bespoken," quoth Harry, "and here's that paternoster as you gave me to jig up. Beautiful minnows, sir, white as a silver spoon—They're the ones now, ain't they, sir, eh?"

"They'll do!"

"Well, then, don't say old Harry don't know nothing, that's all, ch!" and the old fellow tickled off, peering and twisting his head about like a starling.

"An odd old fellow that, Trigarva," said Lancelot.

"Very, sir, considering who made him," answered the Cornishman, touching his hat, and then thrusting his nose deeper than ever into the eel-basket.

"Beautiful stream this," said Lancelot, who had a continual longing—right or wrong to chat with his inferiors; and was proportionately ulky and reserved to his superiors.

"Beautiful enough, sir," said the keeper, with an emphasis on the first word.

"Why, has it any other fault?"

"Not so wholesome as pretty, sir."

"What harm does it do?"

'Fever, and ague, and rheumatism, sir'
'Where?' asked Lancelot, a little amused by the man's laconic answers.

'Wherever the white fog spreads, sir'

'Where's that?'

'Everywhere, sir'

'And when?'

'Always, sir.'

Lancelot burst out laughing. The man looked up at him slowly and seriously.

'You wouldn't laugh, sir, if you'd seen much of the inside of these cottages round.'

'Really,' said Lancelot, 'I was only laughing at our making such very short work of such a long and serious story. Do you mean that the unhealthiness of this country is wholly caused by the river?'

'No, sir. The river dumps are God's sending, and so they are not too bad to bear. But there's more of man's sending, that is too bad to bear.'

'What do you mean?'

'Are men likely to be healthy when they are worse housed than a pig?'

'No.'

'And worse fed than a hound?'

'Good Heavens! No.'

'Or packed together to sleep, like partridges in a barrel?'

'But, my good fellow, do you mean that the labourers here are in that state?'

'It isn't far to walk, sir. Perhaps some day, when the Maccally has gone off, and the fish won't rise awhile, you could walk down and see. I beg your pardon, sir, though for thinking of such a thing. They are not places fit for gentlemen, that's certain. There was a stand monkey in his tune, which Lancelot felt

'But the begymen goes?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And Miss Honoria goes?'

'Yes, God Almighty bless her!'

'And do not they see that all goes right?'

'The giant twisted his huge limbs, as if trying to avoid an answer, and yet not daring to do so.

'Do the gymen go about among the poor much, sir, at college, before they are ordained?'

Lancelot smiled, and shook his head.

'I thought so, sir. Our good vicar is like the rest hereabouts. God knows, he wants neither time nor money—the souls of the poor are well looked after, and their bodies too—as far as his purse will go, but that's not for

'Is he ill-off, then?'

'The living's worth some four, pounds a year. The great tithes, they say, are worth better than twelve hundred, but Squire Lavington has them.'

'Oh, I see!' said Lancelot.

'I'm glad you do, sir, for I don't,' meekly answered Tregarva. 'But the vicar, sir, he is a kind man, and a good, but the poor don't understand him, nor he them. He is too learned, sir, and, saving your presence, too fond of his prayer-book.'

'One can't be too fond of a good thing.'

'Not unless you make an idol of it, sir, and fancy that men's souls were made for the prayer-book, and not the prayer-book for them.'

'But cannot he expose and redress these evils, if they exist?'

Tregarva twisted about again.

'I do not say that I think it, sir, but thus I know, that every poor man in the vale thinks it—that the persons are afraid of the landlords. They must see these things, for they are not blind, and they try to plaster them up out of their own pockets.'

'But why, in God's name, don't they strike at the root of the matter, and go straight to the landlords and tell them the truth?' asked Lancelot.

'So people say, sir. I see no reason for it except the one which I gave you. Besides, sir, you must remember that a man can't quarrel with his own kin, and so many of them are their squire's brothers, or sons, or nephews.'

'Or good friends with him, at least.'

'Ay, sir, and, to do them justice, they had need, for the poor's sake, to keep good friends with the squire. How else are they to get a farthing for schools, or odd-subscriptions, or living in societies, or holding libraries, or penny clubs? If they spoke their minds to the great ones, sir, how could they keep the parish together?'

'You seem to see both sides of a question, certainly. But what a miserable state of things, that the labouring man should require all these societies and charities, and helps from the rich!—that an industrious freeman cannot live without them.'

'So I have thought this long time,' quietly answered Tregarva.

'But Miss Honoria—she is not afraid to tell her father the truth.'

'Suppose, sir, when Adam and Eve were in the garden, that all the devils had come up and played their heads' tricks before them—do you think they'd have been any the wiser?'

'I really cannot tell,' said Lancelot, smiling.

'Then I am, sir. They'd have seen no more harm in it than there was harm already in themselves—and that was none. A man's eyes can only see what they've learnt to.'

Lancelot started. It was a favourite dictum of his in Carlyle's works.

'Where did you get that thought, my friend?'

'By seeing, sir.'

'But what has that to do with Miss Honoria?'

'She is an angel of holiness herself, sir, and, therefore, she goes on without blinking or suspecting, where our blood would boil again. She sees people in want, and thinks it must be so, and pities them and relieves them. But she don't know what herself and therefore, she don't know that it makes men beasts and devils. She's as pure as God's light herself, and, therefore, she fancies every one is as spotless as she is. And there's another mistake in your charitable great people, sir. When they see poor folk sick or hungry before their eyes, they pull

out then pursue fast enough, God bless them, for they wouldn't like to be so themselves. But the oppression that goes on all the year round, and the want that goes on all the year round, and the filth, and the lying, and the swearing, and the profligacy, that go on all the year round, and the sickening weight of debt, and the miserable grinding anxiety from rent-day to rent day, and Saturday night to Saturday night, that crushes a man's soul down, and drives every thought out of his head but how he is to fill his stomach and warm his back, and keep a house over his head, till he daren't for his life take his thoughts one moment off the meat that periseth—oh, sir, they never felt this, and, therefore, they never dream that there are thousands who pass them in their daily walks who feel thus, and feel nothing else!

This outburst was uttered with an earnestness and majesty which astonished Lancelot. He forgot the subject in the speaker.

'You are a very extraordinary gunkeeper,' said he.

'When the Lord shows a man a thing, he can't well help seeing it,' answered Tregarva, in his usual staid tone.

There was a pause. The keeper looked at him with a glance, before which Lancelot's eyes fell.

'Hill is paved with hearsays, sir, and is all this talk of mine is hearsay, if you are in earnest, sir, go and see for yourself. I know you have a kind heart, and they tell me that you are a great scholar, which would to God I was! so you ought not to condescend to take my word for anything which you can look into yourself,' with which sound piece of common-sense Tregarva returned busily to his reel-hire.

'Hand me the rod and can, and help me out along the back stage,' said Lancelot, 'I must have some more talk with you, my fine fellow.'

'Ainon,' answered Tregarva, as he assisted him lame here along a huge beam which stretched out into the pool, and having settled him there, returned mechanically to his work, humming a Wesleyan hymn-tune.

Lancelot sat and tried to catch perch, but Tregarva's words haunted him. He lighted his cigar, and tried to think earnestly over the matter, but he had got into the wrong place for thinking. All his thoughts, all his sympathies, were drowned in the rush and whirl of the water. He forgot everything else in the mere animal enjoyment of sight and sound. Take many young men at his crisis of life, he had given himself up to the mere contemplation of Nature till he had become her slave, and now a hissing scene, a singing bird, were enough to allure his mind away from the most earnest and awful thoughts. He tried to think, but the river would not let him. It thundered and spouted out behind him from the hatches, and leapt madly past him, and caught his eyes in spite of him, and swept them away down its dancing waves, and let them go again only to sweep them down again and again, till his brain felt

a delicious dizziness from the everlasting rush and the everlasting roar. And then below, how it spread, and withered, and whirled into transient fairs, hissing and twining snakes, polished glass-wreaths, huge crystal bells, which looked up from the bottom, and dived again beneath long threads of creamy foam, and swung round posts and roots, and rushed blackening under dark weed-fringed loughs, and gnawed at the muddy banks, and shook the ever restless bulrushes, till it was swept away and down over the white pebbles and olive weeds, in one broad rippling sheet of molten silver, towards the distant sea. Downwards it tumbled over, and bore his thoughts floating on its only stream, and the great trout, with their yellow sides and peacock backs, lounged among the eddies, and the silver grayling dangled and waded upon the shallows, and the May-flies flickered and rustled round him like water-farers, with their green gauzy wings, the goat clanked miserably among the reeds, the hogs hummed their ceaseless vesper-monotony, the kingfisher darted from his hole in the bank like a blue spark of electric light, the swallows' bills snapped as they twined and hawked above the pool, the swifts' wings whirled like musket-balls, as they rushed screaming past his head, and ever the river fleetly by, bearing his eyes away down the current, till its wild eddies began to glow with crimson beneath the setting sun. The complex harmony of sights and sounds shd softly over his soul, and he sunk away into a still day-dream, too passive for imagination, too deep for meditation, and

'Beauty born of humming sound,
Did pass into his face.'

Blame him not. There are more things in a man's heart than ever get in through his thoughts.

On a sudden, a soft voice behind him startled him.

'Can a poor cockney artist venture himself along this timber without falling?' said Lancelot.

'Come out to me, and if you stumble the urials will rise out of their depths, and "hold up their periled wrists" to save their favourite.'

The artist walked timidly out along the beam, and sat down beside Lancelot, who shook him warmly by the hand.

'Welcome, Claude Mellot, and all lovely enthusiasms and symbolisms! Expound to me now, the meaning of that water-lily leaf and its grand simple curve, as it lies sleeping there in the back eddy.'

'Oh, I am too unused to philosophise. The fur Argemone has just been treating me to her three hundred and sixty-fifth philippic against my unoffending head.'

'Why, what fault can she find with such a graceful and natural ornament?'

'Just this, my dear fellow, that it is paternal. As it is, she considers me only "intelligent-looking." If the beard were away, my face,

she says, would be "so refined!" And, I suppose, if I was just a little more effeminate and pale, with a more retreating under-jaw and a drooping lip, and a meek, peaking snimper, like your starved Russian saints, I should be "so spiritual!" And if, again, to complete the climax, I did but shave my head like a Chinese, I should be a model for St. Francis himself!

"But really, after all, why make yourself so singular by this said beard?"

"I wear it for a testimony and a sign that a man has no right to be ashamed of the mark of manhood. Oh, that one or two of your Protestant clergymen, who ought to be perfect models of man, would have the courage to get up into the pulpit in a long beard, and testify that the very essential idea of Protestantism is the dignity and divinity of man as God made him! Our forefathers were not ashamed of their beards, and now even the soldier is only allowed to keep his mustache, while our quill-driving misers shave themselves as close as they can, and in proportion to a man's piety he wears less hair, than the young rascal who shaves off his whiskers to the Papish priest who shaves his crown!"

"What do you say, then, to cutting off mine?"

"I say that extremes meet, and punish. Muchism always ends in sheer indecency. Those Priests have forgotten what woman was made for, and therefore they have forgotten that a woman's hair is her glory, for it was given to her for a covering—as says your friend Paul the Hebrew, who, by the bye, had as he became old as he had of society, if he had only lived fifteen hundred years later, and had a chance of working them out."

"How remarkably orthodox you are!" said Lancelot, smiling.

"How do you know that I am not?" You never heard me deny the old creed. But what if an artist ought to be all kinds of things? My business is to represent the beautiful, and then to put it wherever I find it. Yours is to be a philosopher, and find the true."

"But the beautiful must be truly beautiful to be worth anything, and so you, too, must search for the true."

"Yes, truth of form, colour, physiognomy. They are worthy to occupy me a life, for they are eternal—or at least that which they express. And I am to get at the symbolising unseen, to must be through the beauty of the symbolising phenomenon. If I, who live by art for art, in art, or you either, who seem as much a born artist as myself, am to have a religion, it must be a worship of the human of art—of the

"Spirit of beauty, who doth consecrate
With her own line whatever he dares upon."

"As poor Shelley has it, and much peace of mind it gave him," answered Lancelot. "I have grown sick lately of such dreary truse deductions. When you look through the glitter of the words, your "spirit of beauty"

simply means certain shapes and colours which please you in beautiful things and in beautiful people."

"Vile nominalist!" retorted from the ideal and all its glories!" said Claude, laughing.

"I don't care sixpence now for the ideal! I want not beauty, but some beautiful thing—a woman perhaps," and he sighed. "But at least a person a living loving person all lovely itself, and giving loveliness to all things! If I must have an ideal, let it be, for mercy's sake, a realised one!"

Claude opened his sketch book.

"We shall get swamped in these metaphysical ocean, my dear dreamer. But let her come a couple, as an ideal is any in these degenerate days—the two poles of beauty—the *molten* of which would be Venus with us Pagans, or the Virgin Mary with the Catholics. Look at them! Homer the dark—symbols of passionate depth. Argemone the fair type of intellectual light! Oh, that I were a Zeus to unite them instead of having to paint them in two separate pictures, and split perfection in half as everything is split in this practical world!"

"You will have the honour of a sitting this afternoon, I suppose, from both beauties?"

"I hope so, for my own sake. There is no path left to immortality, or for id either, now for us poor artists but ports in painting."

"I envy you your path, who cut heads through such Elysiums," said Lancelot.

"Come here, gentlemen both!" cried Argemone from the bridge.

"I only caught," giggled Lancelot. "You must go at first—my lameness will excuse me, I hope."

The two ladies were accompanied by Brionbridge, a gazelle which he had given Argemone, and a certain miserable cur of Honoria's adopted, who plays an important part in this story, and, therefore, deserves a little notice. Honoria had rescued him from a watery death in the village pond by means of the colonel, who had revenged himself for a purser wet to be utterly corrupting the dogs' morals, and teaching him every week to answer to some fresh scandalous name.

But Lancelot was not to escape. Instead of moving on as he had hoped the party stood looking over the bridge and talking. He took for granted, poor thin-skinned fellow—of him. And for once his suspicions were right, for he overheard Argemone say—

"I wonder how Mr. Smith can be so rude as to sit there in my presence over his stupid perch smoking those horrid cigars too! How selfish those bold sports do make men!"

"Thank you!" said the colonel with a low bow. Lancelot rose.

"It a country girl, now, had spoken in that tone, said he to himself, 'it would have been called at least 'sassy'—but Mammon's elect ones may do anything. Well here I am, limping to my new tyrant's feet, like Goethe's bear to Lili's."

She drew him away, as women only know how, from the rest of the party, who were chatting and laughing with Claude. She had shown off her fancied indifference to Lancelot before them, and now began in a softer voice—

'Why will you be so shy and lonely, Mr Smith?'

'Because I am not fit for your society.'

'Who tells you so? Why will you not become so?'

Lancelot hung down his head
'As long as fish and game are your only society, you will become more and more morose and self-absorbed.'

'Really fish were the last things of which I was thinking when you came. My whole heart was filled with the beauty of nature and nothing else.'

There was an opening for one of Argemone's preconcerted orations.

'Had you no better occupation?' she said gently, 'than nature, the first day of returning to the open air after so frightful and dangerous an accident? Were there no thanks due to One above?'

Lancelot understood her.

'How do you know that I was not even then showing my thankfulness?'

'What? with a cigar and a fishing reel?'

'Certainly. Why not?'

Argemone really could not tell at the moment. The answer upset her scheme entirely.

Might not that very admiration of nature have been an act of worship? continued our hero. 'How can we better glorify the worker than by delighting in his work?'

'Ah!' sighed the lady, 'why trust to these self-willed methods, and neglect the noble and exquisite founts which the Church has prepared for us as embodiments for every feeling of our hearts?'

'Every feeling, Miss Lavington?'

Argemone hesitated. She had made the good old stock assertion, as in duty bound, but she could not help recollecting that there were several Popish books of devotion at that moment on her table, which seemed to her to patch a gap or two in the Prayer book.

'My temple as yet,' said Lancelot, 'is only the heaven and the earth, my church-music I can hear all day long, whenever I have the sense to be silent, and "hear my mother sing", my priests and preachers are every bird and bee, every flower and cloud. Am I not well enough furnished? Do you want to reduce my circular minute chapel to an oblong hundred-foot one? My spheres harmonious to the Gregorian tones in four parts? My world-wide priesthood, with their endless variety of costume, to one not over-educated gentleman in a white sheet? And my dreams of naiads and flower-fairies, and the blue-bells ringing God's praises as they do in "The story without an End," for the gross reality of naughty charity children, with their pockets full of apples, bawling out Hebrew psalms of which they neither feel nor understand a word?'

Argemone tried to look very much shocked at this piece of banter. Lancelot evidently meant it as such, but he eyed her all the while as if there was solemn earnest under the surface.

'Oh, Mr Smith,' she said, 'how can you dare talk so of a liturgy compiled by the wisest and holiest of all countries and ages! You revile that of whose beauty you are not qualified to judge!'

'There must be a beauty in it all, or such as you are would not love it.'

'Oh,' she said hopefully, 'that you would but try the Church system! How you would find it harmonious and mythodise every day, every thought for you! But I cannot explain myself. Why not go to our vicar and open your doubts to him?'

'Pardon, but you must excuse me.'

'Why? He is one of the santhest of men.'

'To tell the truth, I have been to him already.'

'You do not mean it! And what did he tell you?'

'What the rest of the world does—hearsays.'

'But did you not feel him most kind?'

'I went to him to be comforted and guided. He received me as a criminal. He told me that my first duty was penitence, that as long as I lived the life I did, he could not dare to cast his pearls before swine by answering my doubts, that I was in a state incapable of appreciating spiritual truths, and, therefore, he had no right to tell me any.'

'And what did he tell you?'

'Several spiritual lies instead. I thought he told me, hearing me quote Schiller, to be wary of the Germans, for they were all Protestants at heart. I asked him whether he included Lange and Bunsen, and it appeared that he had never read a German book in his life. He then flew furiously at Mr Carlyle, and I found that all he knew of him was from a certain review in the *Quarterly*. He called Boeckner a theosophic Atheist. I should have burst out at that, had I not read the very words in a High Church review the day before, and hoped that he was not aware of the impudent falsehood which he was retailing. Whenever I boldly interposed an objection to anything he said (for, after all, he talked on), he told me to bear the Catholic Church. I asked him which Catholic Church? He said the English. I asked him whether it was to be the Church of the sixth century, or the thirteenth, or the seventeenth, or the eighteenth? He told me the one and eternal Church which belonged as much to the nineteenth century as to the first. I begged to know whether, then, I was to hear the Church according to Sumner, or according to Newman, or according to St. Paul, for they seemed to me a little at variance? He told me, austere enough, that the mind of the Church was embodied in her Liturgy and Articles. To which I answered, that the mind of the episcopal clergy might, perhaps, be, but, then, how happened it that they were always quarrel-

ling and calling hard names about the sense of those very documents? And so I left him, assuring him that, living in the nineteenth century, I wanted to hear the Church of the nineteenth century, and no other, and should be most happy to listen to her, as soon as she had made up her mind what to say.

Argemone was angry and disappointed. She felt she could not cope with Lancelot's quaint logic, which, however unsound, cut deeper into questions than she had yet looked for herself. Somehow, too, she was tongue-tied before him just when she wanted to be most eloquent in behalf of her principles, and that fretted her still more. But his manner puzzled her most of all. First he would go on with his face turned away, as if soliloquising out into the air, and then suddenly look round at her with most humiliating humility, and then, in a moment, check as he would pass over his countenance, and he would look like one possessed, and his lips wreathed in a sinister artificial smile, and his wild eyes glare through and through her with such cunning understanding of himself and her that, for the first time in her life, she quailed and felt frightened, as if in the power of a madman. She turned hastily away to shake off the spell.

He sprang after her, almost on his knees, and looked up into her beautiful face with unuttering cry.

'What, do you, too, throw me off? Will you, too, treat the poor wild uneducated sportsman as a Pariah and an outcast, because he is not ashamed to be a man? Because he cannot stuff his soul's hunger with oat and dried herbs, but dares to think for himself?—because he wants to believe things, and dare not be satisfied with only believing that he ought to believe them?'

She paused, astonished.

'Ah, yes,' he went on, 'I hoped too much! What right had I to expect that you would understand me? What right, still more, to expect that you would stoop any more than the rest of the world, to speak to me, as if I could become anything better than the wild hog I seem? Oh yes! the chrysalis has no butterfly in it, of course! Stamp on the ugly motionless thing! And yet you look so beautiful and good!—are all my dreams to perish, about the Alrunen and prophet maidens, how they charmed our old fighting, hunting forefathers into purity and sweet obedience among their Saxon forests? This woman forgotten her mission—to look at the heart and have mercy, while cold man looks at the act and condemns? Do you, too, like the rest of mankind, think no belief better than disbelief, and smile on hypocrisy, lip-assent, practical Atheism, sooner than on the unpardonable sin of making a mistake? Will you, like the rest of this wise world, let a man's spirit rot asleep into the pit, if he will only be quiet and not disturb your smooth respectabilities, but if he dares, in waking, to yawn in an unorthodox manner,

knock him on the head at once, and "break the bruised reed," and "quench the smoking flax"? And yet you churchgoers have "renounced the world".'

'What do you want, in Heaven's name?' asked Argemone, half terrified.

'I want you to tell me that. Here I am, with youth, health, strength, money, every blessing of life but one, and I am utterly miserable. I want some one to tell me what I want.'

'Is it not that you want religion?'

'I see hundreds who have what you call religion, with whom I should scorn to change my religion.'

'But, Mr South, are you not—are you not wicked? They tell me so,' said Argemone, with an effort. 'And is that not the cause of your disease?'

Lancelot laughed.

'No, fairest prophetess, it is the disease itself. "Why am I what I am, when I know more and more daily what I could be?" That is the mystery, and my sins are the fruit, not the root of it. Who will explain that?'

Argemone began,—

'The Church—'

'Oh, Miss Lavington,' cried he impatiently, 'will you, too, send me back to that cold abstraction? I came to you, however presumptuous, for living, human advice to a living, human heart, and will you pass off on me that Proteus dream the Church, which in every man's mouth has a different meaning? In one book meaning a method of doctrine only it has never been carried out, in another a system of polity, only it has never been realised,—now a set of words written in books on whose meaning all are divided, now a body of men who are daily excommunicating each other as heretics and apostates, now a universal idea, now the narrowest and most exclusive of all parties. Really, before you ask me to join the Church, I have a right to ask you to define what the Church is.'

'Our Articles define it,' said Argemone drily.

'The "Visible Church" at least it defines as "a company of faithful men in which etc." But how does it define the "Invisible" one? And what does "faithful" mean? What if I thought Cromwell and Pierre Leroux infinitely more faithful men in their way and better members of the "Invisible Church," than the tortoise pedants and the facing both ways Protestant-Manichees Taylor?'

It was lucky for the life of young Love that the discussion went no further. Argemone was becoming unrealised beyond all measure. But happily the colonel interposed,—

'Look here, tell me if you know for whom this sketch is meant?'

'Trigava, the keeper—who can doubt?' answered they both at once.

'Has not Mellot succeeded perfectly?'

'Yes,' said Lancelot. 'But what wonder, with such a noble subject? What a grand

benevolence is enthroned on that lofty forehead!

'Oh, you would say so, indeed,' interposed Honoria, 'if you knew him! The stories that I could tell you about him! How he would go into cottages, read to sick people by the hour, dress the children, cook the food for them, as tenderly as any woman! I found out, last winter, if you will believe it, that he lived on bread and water, to give out of his own wages—which are barely twelve shillings a week—five shillings a week for more than two months to a poor labouring man, to prevent his going to the workhouse and being parted from his wife and children.'

'Noble, indeed!' said Lancelot. 'I do not wonder now at the effect his conversation just now had on me.'

'Has he been talking to you?' said Honoria eagerly. 'He seldom speaks to any one.'

'He has to me, and so well, that were I sure that the poor were as ill off as he says, and that I had the power of altering the system a hair, I could find it in my heart to excuse all political grievance-mongers and turn one myself.'

Claudio Mellot clapped his white woman his hand.

'Bravo! bravo! O wonderful conversion! Lancelot has it! He has discovered that, besides the "glorious Past," there is a Present worthy of his sublime notice! We may now hope in time that he will discover the existence of a Future!'

'But, Mr Mellot,' said Honoria, 'why have you been so unfaithful to your original? why have you, like all artists, been trying to soften and refine on your model?'

'Because, my dear lady, we are bound to see everything in its ideal—not as it is, but as it ought to be, and will be, when the vices of this pitiful civilised world are exploded and sanitary reform, and a variety of occupation, and human education, let each man fulfil in body and soul the ideal which God embodied in him.'

'Fourierist!' cried Lancelot, laughing. 'But surely you never saw a face which had lost by wear less of the divine image! How thoroughly it exemplifies your great law of Protestant art, that "the Ideal is best manifested in the Penitential." How classic, how independent of clime or race, is its bland, magnetic self-possession! how thoroughly Norse its massive squareness!'

'And yet, as a Courtier, he should be no Norseman.'

'I beg your pardon! Like all noble races, the Jewish owe their nobleness to the impurity of their blood—to its perpetual leanness from foreign veins. See how the serpentine Grevé of his nose, his long nostril, and protruding, sharp-cut lips, mark his share of Phœnician or Jewish blood! how Norse, again, that dome-shaped forehead! how Celtic those dark curls, that restless gray eye, with its "swunden blickn," like Von Troneg Hagen's in the *Niebelungen Lied*!'

He turned. Honoria was devouring his words. He saw it, for he was in love, and young love makes man's senses as keen as woman's.

'Look! look at him now!' said Claude, in a low voice. 'How he sits, with his hands on his knees, the enormous size of his limbs quite concealed by the rareless grace, with his Egyptian face, like some dimly granite Memnon!'

'Only waiting,' said Lancelot, 'for the day star to arise on him and awake him into voice.'

He looked at Honoria as he spoke. She blushed angrily, and yet a sort of sympathy arose from that moment between Lancelot and herself.

On her forehead he had put one too far, and tried to turn the subject off.

The smooth mill head was alive with rising front.

'What a huge fish he got then!' said Lancelot carelessly, 'and, lose it to the bridge, too!'

Honoria looked round and uttered a piercing scream.

'Oh, my dog! my dog! Mops is in the river! That horrid gizzard has bitten him in, and he is be drowned!'

Alas! it was too true. There, a yard above the one open hatchway, through which the whole force of the stream was rushing, was the unhappy Mops, *alias* Scratch, *alias* Duty Dick, *alias* Luck Sheppard, paddling and squeezing and winking his little bald muzzle pitiably upward to the sky.

'He will be drowned!' smothered the colonel.

There was no doubt of it, and so Mops thought, as, shivering and whimpering, he phled every leg, while the glassy current dragged him back and back, and Honoria sobbed like a child.

The colonel lay down on the bridge, and, caught at him, his arm was a foot too short. In a moment the huge boom of Treguva plunged solemnly into the water, with a splash like seven salmons, and Mops was jerked out over the colonel's head high and dry on the bridge.

'You'll be drowned, at least!' shouted the colonel, with an oath of Uncle Toby's own.

Treguva saw his danger, made one desperate bound upward, and missed the bridge. The colonel caught at him, tore off a piece of his collar, the calm, solemn face of the keeper flushed past beneath him and disappeared through the roaring gate.

They rushed to the other side of the bridge, caught one glimpse of a dark body fleeing and roaring down the foam-way. The colonel leapt the bridge rail like a deer, rushed out along the back-stage, tore off his coat, and sprang head long into the boiling pool, 'rejoicing in his night,' as old Homer would say.

Lancelot, forgetting his criticisms, was dashing after him when he felt a soft hand clutching at his arm.

'Lancelot! Mr Smith!' cried Argemone, 'You shall not go! You are too ill—weak—'

'A fellow-creature's life!'

'What is his life to yours?' she cried, in a tone of deep passion. And then imperiously, 'Stay here, I command you!'

The magnetic touch of her hand thrilled through his whole frame. She had called him 'Lancelot'. He shrank down and stood spell-bound.

'Good heavens!' she cried, 'look at my sister!'

Out on the extremity of the back-stage (how she got there neither they nor she ever knew) crouched Honoria, her face white with terror, while she stared with bursting eyes into the room. A shock of disappointment rose from her lips, as in agreement the colonel's woe-begone head appeared above, looking for all the world like a noble, & shiny painted seal.

'Foot! tally ho! Foot! foot! Honoria's a piece of wood, Lancelot, my boy!' And he disappeared again.

They looked round, but was not it to be seen? Claude ran off towards the house. Lancelot, desperate, seized the bridge rail, tore it off by sheer strength, and hucked it far into the pool. Argemone saw it, and remembered it like a true woman. 'Ay, be as much more sentimental as you will, for ladies' physical prowess, that Eden right of manhood, is sure to fall upon your heels!'

Again the colonel's grizzled head appeared, and, oh joy! beneath it a druggled knot of black curls. In another instant he had huddled of the rail, and quietly floating down to the shallow dragged the blessed giant high and dry on a patch of gravel.

Honoria never spoke. She too walked quickly back along the beam, passed Argemone and Lancelot without seeing them, and hurriedly led the way round the pool side.

Before they arrived at the bank the colonel had turned Tregurva to it. Lancelot and two or three workmen, whom his cries had attracted, lifted the body on to the meadow.

Honoria knelt quietly down on the grass, and watched, silent, motionless, the dead face with her wide, awe-struck eyes.

'God bless her for a kind soul!' whispered the win-wealer-beaten field drudges, as they coughed round the body.

'Get out of the way, my men!' quoth the colonel. 'Too many cooks spoil the broth.' And he packed off one here and another there for a series, and commenced trying every restorative means with the cool coolness of a practised surgeon, while Lancelot, whom he ordered about like a baby, gulped down a great choking lump of envy, and then tasted the rich delight of forgetting himself in admiring obedience to a real superior.

But there Tregurva lay hithers, with folded hands and a quiet satiated smile, while Honoria watched and watched with parted lips, unconscious of the presence of every one.

'Five minutes! ten!'

'Carry him to the house,' said the colonel in a despairing tone, after another attempt.

'He moves!' 'No!' 'He does!' 'He breathes!' 'Look at his eyelids!'

Slowly his eyes opened.

'Where am I? All gone? Sweet dreams! blessed dreams!'

His eye met Honoria's. One big deep sigh swelled to his lips and burst. She seemed to recollect herself, rose, passed her arm through Argemone's, and walked slowly away.

CHAPTER IV

'AN 'INGLORIOUS MILTON'

ARGEMONE, sweet pride, thought herself bound to read Honoria a lecture that night on her reckless exhibition of feeling, but it passed off little. The most consummate cunning could not have baffled Argemone's suspicious more completely than her sister's utter simplicity. She cried just as bitterly about Moses's danger as about the keepers, and then laughed heartily at Argemone's solemnity. Till at last, when pushed a little too hard, she broke out into nothing very like a passion, and told her sister, bitterly enough that 'she was not accustomed to be drowned every day, and begged to hear no more about the subject. Whereat Argemone punctually held her tongue, knowing that under all Honoria's tenderness lay a volcano of passionate determination, which was generally kept down by her affect, off, but was just as likely to be kindled by them.

And 'his conversation only went to increase the unbecoming estimation between them, though they continued, as sisters will do to lavish upon each other the most extravagant protestations of affection—vowing to live and die only for each other, and to being honestly, sweet souls, that they felt all they said. All real imperious Love came in in one case of the two at least, shouldering all other affection right and left, and then the two beauties discovered, as others do, that it is not so possible or reasonable as they thought for a woman to sacrifice herself and her lover for the sake of her sister or her friend.

Next morn' Lancelot and the colonel started out to Tregurva's cottage on a mission of inquiry. They found the giant propped up in bed with pillows, his magnificent features looking in their paleness more than ever like a granite Menmon. Before him lay in open *Pilgrim's Progress*, and a drawer filled with feathers and furs which he was busily manufacturing into trout flies, reading as he worked. The room was filled with nets, guns, and keepers' tackle, while a well filled shelf of books hung by the wall.

'Excuse my rising, gentlemen,' he said, in his slow, staid voice, 'but I am very weak, in spite of the Lord's goodness to me. You are very kind to think of coming to my poor cottage.'

'Well, my man,' said the colonel, 'and how are you after your cold bath? You are the heaviest fish I ever landed.'

'Pretty well, thank God, and you, sir. I am in your debt, sir, for the dear life. How shall I ever repay you?'

'Repay, my good fellow? You would have done as much for me.'

'Maybe, but you did not think of that when you jumped in, and no more must I in thanking you. God knows how a poor miner's son will ever reward you, but the mouse repaid the lion, says the story, and, at all events, I can pray for you. By the bye, gentlemen, I hope you have brought up some trolling tackle.'

'We came up to see you, and not to fish,' said Lancelot, charmed with the stately courtesy of the man.

'Many thanks, gentlemen, but old Harry Verney was in here just now, and had seen a great jack strike, at the tail of the lower reeds. With this fresh wind he will run till noon, and you are sure of him with a dace. After that he will not be up again on the shallows till sunset. He works the works of darkness, and comes not to the light, because his deeds are evil.'

Lancelot laughed. 'He does not follow his kind, poor fellow.'

'No doubt, sir, no doubt, all the Lord's works are good, but it is a wonder why He should have made wasps, now, and blights, and vermin, and jack, and such evil-featured things, that carry spite and cruelty in their very faces—a great wonder. Do you think, sir, all those creatures were in the Garden of Eden?'

'You are getting too deep for me,' said Lancelot. 'But why trouble your head about fishing?'

'I beg your pardon for preaching to you, sir. I'm sure I forgot myself. If you will let me, I'll get up and get you a couple of bait from the stew. You'll do us keepers a kindness, and prevent sin, sir, if you'll catch him. The squire will swear mildly—the Lord forgive him—if he hears of a pike in the trout-runs. I'll get up, if I may trouble you to go into the next room a minute.'

'Lie still, for Heaven's sake. Why bother your head about pike now?'

'It is my business, sir, and I am paid for it, and I must do it thoroughly,—and abide in the calling wherein I am called,' he added, in a sadder tone.

'You seem to be fond enough of it, and to know enough about it, at all events,' said the colonel, 'tying flies here on a sick-bed.'

'As for being fond of it, sir—those creatures of the water teach a man many lessons, and when I tie flies I earn books.'

'How then?'

'I send my flies all over the country, sir, to Salisbury and Hungerford, and up to Winchester, even, and the money buys me many a wise book—all my delight is in reading, perhaps so much the worse for me.'

'So much the better, say,' answered Lancelot warily. 'I'll give you an order for a couple of pounds' worth of flies at once.'

'The Lord reward you, sir,' answered the quiant. 'And you shall make me the same quantity,' said the colonel. 'You can make salmon-flies?'

'I made a lot by pattern for an Irish gent, sir.'

'Well then, we'll send you some Norway patterns, and some golden plover and parrot feathers. We're going to Norway this summer, you know, Lancelot—'

Tregarva looked up with a quiant, solemn hesitation.

'If you please, gentlemen, you'll forgive a man's conscience.'

'Well?'

'But I do not like to be a party to the making of Norway flies.'

'Here's a Protectionist, with a vengeance!' laughed the colonel. 'Do you want to keep all us fishermen in England? Or to see English keepers?'

'No, sir. There's pretty fishing in Norway. I hear, and poor folk that want money more than we keepers. God knows we get too much we that hang about great houses and serve great folks' pleasure—you toss the money down our throats without our deserving it, and we spend it as we get it—a deal too fast while hard-working labourers are starving.'

'And yet you would keep us in England?'

'Would God I could!'

'Why then, my good fellow?' asked Lancelot, who was getting intensely interested with the calm, self-possessed earnestness of the man, and longed to draw him out.

The colonel yawned.

'Well, I'll go and get myself a couple of bait. Don't you stir, my good parson-keeper. I have charge, I say. Odd if I don't find a bait net, and a rod for myself, under the verandah.'

'You will, colonel. I remember, now, I sat it there last morning, but the water washed many things out of my brains, and some things into them—and I forgot it like a goose.'

'Well, good bye, and he still. I know what a drowning is, and more than one. A day and a night have I been in the deep, like the man in the good book, and bed is the best of medicine for a ducking,' and the colonel shook him kindly by the hand and disappeared.

Lancelot sat down by the keeper's bed.

'You'll get those fish-hooks into your trousers, sir, and this is a poor place to sit down in.'

'I want you to say your say out, friend, fish hooks or none.'

The keeper looked warily at the door, and when the colonel had passed the window, balancing the trolling-rod on his chin, and whistling merrily, he began,—

'A day and a night have I been in the deep!—and brought back no more from it! And yet the Psalm says how they that go down to the sea in ships see the works of the Lord!—'

If the Lord has opened their eyes to see them, that must mean—'

Lancelot waited

'What a gallant gentleman that is, and a valiant man of war, I'll warrant,—and to have seen all the wonders he has, and yet to be wasting his span of life like that!'

Lancelot's heart smote him

'One would think, sir,— You'll pardon me for speaking out.' And the noble face worked, as he murmured to himself, 'When ye are brought before kings and princes for my name's sake I dare not hold my tongue, sir. I am as one risen from the dead,'—and his face flushed up into sudden enthusiasm 'and woe to me if I speak not! Oh, why, why are you gentlemen running off to Norway and foreign parts, whither God has not called you? Are there no graves in Egypt, that you must go out to die in the wilderness?'

Lancelot, quite unaccustomed to the language of the Dissenting poor, felt keenly the bad taste of the allusion.

'What can you mean?' he asked

'Pardon me, sir, if I cannot speak plainly, but are there not temptations enough here in England, that you must go to waste all your gifts, your scholarship, and your rank, far away there out of the sound of a church-going bell? I don't deny it's a great temptation. I have read of Norway wonders in a book of my Miss Muttman, with a strange name.'

'Facts on the Fjord?'

'That's it, sir. Her books are grand books to set one a thinking, but she don't seem to see the Lord in all things, does she, sir?'

Lancelot parried the question

'You are wandering a little from the point.'

'So I am, and thank you for the rebuke. There's where I had you scholars have the advantage of us poor fellows, who pick up knowledge as we can. Your book-learning makes you stick to the point so much better. You are taught how to think. After all—God forgive me if I'm wrong!—but I sometimes think that there must be more good in that human wisdom, and philosophy halsely so called, than we Wesleyans hold. Oh, sir, what a blessing is a good education! What you gentlemen might do with it, if you did but see your own power! Are there no fish in England, sir, to be caught? precious fish, with immortal souls? And is there not One who has said, "Come with me, and I will make you fishers of men"?'

'Would you have us all turn parsons?'

'Is no one to do God's work except the parson, sir? Oh, the game that you rich folks have in your hands, if you would but play it! Such a man as Colonel Brucebridge now, with the tongue of the serpent, who can charm any living soul he likes to his will, as a stout charms a rabbit. Oh you, sir, with your tongue— you have charmed one precious creature already. I can see it, though neither of you know it, yet I know it.'

Lancelot started and blushed crimson

'Oh, that I had your tongue, sir!' And the keeper blushed crimson too, and went on hastily,—

'But why could you not charm all dike? Do not the poor want you as well as the rich?'

'What can I do for the poor, my good fellow? And what do they want? Have they not houses, work, a church, and schools,—and poor rates to fall back on?'

'The keeper smiled sadly

'To fall back on, indeed! and down on, too. At all events, you rich might help to make Christians of them and men of them. For I'm beginning to fancy strangely, in spite of all the preachers say, that, before ever you can make them Christians, you must make them men and women.'

'Are they not so already?'

'Oh, sir, go and see! How can a man be a man in those crowded styes, sleeping packed together like Irish pigs in a steamer, never out of the fear of want, never knowing any higher amusement than the beer-shop? Those old terecks and Rowans as I read, were more like men than half our English labourers. Go and see! Ask that sweet heavenly angel, Miss Honours,' and the keeper again blushed,—and she, too, will tell you. I think, sometimes if she had been born and bred like her father's tenants' daughters, to sleep where they sleep, and hear the talk they hear, and see the things they see, what would she have been now? We mustn't think of it! And the keeper turned his head away and fairly burst into tears.

Lancelot was moved

'Are the poor very wonderful, then?'

You ask the rector, sir, how many children hereabouts are born within six months of the wedding day. None of them marry, sir, till the devil forces them. There's no sadder sight than a labourer's wedding nowadays. You must see the parents come with them. They just get another couple that are keeping company like themselves, and come sneaking into church, looking all over as if they were ashamed of it, and well they may be!'

'Is it possible?'

'I say, sir, that God makes you gentlemen, gentlemen, that you may see into these things. You give away your charities kindly enough, but you don't know the folks you give to. A few of you would but be like the blessed Lord, and stoop to go out of the road, just behind the hedge, for once, among the publicans and harlots. Were you ever at a country fair, sir? Though I suppose I am rude for fancying that you could demean yourself to such company.'

'I should not think it demeaning myself,' said Lancelot, smiling 'but I never was at one, and I should like for once to see the real manners of the poor.'

'I'm no haunter of such places myself, God knows, but— I see you're in earnest now— will you come with me, sir,—for once? for God's sake and the poor's sake?'

'I shall be delighted.'

'Not after you've been there, I am afraid.'

'Well, it's a bargain when you are recovered. And, in the meantime, the square's orders are, that you lie by for a few days to rest, and Miss Homera's, too, and she has sent you down some wine.'

'She thought of me, did she?' And the still sad face blazed out radiant with pleasure, and then collapsed suddenly into deep melancholy.

Lancelot saw it, but said nothing, and shook him heartily by the hand, but his shake returned by an iron grasp, and slipped silently out of the cottage.

The keeper lay still, gazing on vacancy. Once he murmured to himself:

'Through strange ways—strange ways—and though he let them wander out of the road in the wilderness, we know how that goes on—'

And then he fell into a mixed modulation perhaps into a prayer.

CHAPTER V

A SHAM IS WORSE THAN NOTHING.

At last, after Lancelot had waited long in vain, came his cousin's answer to the letter which I gave in my second chapter.

'You are not late to me, good cousin . . . but I have given up expecting fairness from Protestants. I do not say that the heart and the back of my head have different makers, any more than that doves and vipers have; and yet I kill the viper when I meet him, and so do you. And yet, are we not taught that our animal nature is throughout equally viperous? The Catholic Church, at least, so teaches. She believes in the corruption of human nature. She believes in the literal meaning of Scripture. She has no wish to paraphrase away St. Paul's awful words, that "in his flesh dwelleth no good thing," by the unscientific euphemisms of "fallen nature" or "corrupt humanity." The boasted discovery of phreologists that thought, feeling, and passion reside in this material brain and nerve of ours, has ages ago been anticipated by her simple faith in the letter of Scripture; a faith which puts to shame the irreverent vagueness and fantastic private interpretations of those who make an idol of that very letter which they dare not take literally, because it makes against their self-willed theories. . . . And so you call me *dour* and meek?'

You should remember what I once was, Lancelot. I, at least, have not forgotten. . . . I have not forgotten how that very animal nature, on the possession of which you seem to pride yourself was in me only the parent of remorse. I know it too well not to hate and fear it. Why do you reproach me, if I try

to slough it, and cast away the burden which I am too weak to bear? I am weak. Would you have me say that I am strong? Would you have me try to be a Prometheus, while I am longing to be once more an infant on a mother's breast? Let me alone. I am a weary child, who knows nothing, can do nothing, except lose its way in arguments and reasonings, and "find no end, in wandering mazes lost." Will you reproach me, because when I see a soft cradle lying open for me with a Virgin Mother's face smiling down all woman's love about it. . . . I long to crawl into it and sleep awhile? I want loving, indulgent sympathy.

I want detailed, explicit guidance.

Have you, then, found so much of them in our former creed that you look to me to go to seek them elsewhere, in the Church which not only professes them as an organised system, but justifies them—as you would find in your best heart's talk with one of her purest true parents—who know the heart of man, and pity and console, and bear for them the burden which they cannot bear themselves? You ask me who will teach a lost young man? I answer, the least. A, start and snort, at that delicate woman like tenderness, that subtle instinctive sympathy, which you have never felt—which was new to me, alas, as it would be to you. For if there be none nowadays to teach, such as you, who is there who will teach such as me? Do not fancy that I have not craved and searched for teachers. . . . I went to one party long ago and they commanded me, as the price of their sympathy, even of nothing but their denunciations, to ignore, if not to abjure, all the very points on which I came for light—my love for the Beautiful and the Symbolic—my desire to consecrate and Christianise it—my longing for a human voice to tell me with authority that I was forgiven—my desire to find some practical and palpable communion between myself and the saints of old. They told me to cast away, as an accursed of hoars, a thousand years of Christian history, and believe that the devil had been for ages—just the ages I thought noblest, most faithful, most intently penetrated with the thought of God triumphant over that church with which He had promised to be till the end of the world. No—by the bye, they made two exceptions of their own choosing. One, in favour of the Albigenses, who seemed to me, from the original documents, to have been very prodigal of Inebels, of whom the world was well rid. . . . and the Pechmanese, . . . poor, simple, ill-used folk enough, but who certainly cannot be said to have exercised much influence on the destinies of mankind—and all the rest was chaos and the pit. There never had been, never would be, a kingdom of God on earth, but only a few scattered individuals, each solitarily intent on the salvation of his own soul—without organisation, without unity, without common purpose, without even a

masonic sign whereby to know one another when they chanced to meet . . . except Shibboleths which the hypocrite could ape, and virtues which the heathen have performed . . . Would you have had me accept such a "Philosophy of History"?

'And then I went to another school . . . or rather wandered up and down between those whom I have just described, and those who boast on their side prescriptive right and apostolic succession . . . and I found that then ancient charter went back—just three hundred years—and there derived its transmitted virtue, it seemed to me, by something very like obtaining goods on false pretences, from the very church which it now anathematises. Discouraged but not hopeless, I asked how it was that the priesthood, whose hand is bestowed the grace of ordination, could not withdraw it . . . whether, at least, the schismatic did not forfeit it by the very act of schism . . . and instead of any real answer to that painful spiritual dilemma, they set me down to tobacco of Nag's head connoisseurs . . . and myths of an independent British Church, now represented, strangely enough, by those Saxons who, after its wicked refusal to communicate with them, exterminated it with fire and sword, and derived its own order from St. Gregory . . . and doisons of mythical old councils held by bishops of a different faith and practice from their own, from which I was to pick the one point which made for them, and omit the nine which made against them, which I was to believe, by a stretch of imagination . . . or common honesty . . .

which I leave you to conceive, that the Church of Syria in the fourth century was in doctrine, practice, and constitution, like that of England in the nineteenth . . . And what was I to gain by all this? . . . For the sake of what was I to strain logic and conscience? To believe myself a member of the same body with all the Christian nations of the earth—to be able to hail the Frenchman, the Italian, the Spaniard, as a brother, to have hope even of the German and the Swede . . . if not on this life, still in the life to come? No . . . to be able still to sit apart from all Christendom in the exclusive parable of insular Phariseism, to claim for the modern littleness of England the infallibility which I denied to the primeval mother of Christendom, not to enlarge my communion to the Catholic, but excommunicate, to all practical purposes, over and above the Catholics, all other Protestants except my own sect . . . or rather, in practice, except my own party in my own sect . . . And thus was believing in one Catholic and Apostolic church!

Thus was to be my share of the communion of saints! And thus were the theories which were to satisfy a soul which longed for a kingdom of God on earth, which felt that unless the highest of His promises are a mythic dream, there must be some system on the earth commissioned to fulfil those promises, some authority divinely appointed to regenerate,

and rule, and guide the lives of men and the destinies of nations, who must govern, unless he finds that history is not a dreary aimless procession of lost spirits descending into the pit, or that the salvation of millions does not depend on an obscure and controverted hair's breadth of ecclesiastic law.

'I have tried them both, Lancelot, and found them wanting, and now but one road remains. Home, to the mountain head, to the mother of all the churches, whose fanciful cruelty to her children ran no more destroy her motherhood than their contest rebellion can . . . Shall I not hear her voice, when she, and she alone, cries to me, "I have authority and commission from the king of kings to regenerate the world. History is a chaos, only because mankind has been ever rebelling against me, its lawful ruler . . . and yet not rebels . . . for I still stand, and grow rooted on the rock of ages . . . and under my boughs are fowl of every wing." I alone have been and am consistent, progressive, expansive, welcoming every race, and intellect, and character into its proper place in my great organism . . . meeting alike the wants of the king and the beggar, the artist and the devotee . . . there is no room for all within my heaven-wide bosom. Infallibility is not the exclusive heritage of one proud and ignorant Island, but of a system which knows no distinction of language, race, or time. The communion of saints is not a bygone tale for my saints coloured from every age and every nation under heaven, still live, and give and help, and intercede. The union of heaven and earth is not a butane myth, for I have still my miracles, my Host, my eucharist, my absolutism. The present rule of God is still as ever, a living reality, for I rule in His name, and fulfil all His will.'

How can I turn away from such a voice? What if some of her doctrines may strike my untrained and ignorant understanding? . . . If she is the appointed teacher, she will know best what truths to teach . . . The discipline is not above his master . . . or wise in requiring him to demonstrate the abstract problems . . . spiritual problems too . . . before he allows brought to teach the elements. Humbly I must enter the temple porch, graciously and trustfully proceed with my instruction . . . When that is past, and not before . . . Shall I be a judge of the mysteries of the inner shrine?

'Those . . . I have written a long letter . . . with my own doubts clouded . . . I think over it well before you describe it . . . And if you can refute it for me, and sweep the whole away like a wild dream when one awakes, none will be more thankful—provided it is in my service than your unhappy Cousin.'

And Lancelot did consider that letter, and answered it as follows.

'It is a relief to me at least, dear Luke, that you are going to Rome in search of a great idea and not merely from selfish superstitious terror (as I should call it) about the "salvation of your

soul." And it is a new and very important thought to me, that Rome's schema of this world, rather than of the next, forms her chief allurements. But as for that flesh and spirit question, or the apostolic succession one either, all you seem to me, as a looker on, to have logically proved is that Protestants, orthodox and unorthodox, must be a little more scientific and careful in their use of the terms. But as for adopting your use of them, and the consequences thereof—you must pardon me, and, I suspect, them too. Not that. Anything but that. Whatever is right, that is wrong. Better to be inconsistent in truth than consistent in a mistake. And your Romish idea of man is a mistake—utterly wrong and absurd except in the one requirement of righteousness and godliness, which Protestants and heathen philosophers have required and do require just as much as you. My dear Laike, your ideal men and women won't do—for they are not men and women at all, but what you call "saints." Your Calendar your historic list of the Earth's worthies, won't do—not they, but others, are the people who have brought Humanity thus far. I don't deny that there are great souls among them, Becket, and Hugh Gristies, and Elizabeth of Hungary. But you are the last people to praise them, for you don't understand them. Their honours Thomas à Becket more than all Canonisations and worshippers do, because he does see where the man's true greatness lay, and you don't. Why, you may hunt all Saints for such a biography of a mediæval worthy as Carlyle has given of your Abbot Samson. I have read, or tried to read, your Saints, and Allan Butler, and so forth—and they seemed to me bats and bees.—One really pities the poor saints and martyrs for having such blind biographers—such dung-hill cocks, who overlooked the pearl of human love and nobleness in them, in their greediness to stick up and parade the rotten chaff of superstition, and self-torture, and spiritual dyspepsia, which had overclouded it. My dear fellow, that Calendar runs your case: you are "sacred aristocrats"—kings and queens, bishops and virgins by the hundred at one end, a beggar or two at the other, and but one real human lay St. Hieronimus to fill up the great gulch between. A pretty list to allure the English middle classes of the Lancashire working town!—Almost as charmingly suited to England as the present free, industrious, enlightened, and moral state of that Eternal City, which has been blessed with the visible presence and peculiar rule, temporal as well as spiritual, too, of your Duke Lama. His pulls do not seem to have had much practical effect there. . . . My good Laike, till he can show us a little better specimen of the kingdom of Heaven organised and realised on earth, in the country which does belong to him, soil and people, body and soul, we must decline his assistance in realising that kingdom in countries which don't belong to him. If the state of Rome don't show his idea of man and society to be a rotten lie, what proof would you

have? . . . perhaps the charming results of a century of Jesuitocracy, as they were represented on the French stage in the year 1793? I can't answer his arguments, you see, or yours either, I am an Englishman, and not a controversialist. The only answer I give is John Bull's old dumb instinctive "Everlasting No!" which he will stand by, if need be, with sharp shot and cold steel.—Not that, anything but that. No kingdom of Heaven at all for us, if the kingdom of Heaven is like that. No heroes at all for us, if their heroism is to consist in their being not men. Better no society at all, but only a competitive wild beast's den, than a sham society. Better no faith, no hope, no love, no God, than shams thereof. I take my stand on fact and nature, you may call them idols and phantoms, I say they need be so no longer to any man, since Bacon has taught us to discover the Eternal Laws under the outward phenomena. Here on blank materialism will I stand, and testily against all Religions and Gods whatsoever, if they must needs be like that Roman religion, that Roman God. I don't believe they need—not I. But if they need, they must go. We cannot have a "Deus quidam deceptor." If there be a God, these trees and stones, these beasts and birds must be His will, whatever else is not. My body, and brain, and faculties, and appetites must be His will, whatever else is not. Whatever I can do with them in accordance with the constitution of them and nature must be His will, whatever else is not. Those laws of nature must reveal Him, and be revealed by Him, never else is not. Man's scientific comprehension of nature must be one phase of His kingdom on earth, whatever else is not. I don't deny that there are spiritual laws which man is meant to obey. How can I, who feel in my own daily and no explicable unhappiness the fruits of having broken them? But I do say, that these spiritual laws must be in perfect harmony with every such physical law which we discover—that they cannot be intended to compete self-destructively with each other, that the spiritual cannot be intended to be perfected by ignoring or crushing the physical, unless God is a deceiver, and His universe a well contrived trap. And by this test alone will I try all theories, and dogmas, and spiritualities whatsoever. Are they in accordance with the laws of nature? And therefore when your party conjure succumbing Romish Sanctity and English Civilisation, I say, "Take you the Sanctity and give me the Civilisation!" The one may be a dream, for it is unnatural, the other cannot be, for it is natural, and not an evil in it at which you sneer but is discovered, day by day, to be owing to some infringement of the laws of nature. When we "draw hills on nature," as Carlyle says, "she honours them," our ships do sail; our mills do work, our doctors do cure, our soldiers do fight. And she does not honour yours, for you Jesuits have, by their own confession, to lie, to swindle, to get even man to accept them for them. So give me the political

economist, the sanitary reformer, the engineer; and take your saints and virgins, robes and miracles. The spinning-jenny and the railroad, Carnard's liners and the electric telegraph, are to me, if not to you, signs that we are, on some points at least, in harmony with the universe, that there is a mighty spirit working among us, who cannot be your anathema and destroying Devil, and therefore may be the Ordering and Creating God.

Which of them do you think, reader, had most right on his side?

CHAPTER VI

VOGUE LA GALÈRE

Lancelot was now so far improved in health as to return to his little cottage *oracé*. He gave himself up freely to his new passion. With his comfortable fortune and good connections, the future seemed bright and possible enough as to circumstances. He knew that Argemone felt for him, how much it seemed presumptuous even to speculate, and as yet no golden-visaged meteor had arisen portentous in his amatory zodiac. Much rum had stepped in to snatch, in spite of all his own blocks and herds, at the poor man's own cow lamb, and set him looking at all the world, as many a poor lover has to do in defence of his morsel of enjoyment, now turned into a mere bone of contention and lodestone for all hungry kites and crows.

All that had to be done was to render himself worthy of her, and in doing so to win her. And now he began to feel more painfully the ignorance of society, of practical life, and the outward present. He blamed himself angrily for having, as he now thought, wasted his time on ancient histories and foreign travels, which he neglected the living world and present, which weltered daily round him, every face embodying a living soul. Now he began to feel that those faces did hold living souls. Formerly he had half believed he had tried, but from laziness, to make himself wholly false, that they were all empty masks, phantasies, without interest or significance for him. But somehow, in the light of his new love for Argemone, the whole human race seemed glorified, brought nearer, endeared to him. So it must be. He had spoken of a law wider than he thought in his fancy, that the angels might learn love for all by love for an individual. Do we not all learn love so? Is it not the first touch of the mother's bosom which awakens in the infant's heart that spark of affection which is hereafter to spread itself out towards every human being and to lose none of its devotion for its first object, as it expands itself to innumerable new ones? Is it not by love, too - by looking into loving human eyes, by feeling the care of loving hands - that the infant first learns that there exist other beings beside itself? that every

body which it sees expresses a heart and will like its own? Be sure of it. Be sure that to have found the key to one heart is to have found the key to all, that truly to love is truly to know, and truly to love one is the first step towards truly loving all who bear the same flesh and blood with the beloved. Like children, we must dress up even our miseri future in stage properties borrowed from the tried and palpable present, ere we can look at it without horror. We fear and hate the utterly unknown, and it only. Even pain we hate only when we cannot know it, when we can only feel it, without explaining it, and making it harmonise with our notions of our own desires and destiny. And as for human beings, there surely it stands true, wherever else it may not, that all knowledge is love, and all love knowledge, that even with the meanest we cannot gain a glimpse into their inward trials and struggles, without an increase of sympathy and affection.

Whether he reasoned thus or not, Lancelot found that his new interest in the working classes was strangely quickened by his passion. It seemed the shortest and clearest way toward a practical knowledge of the present. Here, he said to himself, 'in the investigation of existing relations between poor and rich I shall gain more real acquaintance with English society, than by dawdling continually in exclusive drawing rooms.'

The money had not yet presented itself to him as a duty, perhaps so much the better, that it might be the more thoroughly a free-will offering of love. At first it opened a new field of amusement and knowledge. It promised him new studies of human life - and as he lay on his sofa and let his thoughts flow, his eyes darkened as he began to mix themselves with dreams about the regeneration of the Whitford poor, and those again with dream about the history of Whitford, and many a hispanic scene did noble plans pass brightly sketched in his exuberant imagination. For Lancelot, like all born artists, could only think in a concrete form. He never worked out a subject without embodying it in some set oration, dialogue, or dramatic castle in the air.

But the more he dreamt, the more he felt that a material beauty of flesh and blood required a material house, baths, and bowdons, conservatories, and carriages, a size material purse, and fixed material society - law and order, and the established framework of society - aimed an importance in his eyes which they had never had before.

'Well,' he said to himself, 'I am turning quite practical and unid world. Those old Greeks were not so far wrong when they said that what made men citizens patriots, heroes, was the love of wedded wife and child.'

'Wedded wife and child!' - He shrank in from the daring of the delicious thought, as if he had intruded without invitation into a hidden sanctuary, and looked round for a look to drive away the dazzling picture. But even there his

thoughts were haunted by Argemone's face, and

'When his regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness, two eyes,
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
And seemed, with their serene and azure smile,
To beckon him.'

He took up, with a new interest, *Chartism*, which alone of all Mr. Carlyle's works he had hitherto disliked, because his own luxurious day-dreams had always flowed in such sad discord with the terrible warnings of the modern seer, and his dark vistas of starvation, crime, neglect, and discontent.

'Well,' he said to himself, as he closed the book, 'I suppose it is good for us easy-going ones now and then to see the possibility of a change. Gold has grown on my back as feathers do on geese, without my own will or deed, but considering that gold, like feathers, is equally useful to those who have and those who have not, why, it is worth while for the geese to remember that he may possibly one day be plucked. And what remains?' "Lo," as *Moby-Dick* says. But Argemone! . . . And Lancelot felt, for the moment, as conservative as the tutelary genius of all special constables.

As the last thought passed through his brain, Blackledge's little mustang clonched past the window, ridden (without a saddle) by a horseman whom there was no mistaking, for no one but the immaculate colonel, the *chercheur sans peur et sans reproche*, dared to go about the county, "such a figure." A minute afterwards he walked in, in a felt stamboul's hat, a ragged leather coloured coat, and old white 'regulation drills,' shrunk half way up his legs, a pair of embroidered Lulham moccasins, and an enormous uerscham at his button hole.

'Where have you been this last week?'

'Over head and ears in Young England, till I feel to you for a week's common sense. A glass of cider, for mercy's sake, "to take the taste of it out of my mouth," as Bill Sykes has it.'

'Where have you been at yint?'

'With young Lord Vixenbox, among high art and painted glass, spawo lartos, and model smell-traps, inidealities and sanitary reforms, and all other inventions, possible and impossible, for "stretching the old formula to meet the new fact," as your favourite prophet says.'

'Till the old formula cracks under the tension.'

'And cracks its devotees too, I think. Here comes the colonel!'

'But, my dear fellow, you must not laugh at all this. Young England or Peelite, this is all right and noble. What a yet unspoken poetry there is in that very sanitary reform! It is the great fact of the age. We shall have men arise and write epics on it, when they have learnt that "to the pure all things are pure," and that science and usefulness contain a divine element, even in their lowest appliances.'

'Write one yourself, and call it the *Chant wickiand*.

'Why not?'

'Suetella and the Man I sing.

There's a beginning at once. Why don't you rather, with your practical power, turn sanitary reformer the only true soldier—and conquer these real devils and "natural enemies" of Englishmen, carbuncles and sulphuretted hydrogen?'

'*C'est pas mon métier*, my dear fellow. I am miserably behind the age. People are getting so cursedly in earnest nowadays that I shall have to bolt to the backwoods to amuse myself in peace, or else sham drink as the monkeys do, lest folks should find out that I'm rational, and set me to work.'

Lancelot laughed and sighed.

'But how on earth do you contrive to get on so well with men with whom you have not an idea in common?'

'*Servez bien*, O distant Hercules! own daddy to *serve bien*. I am a good listener, and, therefore, the most perfect, because the most silent, of flatterers. When they talk Puginesque, I stick my head on one side attentively, and "think the more," like the July's parcel. I have been all the morning looking over a set of drawings for my lord's new chapel, and every soul in the party finds me a good antiquary, just because I have been troubling to be my own everything that I told me the moment before.'

'I envy you your tact, at all events.'

'Why the deuce should you? You may run in time to something better than that, to what the good book, I suppose, means by "wisdom." Young gamuses like you, who have been given enough to sell your souls to "truth," must not meddle with tact, unless you wish to find it the donkey did when he tried to play leap dog.'

'At all events, I would sooner remain dumb till they run me down and cut me, than give up speaking my mind,' said Lancelot. 'Frod I move, but the devil himself shan't make me know.'

'Quite proper. On twogthousand a year a man can afford to be honest. Kuck out in the night and let it. After all, the world is like a spam. The more you beat it, the better it likes you - if you have decency. Only don't be too hard, for, after all, it has a hundred million pair of skins to your one.'

'Don't fear that I shall run a-muck against society just now. I am too thoroughly out of my own good books. I have been for years laughing at Young England, and yet its little finger is thicker than my whole body, for it is trying to do something, and I, alas, am doing utterly nothing. I should be really glad to take a lesson of these men and then plans for social improvement.'

'You will have a fine opportunity this evening. Don't you dine at Minchamstead?'

'Yes. Do you?'

'Mr. Juggle dines everywhere, except at home. Will you take me over in your trap?'

'Done. But whom shall we meet there?'

'The Lavingtons, and Vieuxbois, and Vaurien, and a parson or two, I suppose. But between Saint Venus and Vieuxbois you may soon learn enough to make you a sailor man, if not a wiser one.'

'Why not a wiser one? Smarter than now I cannot be; or less wise, God knows.'

The colonel looked at Mancelot with one of those kindly thoughtful smiles, which came over him whenever his better child's heart could bubble up through the thick crust of worldliness.

'My young friend, you have been a little too much on the stiffs heretofore. Take care that, now you are off them, you don't lie down and sleep, instead of walking homely on your legs. Have faith in yourself, pick those men's brains, and all men's. You can do it. Say to yourself boldly, as the false prophet in India said to the missionary, "I have fire enough in my stomach to burn up a dozen stucco and tigrée monuments and assimilate their ashes into the bargain, like one of Lancelot's chibags."

'How can I have faith in myself, when I am playing traitor to myself every hour in the day? And yet faith in something I must have in common, perhaps.'

'Never!' said the colonel energetically. 'In anything but woman.' She must be led, not leader. If you love a woman, make her have faith in you. If you love a child, you will run yourself and her as well.'

Lancelot shook his head. 'There was a pun.'

'After all, colonel, I think there must be a meaning in those old words our mothers used to teach us about "having faith in God."

The colonel shrugged his shoulders.

'*Quin sabe!*' said the Spanish girl, when they asked her who was her child's father. But her words lay like a child's back, and it is true to dress for dinner.

So to the dinner party they went.

Lord Minchampstead was one of the few noble men Lancelot had ever met who had accorded to him a thorough feeling of respect. He was always and in all things a strong man. Naturally keen, ready, loneliness-like, daring, he had carved out his own way through life, and opened his oyster—the world—neither with sword nor pen, but with steam and cotton. His father was Mr. Obadiah Newbroom, of the well-known manufacturing firm of Newbroom, Stag, and Playtall. A staunch Dissenter himself, he saw with a slight pang his son Thomas turn Churchman, as soon as the young man had worked his way up to be the real head of the firm. But this was the only sorrow which Thomas Newbroom, now Lord Minchampstead, had ever given his father. 'I stood behind a loom myself, my boy, when I began life, and you must do with great means what I did with little ones. I have made a gentleman of you, you must make a nobleman of yourself. Those were almost the last words of the stern, thirty, old Puritan craftsman, and his son never forgot them. From a mill-owner he grew to coal-

owner, ship-owner, banker, railway director, money-lender to kings and princes, and last of all, as the summit of his own and his compeer's ambition, to landowner. He had half a dozen estates in as many different counties. He had adited horse to house and field to field, and at last bought Minchampstead Park and ten thousand acres, for two-thirds its real value, from that enthusiastic sportsman Lord Pen de Cervelle, whose family had come in with the Conqueror and gone out with George IV. So, at least, they always said, but it was remarkable that their name could never be traced farther back than the dissolution of the monasteries and Calumnious Dryaschists would sometimes insolently father their title on James I and one of his batches of bought peccages. But let the dead bury their dead. There was now a new lord in Minchampstead, and every country Caliban was finding, to his disgust, that he had 'got a new master, and must perform 'be a new man.' Oh! how the squires swore and the farmers chuckled, when the 'Paragon' sold the Minchampstead bounds, and celebrated his 1st of September by exterminating every hare and pheasant on the estate. How the farmers swore and the labourers chuckled when he took all the cottages into his own hands and rebuilt them set up a first-rate industrial school gave every man a pig and a garden, and broke up all the commons 'to turn the lion-market.' Oh! how the labourers swore and the farmers chuckled, when he put up steam engines on all his farms, refused to give away a farthing in alms and enforced the new Poor Law to the very letter. How the country squires swore when he called them 'a pack of delirious jobbers' and announced his intention of employing only London workmen for his improvements. Oh! how they all swore together (behind his back, of course, for his dinners were worth eating) and the very ladies said naughty words when the stern political economist proclaimed at his own table that 'he had bought Minchampstead for purely commercial purposes, as a profitable investment of capital, and he would see that, whatever else it did, it should pay.'

But the new lord heard of all the hard words with a quiet self-possessed smile. He had formed his narrow theory of the universe, and he was methodically and conscientiously carrying it out. True, too often, like poor Keats's merchant brothers—

'Half-ignorant, he lived an easy wheel
Which set sharp racks at work to punch and peel.'

But of the harm which he did he was unconscious, in the good which he did he was consistent and indelible, infinitely superior, with all his defects, to the ignorant, extravagant, do-nothing Squire Lavingtons around him. At heart, however Mammon-blinded, he was kindly and upright. A man of a stately presence, a broad, honest, north-country face, a high square forehead, bland and unwrinkled. I

sketch him here once for all, because I have no part for him after this scene in my *corps de ballet*.

Lord Munchampstead had many reasons for patronising Lancelot. In the first place, he had a true eye for a strong man wherever he met him, in the next place, Lancelot's uncle the banker was a staunch Whig ally of his in the House. 'In the rotten borough times, Mr. Smith,' he once said to Lancelot, 'we could have made a senator of you at once, but, for the sake of humanity, we were forced to relinquish that organ of influence. The Tories had abused it, really, a little too far, and now we can only make a commissioner of you—which, after all, is a more useful post, and a more lucrative one.' But Lancelot had not as yet 'Galloised,' as the Irish schoolmaster used to call it, and cared very little to play a political ninth billie.

The first thing which caught his eyes as he entered the drawing-room before dinner was Argemone listening in absorbed reverence to her favourite vicar, — a stern, jonn, close-shaven, dyspeptic man, with a meek, cold smile, which might have become a cruel one. He watched and watched in vain, hoping to catch her eye, but no—there she stood, and talked and listened—

'Ah,' said Bracebridge, smiling, 'it is in vain, Smith! When did you know a woman leave the Church for one of us poor laymen?'

'Good heavens!' said Lancelot impatiently, 'why will they make such fools of themselves with clergymen?'

'They are quite right. They always like the strong men—the fighters and the workers. In Voltaire's time they all ran after the philosophers. In the middle ages, books tell us, they worshipped the knights errant. They are always, on the winning side, the cunning little beauties. In the war-time, when the soldiers had to play the world's game—the ladies all caught the red-hot fever, now, in these talking and thinking days (and he banged to them for lores) they have the black-coat fever for the same reason. The parsons are the workers nowadays—or rather, all the world expects them to be so. They have the game in their own hands, if they did but know how to play it.'

Lancelot stood still, sulking over many thoughts. The colonel lounged across the room towards Lord Vieuxbois, a quiet, truly high-bred young man, with a sweet open countenance and an ample forehead, whose sure would have vouched for great talents, had not the promise been contradicted by the weakness of the over delicate mouth and chin.

'Who is that with whom you came into the room, Bracebridge?' asked Lord Vieuxbois. 'I am sure I know his face.'

'Lancelot Smith, the man who has taken the shooting-box at Lower Whitford.'

'Oh, I remember him well enough at Cambridge! He was one of a set who tried to look like blackguards, and really succeeded tolerably. They used to eschew gloves, and drink nothing but beer, and smoke disgusting short pipes; and

when we established the Chiverley Club in Trinity, they set up an opposition, and called themselves the Navvies. And they used to make jarratical expeditions down to Lynn in eight oars, to attack bargemen, and fen girls, and shoot ducks, and sleep under turf-stacks, and come home when they had drunk all the public-house taps dry. I remember the man perfectly.'

'Navy or none,' said the colonel, 'he has just the longest head and the noblest heart of any man I ever met. If he does not distinguish himself before he dies, I knew nothing of human nature.'

'Ah yes, I believe he is clever enough!—took a good degree, a better one than I did—but horribly eclectic, full of mesmerism, and German metaphysics, and all that sort of thing. I heard of him one night last spring, on which he had been seen, if you will believe it, going successively into a Swedenborgian chapel, the Garrison's Hall, and one of Elphinstone's magnetic societies. What can you expect after that?'

'A great deal,' said Bracebridge dryly. With such a head as he carries on his shoulders the man might be another Mirabau, if he held the right cards in the right rubber. And he really ought to suit you, for he raves about the middle ages and chivalry, and has edited a book full of idyl ballads.'

'Oh, all the colleges do that sort of thing, and small thanks to them. However, I will speak to him after dinner, and see what there is in him.'

And Lord Vieuxbois turned away, and, alas for Lancelot! sat next to Argemone at dinner. Lancelot, who was cross with everybody for what was nobody's fault, revenged himself all dinner-time by never speaking a word to his next neighbour. Miss Newblom, who was lounging with all her heart to talk sentiment to him about the Exhibition, and when Argemone, in the midst of a brilliant word-skirmish with Lord Vieuxbois, stole a glance at him, he chose to fancy that they were both talking of him, and looked more cross than ever.

After the ladies retired, Lancelot, in his sulky way, made up his mind that the conversation was going to be ineffably stupid, and set to to dream, sip claret, and count the minutes till he found himself in the drawing-room with Argemone. But he soon discovered, as I suppose, we all have, that 'it never rains but it pours,' and that one cannot tell in with a new tact or a new acquaintance but next day twenty fresh things shall spring up as it by magic, throwing unexpected light on one's new phenomenon. Lancelot's head was full of the condition of the poor question, and so! everybody seemed destined to talk about it.

'Well, Lord Vieuxbois,' said the host usually, 'my girls are raving about your new school. They say it is a perfect antiquarian gem.'

'Yes, tolerable, I believe. But Wales has disappointed me a little. That vile undermost naturalism is creeping back even into our painted glass. I could have wished that the

artist's designs for the windows had been a little more Catholic.

'How then?' asked the host, with a puzzled face.

'Oh, he means,' said Bracebridge, 'that the figures' wrists and ankles were not sufficiently decorated, and the patron saint did not look quite like a starved rabbit with its neck wringing. Some of the faces, I am sorry to say, were positively like good-looking men and women.'

'Oh, I understand,' said Lord Minchamstead, 'Bracebridge's tongue is privileged, you know, Lord Vieuxbois, so you must not be angry.'

'I don't see my way into all this,' said Squire Lavington (which was very likely to be true, considering that he never looked for his way). 'I don't see how all these painted windows, and crosses, and chanting, and the deuce and the Pope only know what else, are to make boys any better.'

'We have it on the highest authority,' said Vieuxbois, 'that pictures and music are the books of the unlearned. I do not think that we have any right in the nineteenth century to contest an opinion which the fathers of the Church gave in the fourth.'

'At all events,' said Lancelot, 'it is by pictures and music, by art and song, and symbolic representations, that all nations have been educated in their adolescence'—and as the youth of the individual is exactly analogous to the youth of the collective race, we should employ the same means of instruction with our children which succeeded in the early ages with the whole world.'

Lancelot might as well have held his tongue—nobody understood him but Vieuxbois, and he had been taught to scent German mology in everything, as some folks are taught to scent Jesuitry, especially when it involved inductive law, and not a mere red tape precedent, and, therefore, could not see that Lancelot was arguing for him.

'All very fine, South,' said the squire, 'it is a pity you won't please oil puzzling your head with books, and stick to fox hunting. All our young gentlemen will do is to turn the heads of the poor with your cursed education.' The national oath followed, of course. 'Pictures and chanting! Why, when I was a boy, a good honest labouring man wanted to see nothing better than a halfpenny ballad, with a woodcut at the top, and they worked very well then and wanted for nothing.'

'Oh, we shall give them the halfpenny ballads in time!' said Vieuxbois, smiling.

'You will do a very good deed, then,' said Squire Lavington. 'But I am sorry to say that, as far as I can find from my agents, when the upper classes write cheap publications the lower classes will not read them.'

'Too true,' said Vieuxbois.

'Is not the cause,' asked Lancelot, 'just that the upper classes do write them?'

'The writings of working men, certainly,' said

Lord Minchamstead, 'have an enormous sale among their own class.'

'Just because they express the feelings of that class, of which I am beginning to fear that we know very little. Look again, what a noble literature of people's songs and hymns Germany has. Some of Lord Vieuxbois's friends, I know, are busy translating many of them.'

'As many of them, that is to say,' said Vieuxbois, 'as are compatible with a real Church spirit.'

'Be it so, but who wrote them? Not the German aristocracy for the people but the German people for themselves. There is the secret of their power. Why not educate the people up to such a standard that they should be able to write their own literature?'

'What,' said Mr. Chalklands, of Chalklands, who sat opposite, 'would you have working men turn ballad writers? There would be an end of work then, I think.'

'I have not heard,' said Lancelot, 'that the young women—*ladies*, I ought to say, if the word mean anything—who wash the *Louise O'Hara*, spun less or worse cotton than their neighbours.'

'On the contrary,' said Lord Minchamstead, 'we have the most noble accounts of heroic industry and self-sacrifice in girls whose education, to judge by its fruits, might shame that of most English young ladies.'

Mr. Chalklands expressed certain confused notions that in America factory girls earned green silk parasols, put the legs of jeans into trousers, and were too pious to make a shirt, or to call it a shirt after it was made, he did not quite remember which.

'It is a great pity,' said Lord Minchamstead, 'that our factory girls are not in the same state of civilisation. But it is socially impossible. America is not in abnormal state. In a young country the laws of political economy do not make themselves fully felt. Here, where we have no unlearned world to drain the labour-market we may pity and alleviate the condition of the working classes, but we can do nothing more. All the modern schemes for the anchorage which ignore the laws of competition must end either in pauperisation—or, with a glance at Lord Vieuxbois—in the destruction of property.'

Lancelot said nothing, but thought the more. It did strike him at the moment that the few might possibly be made for the many, and not the many for the few, and that property was made for man, not man for property. But he contented himself with asking—

'You think, then, my lord, that in the present state of society no dead lift can be given to the condition—in plain English, the wages—of working men, without the destruction of property?'

Lord Minchamstead smiled and parried the question.

'There may be other dead lift anchorages, my young friend, besides a dead lift of wages.'

So Lancelot thought also, but Lord Muchamstead would have been a little startled could he have seen Lancelot's notion of a devil-lift. Lord Muchamstead was thinking of cheap bread and sugar. Do you think that I will tell you of what Lancelot was thinking?

But how Vienchoux spurred in to break a last lance. He had been very much disgusted with the turn the conversation was taking, for he considered nothing more heterodox than the notion that the poor were to educate themselves. In his scheme, of course, the clergy and the gentry were to educate the poor, who were to take down thankfully as much as it was thought proper to give them. And all beyond was 'sell will' and 'private judgment,' the fathers of Dresent and Chaptain, Trades Union strikes, and French Revolutions, *et si quis alius*.

'And pray, Mr. Smith, may I ask what hunt you would put to education?'

'The capacities of each man,' said Lancelot. 'If a man living in civilised society has one right which he can demand it is this, that the State which exists by his labour shall enable him to develop, or, at least, not hinder his developing, his whole faculties to their very utmost, however lofty that may be. While a man who might be an author minus a spade-dodge, or a journeyman while he has capacities for a master, while any man able to use his life remains by social circumstances lower than he is willing to place himself, that man has a right to complain of the State's injustice and neglect.'

'Really, I do not see,' said Vienchoux, 'why people should wish to rise in life. They had no such self-willed busy in the good old times. The whole notion is a product of these modern days—'

He would have said more, but he luckily remembered at whose table he was sitting.

'I think honestly,' said Lancelot, whose blood was up, 'that we gentlemen all run into the same fallacy. We take ourselves the fixed and necessary element in society, to which all others are to accommodate themselves. "Given the rights of the few rich, to find the condition of the many poor." It seems to me that other postulate is quite as fair. "Given the rights of the many poor, to find the condition of the few rich."'

Lord Muchamstead laughed.

'If you hit us so hard, Mr. Smith, I must really denounce you as a Communist. Lord Vienchoux, shall we join the ladies?'

In the drawing-room, however, Lancelot, after rejecting overtures of fraternity from several young ladies, set himself steadily again against the wall to sulk and watch Argemone. But this time she smiled in a few minutes his melancholy, moonstruck face, swam up to him, and said something kind and commonplace. She spoke in the simplicity of her heart, but he chose to think she was patronising him—she had not talked commonplaces to the vicar. He tried to say something smart and cutting—stuttered, broke down, blushed, and shrunk

back again to the wall, fancying that every eye in the room was on him, and for one moment a flash of sheer hatred to Argemone swept through him.

Was Argemone patronising him? Of course she was. True, she was but three-and-twenty, and he was of the same age, but, spiritually and socially, the girl develops ten years earlier than the boy. She was flattered and worshipped by gray-headed men, and in her simplicity she thought it a noble self-sacrifice to stoop to notice the poor awkward youth. And yet if he could have seen the pure moonlight of sisterly pity which filled all her heart as she retreated, with something of a blush and something of a sigh, and her heart fluttered and fell, would he have been content? Not he. It was her love he wanted, and not her pity, it was to conquer her and possess her, and inform himself with her image, and her with his own, though as yet he did not know it, though the moment that she turned away he cursed himself for selfish vanity, and impotence and cowardice.

'Who am I to demand her all to myself? Her, the glorious, the saintly, the infallible! Is not a look, a word, infinitely more than I deserve? And yet I pretend to admire ladies of rivalry! Old knightly hearts would have fought and wandered for years to earn a tilium of the favours which have been bestowed on me unasked!—'

Peace! poor Lancelot! His egg is by no means adrift, but the chick is breaking the shell in somewhat a cross-grained fashion.

CHAPTER VII

THE DRIVE HOME, AND WHAT CAME OF IT

Now it was not extraordinary that Squire Lavington had accumulated a couple of bottles of Carbonel's last port, for however abstemious the new Lord himself might be, he fit for the habits and for the vote of an old-fashioned Whig squire. Nor was it extraordinary that he fell fast asleep the moment he got into the carriage, nor, again, that his wife and daughters were not solicitous about waking him, nor, on the other hand, that the coachman and footman, who were, like all the squire's servants, of the good old sort, honest, faithful, boozing, extravagant, happy-go-lucky souls, who had 'been about the place these forty years,' were somewhat owlish and misty on the box. Nor was it extraordinary that there was a heavy storm of lightning, for that happened three times a week in the chalk hills the summer through, nor, again, that under these circumstances the horses, who were of the squire's own breeding, and never thoroughly broke (nothing was done thoroughly at Whitford), went rather wildly home, and that the carriage swung alarmingly down the steep hills, and the thorough brushed the windows rather too often. But it

was extraordinary that Mrs. Lavington had cast off her usual primness, and seemed to night, for the first time in her life, in an exuberant good humour, which she evinced by smothering her usual favourite Honoria, and lavishing caresses on Argemone, whose vagaries she usually regarded with a sort of puzzled terror, like a lun who has hat-led a duckling.

'Honoria, take your feet off my dress, Argemone, my child, I hope you spent a pleasant evening?'

Argemone answered by some tossy concinnous phrase.

A pause—and then Mrs. Lavington recommenced, —

'How very pleasing that poor young Lord Vieuxbois is, after all.'

'I thought you disliked him so much.'

'His opinions, my child, but we must hope for the best. He seems moral and well inclined, and really desirous of doing good in his way, and so successful in the House, too, I hear.'

'To me,' said Argemone, 'he seems to want life, originality, depth, everything that makes a great man. He knows nothing but what he has picked up ready made from books. After all, his opinions are the one redeeming point in him.'

'Ah, my child, when it pleases Heaven to open your eyes, you will see as I do.'

'Poor Mrs. Lavington! Unconscious spokeswoman for the ninety nine hundredths of the human race! What are we all doing from morning to night but setting up our own whims as the measure of all heaven and earth and saving, each in his own dialect, Whig Radical, or Tory, Protestant or Protestant? When it pleases Heaven to open your eyes you will see as I do.'

'It is a great pity,' went on Mrs. Lavington meditatively, 'to see a young man so enlightened and thrown away. With his vast fortune, too—such a means of good! Really we ought to have seen a little more of him. I think Mr. O'Blairways's conversation might be a blessing to him. I think of asking him over to stay a week at Whitford, to meet that sainted young man.'

Now Argemone did not think the Reverend Pious O'Blairways, incumbent of Lower Whitford, at all a sainted young man, but, on the contrary, a very vulgar, slippery Irishman, and she had, somehow, tired of her late favourite, Lord Vieuxbois, so she answered tossily enough, —

'Really, mamma, a week of Lord Vieuxbois will be too much. We shall be bored to death with the Camden Camden Society and ballads for the people.'

'I think, my dear,' said Mrs. Lavington (who had, half unconsciously to herself, more reasons than one for longing the young lord to Whitford), 'I think, my dear, that his conversation, with all its faults, will be a very improving change for your father. I hope he's asleep.'

The squire's nose answered for itself.

'Really, what between Mr. Smith and Colonel Blunderbore, and then very delightful friend, Mr. Mellot, whom I should never have allowed to enter my house if I had suspected his religious views, the place has become a hotbed of false doctrine and heresy. I have been quite frightened when I have heard their conversation at dinner, lest the footmen should turn infidels!'

'Perhaps, mamma,' said Honoria slyly, 'Lord Vieuxbois might convert them to something quite as bad. How shocking if old Giles, the butler, should turn Papist!'

'Honoria, you are very silly. Lord Vieuxbois, at least, can be trusted. He has no liking for low companions. He is above joking with grooms and taking country walks with gamekeepers.'

It was lucky that it was dark, for Honoria and Argemone both blushed crimson.

'Your poor father's mind has been quite unsettled by all their rillydilly. They have kept him so continually amused, that all my efforts to bring him to a sense of his awful state have been more unavailing than ever.'

'Poor Mrs. Lavington!' she had married, at eighteen, a man far her inferior in intellect, and had become as often happens in such cases—a pious and a devotee. The squire, who really admired and respected her, confined his disgust to sly curses at the Methodist (under which name he used to include every species of religious earnestness, from Quakerism to that of Mr. Newman. Mrs. Lavington used it first to dignify those disagreeables by the name of persecution and now she was trying to convert the old man by redness, severity and long certain lectures, utterly unintelligible to their victim because couched in the peculiar conventional phraseology of a certain school. She forgot poor earnest said, that the same form of religion which had captivated a disappointed girl of twenty might not be the most attractive one to a jovial old man of sixty.

Argemone, who a fortnight before would have chimed in with all her mother's lamentations, now felt a little nettled and jealous. She could not bear to hear Lancelot classed with the colonel.

'Indeed,' she said, 'if amusement is level for my father, he is not likely to get much of it during Lord Vieuxbois's stay. But of course, mamma, you will do as you please.'

'Of course I will, my dear,' answered the good lady, in a tragedy queen tone. 'I shall only take the liberty of adding that it is very painful to me to find you adding to the anxiety which your unfortunate opinions gave me by throwing every possible obstacle in the way of my plans for your good.'

Argemone burst into proud tears (she often did so after a conversation with her mother). 'Plans for my good!—And an unworthy suspicion about her mother crossed her mind, and was peremptorily expelled again. What

turn the conversation would have taken next I know not, but at that moment Honoria and her mother uttered a fearful shriek, as then side of the carriage jolted half-way up the bank and stuck still in that pleasant position.

The squire awoke, and the ladies simultaneously clapped their hands to their ears, knowing what was coming. He thrust his head out of the window, and discharged a broadside of at least ten pounds' worth of oaths (Bow Street valuation) at the servants, who were examining the laden wheel, with a side volley or two at Mrs. Lavington for being frightened. He often treated her and Honoria in that style of oratory. At Argemone he had never sworn but once since she left the nursery, and was so frightened at the consequences that he took care never to do it again.

But there they were fast, with a broken wheel, plunging horses, and a drunken coachman. Luckily for them, the colonel and Lancelot were following close behind, and came to their assistance.

The colonel, as usual, solved the problem.

'Your dog-cart will carry him, Smith.'

'It will.'

'Then let the ladies get in, and Mr. Lavington drive them home.'

'What?' said the squire, 'with both my hands red-hot with the gout? You must drive three of us, colonel, and one of us must walk.'

'I will walk,' said Argemone, in her determined way.

Mrs. Lavington began something about propriety, but was stopped with another pound's worth of oaths by the squire, who, however, had tolerably recovered his good humour, and hurried Mrs. Lavington and Honoria laughing into the dog-cart, saying—

'Argemone's safe enough with Smith, the servants will lead the horses behind them. It's only three miles home, and I should like to see any one speak to her twice while Smith's lists are in the way.'

Lancelot thought so too.

'You can trust yourself to me, Miss Lavington.'

'By all means I shall enjoy the walk after —,' and she stopped. In a moment the dog-cart had rattled off, with a parting curse from the squire to the servants, who were unharnessing the horses.

Argemone took Lancelot's arm, the soft touch thrilled through and through him, and Argemone felt, she knew not why, a new sensation run through her frame. She shuddered—not with pain.

'You are cold, Miss Lavington.'

'Oh, not in the least.' Cold! when every vein was boiling so strangely! A soft luxurious melancholy crept over her. She had always had a terror of darkness, but now she felt quite safe in his strength. The thought of her own unprotected girlhood drew her heart closer to him. She remembered with pleasure the stories of his personal prowess which had once

made her think him coarse and brutal. For the first time in her life she knew the delight of dependence—the holy chain of weakness. And as they paced on silently together through the black awful night, while the servants huddled, far out of sight, about the horses, she found out how utterly she trusted to him.

'Listen!' she said. A nightingale was close to them, pouring out his whole soul in song.

'Is it not very late in the year for a nightingale?'

'He is waiting for his mate. She is rearing a life brood, I suppose.'

'What do you think it is which can stir him up to such an ecstasy of joy and transfigure his whole heart into melody?'

'What but love, the mistress of all joy, the evoker of all song?'

'All song?—The angels sing in heaven.'

'So they say—but the angels must love if they sing.'

'They love God!'

'And no one else?'

'Oh yes—but that is universal, spiritual love, not earthly love—a narrow passion for an individual.'

'How do we know that they do not learn to love all by first loving one?'

'Oh, the angelic life is single!'

'Who told you so, Miss Lavington?'

She quoted the stock text, of course—''In heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels.''

'As the tree falls, so it lies.' And God forbid that those who have been true lovers on earth should contract new marriages in the next world. Love is eternal. It may part lovers, but not love. And how do we know that these angels, as they call them, if they be really persons, may not be united in pairs by some marriage bond, infinitely more perfect than any we can dream of on earth?'

'That is a very wild view, Mr. Smith, and not sanctioned by the Church,' said Argemone severely. (Crimson and sanguine it is, how severe ladies are apt to be whenever they talk of the Church.)

'In pagan history, in fact, the early fathers and the middle-age monks did not sanction it, and are not they the very best persons to whom one would go to be taught about marriage? Strange! that people should take their notions of love from the very men who prided themselves on being bound, by their own vows, to know nothing about it!'

'They were very holy men.'

'But still men, as I take it. And do you not see that love is, like all spiritual things, only to be understood by experience—by loving?'

'But is love spiritual?'

'Pardon me, but what a question for one who believes that "God is love"!'

'But the divines tell us that the love of human beings is earthly.'

'How did they know? They had never

tried. Oh, Miss Lavington! cannot you see that in those barbarous and profligate ages of the later empire, it was impossible for men to discern the spiritual beauty of marriage, degraded as it had been by heathen brutality? Do you not see that there must have been a continual tendency in the minds of a celibate clergy to look with contempt, almost with spite, on pleasures which were forbidden to them?

Another pause.

'It must be very delicious,' said Argemone thoughtfully, 'for any one who believes it, to think that marriage can last through eternity. But then, what becomes of entire love to God? How can we part our hearts between Him and His creature?'

'It is a sin, then, to love your sister? or your friend? What a low, material view of love, to think that you can cut it up into so many pieces, like a cake, and give to one person one tit bit, and another to another, as the Popish monks would have you believe! Love is like flame—light as many fresh flames at it as you will, it grows, instead of diminishing, by the dispersion.'

'It is a beautiful imagination.'

'But oh, how miserable and tantalising a thought, Miss Lavington, to those who know that a perfect spirit is not in them, which might be one with theirs through all eternity, like twin stars in one common atmosphere, for ever giving and receiving wisdom and might, beauty and bliss, and yet be barred from their bliss by some invincible adamantine wall, against which they must beat themselves to death, like battering rams against the window-pane, gazing and longing, and unable to guess why they are forbidden to enjoy!'

Why did Argemone withdraw her arm from him? He knew, and he felt that she was entrusted to him. He turned away from the subject.

'I wonder whether they are safe home to this time?'

'I hope my father will not catch cold. How sad, Mr Smith, that he will soon so. I do not like to say it, and yet you must have heard him too often yourself.'

'It is hardly a sin with him now, I think. He has become so habituated to it that he attaches no meaning or notion whatsoever to his own vices. I have heard him do it with a smiling face to the very beggar to whom he was giving half a crown. We must not judge a man of his school by the standard of our own day.'

'Let us hope so,' said Argemone sadly.

There was another pause. At a turn of the hill road the black masses of beech wood opened and showed the Priory lights twinkling right below. Strange that Argemone felt sorry to find herself so near home.

'We shall go to town next week,' said she, 'and then—You are going to Norway this summer, are you not?'

'No. I have learnt that my duty lies nearer home.'

'What are you going to do?'

'I wish this summer, for the first time in my life, to try and do some good—to examine a little into the real condition of English working men.'

'I am afraid, Mr Smith, that I did not teach you that duty.'

'Oh, you have taught me precious things! You have taught me beauty is the sacrament of heaven, and love its gate, that that which is the most lascivious is also the most pure.'

'But I never spoke a word to you on such subjects.'

'There are those, Miss Lavington, to whom a human face can speak truths too deep for books.'

Argemone was silent, but she understood him. Why did she not withdraw her arm a second time?

In a moment more the colonel hailed them from the dog cart, and behind him came the brischka with a relay of servants.

They parted with a long, lingering pressure of the hand, which hampered her young palm all night in dreams. Argemone got into the carriage, Lancelot jumped into the dog cart, took the reins, and relieved his heart by galloping Sandy up the hill, and frightening the retreating coachman down one bank and his led horses up the other.

'*Tout va bien*, Lancelot? I hope you have made good use of your time.'

But Lancelot spoke no word all the way home, and wandered till dawn in the woods round his cottage, kissing the hand which Argemone's palm had pressed.

CHAPTER XIII

WHITHER?

SOME three months slipped away—right thirty months for Lancelot, for the Lavingtons went to Baden Baden for the summer. 'The waters were necessary for their health.' How wonderful it is, by the bye, that those German Brummen are never necessary for poor people's health! and they did not return till the end of August. So Lancelot banded himself up to the eyes in the Condition of the Poor question—that is, in blue books, red books, sanitary reports, mine reports, factory reports, and came to the conclusion, which is now pretty generally entertained, that something was the matter—but what no man knew, or, if they knew thought proper to declare. Hopeless and bewildered, he left the books, and wandered day after day from farm to hamlet, and from field to tramp's tent, in hopes of finding out the secret for himself. What he saw, of course I must not say, for if I did the reviewers would declare, as usual, one and all, that I copied out of the *Morning*

Chronicle, and the fact that these pages, ninety-nine hundredths of them at least, were written two years before the *Morning Chronicle* began its invaluable investigations, would be contemptuously put aside as at once impossible and arrogant. I shall therefore only say that he saw what every one else has seen, at least heard of, and got tired of hearing though alas! they have not got tired of seeing it, and so proceed with my story, only mentioning therein certain particulars which folks seem, to me, somewhat strangely, to have generally overlooked.

But whatever Lancelot saw, or thought he saw, I cannot say that it brought him any nearer to a solution of the question, and he it last ended by a sulky acquiescence in Sam Weller's memorable dictum 'Who it is I can't say, but all I can say is that *somebody* ought to be wopped for this!'

But one day, turning over as hopelessly as he was beginning to turn over everything else, a new work of Mr Carlyle's, he fell on some such words as these—

'The beginning and the end of what is the matter with us in these days is—that we have forgotten God.'

Forgotten God? That was at least a defect of which blue books had taken no note. And it was one which, on the whole—granting, for the sake of argument, any real, living, or practical existence to That Being, might be a radical one—it brought him many hours of thought, that saying, and when they were over, he rose up and went to find Treggyn.

'Yes, he is the man. He is the only man with whom I have ever met, of whom I could be sure that, independent of his own interest, without the allurement of respectability and decency, of habit and custom, he believes in God. And he too is a poor man, he has known the struggles, temptations, sorrows of the poor. I will go to him.'

But as Lancelot rose to find him, there was put into his hand a letter, which kept him at home a while longer—none other, in fact, than the long-expected answer from Luke

'WELL, MY DEAR COUNSEL—You may possibly have some logical ground from which to deny Popery, if you deny all other religions with it, but how those who hold any received form of Christianity whatsoever can fairly side with you against Rome, I cannot see. I am sure I have been sent to Rome by them, not drawn thither by Jesuits. Not merely by their defects and inconsistencies, not merely because they go on taunting us, and shrieking at us with the cry that we ought to go to Rome, till we at last, carried out, take them at their word, and do at their bidding the thing we used to shrink from with terror—not thus merely, but the very doctrines we hold in common with them, have sent me to Rome. For would these men have known of them if Rome had not been? The Trinity—the Atonement—the Inspiration of

Scripture.—A future state—that point on which the present generation, without a smattering of psychological science, without even the old belief in apparitions, dogmatizes so narrowly and arrogantly—what would they have known of them but for Rome? And she says there are three realms in the future state—

heaven, hell, and purgatory. . . . What right have they to throw away the latter, and arbitrarily retain the two former? I am told that Scripture gives no warrant for a third state. She says that it does—that it teaches that implicitly, as it teaches other, the very highest doctrines, some hold, the Trinity itself. . . . It may be proved from Scripture, for it may be proved from the love and justice of God revealed in Scripture. The Protestants divide—in theory, that is—in kind into two classes, the righteous, who are destined to infinite bliss, the wicked, who are doomed to infinite torment, in which latter class, to make their arbitrary division exhaustive, they put of course nine hundred and ninety-nine out of the thousand, and doom to everlasting companionship with Beggars and Caghiosos the gentle, frivolous girl, or the peevish boy, who would have shunk in life with horror from the contact.

Well, at least, their hell is hellish enough. . . . if it were but just. . . .

But I, Lancelot, I cannot believe it! I will not believe it! I had a brother once—affectionate, simple, generous, full of noble aspirations—but without, alas! a thought of God, yielding in a hundred little points, and some great ones, to the infernal temptations of a public school.

He died at seventeen. Where is he now? Lancelot? where is he now? Never for a day has that thought left my mind for years. Not in heaven for he has no right there, Protestants would say that as well as I. . . . Where then?—Lancelot? not in that other place. I cannot, I will not believe it! For the sake of God's heaven, as well as of my own sanity, I will not believe it! There must be some third place—some intermediate chance, some door of hope—some purifying and redeeming process beyond the grave. . . . Why not a purifying fire? Ages of that are surely punishment enough—and if there be a fire of hell, why not a fire of purgatory? After all, the idea of purgatory as a fire is only an opinion, not a dogma of the Church. . . . But if the gross flesh which has refused to be punished by the matter which it has abused, why may it not be punished by it?

'You may laugh, if you will, at both, and say again, as I have heard you say ere now, that the popular Christian paradise and hell are but a Pagan Olympus and Tartarus, as grossly material as Mahomet's, without the honest thorough-going sexuality which you thought made his notion logical and consistent. . . . Well, you may say that, but Protestants cannot, for their idea of heaven and ours is the same—with this exception, that theirs will contain but a thin band of saved ones, while ours will fill and grow

to all eternity. I tell you, Lancelot, it is just the very doctrines for which England most curses Rome, and this very purgatory at the head of them, which constitutes her strength and her allurements, which appeal to the reason, the conscience, the heart of men, like me, who have revolted from the novel superstition which looks pitilessly on all the fond memories of the brother, the prayers of the orphan, the doubled desolation of the widow, with its cold terrible assurance, "There is no hope for thy loved and lost ones—no hope, but hell for evermore!"

"I do not expect to convert you. You have your metaphysics, and your theories of jagged save incantation, and your monads, and your sparks of the stars and flowers. I have not forgotten certain talk of ours over Falk Von Miller's *Recollections of Goethe*, and how you materialists are often the most fantastic of theorists." I do not expect, I say, to convert you. I only want to show you there is no use trying to show the self-satisfied Pharaohs of the popular set why, in spite of all their curses, men still go back to Rome."

Lancelot read this, and re-read it, and smiled, but sadly, and the more he read, the stronger its arguments seemed to him, and he repeated them. For there is a last pleasure—happily he who has not felt it, in a pitiless *reluctance ad absurdum* who looks tauntingly, "Why do you not follow out your own conclusions?" instead of thinking "God that people do not follow them out, and that then he utters no sounder than their heads." Was it with this feeling that the time took possession of him, to show the letter to Tregarva? I hope not, perhaps he did not altogether wish to lead him into temptation, and more than I wish to lead my readers, but only to make him, just as I wish to make them, face manfully a real awful question now ranking the hearts of hundreds, and see how they will be able to answer the subtlest and, for honestly such he is when their time comes, as come it will. At last he wanted to test at once Tregarva's knowledge and his logic. As for his "truth," alas! he had not so much reverence for it as to try what effect Luke's arguments might have there. "The whole man," quoth Lancelot to himself, "is a novel phenomenon, and all phenomena, however magnificent, are surely fair subjects for experiment. Magendie may have gone too far, certainly, in dissecting a live dog—but what harm in my pulling the mine of a dead lion?"

So he showed the letter to Tregarva as they were fishing together one day—for Lancelot had been installed duly in the Whitford trout preserve.—Tregarva read it slowly, asked, shrewdly enough, the meaning of a word or two as he went on, at last folded it up deliberately, and returned it to its owner with a deep sigh. Lancelot said nothing for a few minutes, but the giant seemed so little inclined to open the conversation, that he was forced at last to ask him what he thought of it.

"It isn't a matter for thinking, sir, to my mind—There's a nice fish on the reel there, just over right that abber!"

"Hang the fish! Why not a matter for thinking?"

"To my mind, sir, a man may think a deal too much about many matters that come in his way."

"What should he do with them, then?"

"Mind his own business."

"Pleasant for those whom they concern!—That's rather a cold-blooded speech for you, Tregarva!"

The Cornishman looked up at him earnestly. His eyes were glittering—was it with tears?

"Don't fancy I don't feel for the poor young gentleman. God help him!—I've been through it all, or not through it, that's to say. I had a brother once, as fine a young fellow as ever handled jack, as kind hearted as a woman, and as honest as the sun in heaven. But he would drink, sir,—that one temptation, he never could stand it. And one day at the shaft's mouth, reaching after the kibble chain, maybe he was in hopes, maybe not, the Lord knows, but—"

"I didn't know him again, sir, when we picked him up any more than—" and the strong man shuddered from head to foot and beat his impatiently on the ground with his heavy heel, as if to crush down the rising horror.

"Where is he, sir?"

A long pause.

"Do you think I didn't ask that, sir, for years and years after, of God, and my own soul and heaven and earth and the things under the earth, too? For many a night did I go down that mine out of my turn, and sat for hours in that level, watching and watching, it perhaps the spirit of him might haunt about, and tell his poor brother one word of how—or why on the other, anything would have been comfort—but the doubt I couldn't ban. And yet it isn't I learnt to ban it—and what's more, I learnt not to care for it. It's a bold word, there's one who knows whether or not it is a true one."

"Good heaven—and what then did you say?"

"I said this, sir, or rather, one came as I was on my knees, and said it to me. What should you mind? What's left you can. Whatever has happened is God's concern now, and none but His. Do you see that as far as you can no such thing ever happen again on the face of His earth. And then that day, sir, I gave myself up to that one thing, and will until I die, to save the poor young fellows like myself, who are left nowadays to the Devil body and soul just when they are in the prime of their power to work for God."

"Ah!" said Lancelot—"if poor Luke's spirit were but as strong as yours!"

"I strong?" answered he, with a sad smile—"and so you think, sir. But it's written and it's true. 'The heart knoweth its own bitter-

'Then you absolutely refuse to try to fancy your—his present state!'

'Yes, sir, because if I did fancy it, that would be a certain sign I didn't know it. If we can't conceive what God has prepared for those that we know loved Him, how much less can we for them of whom we don't know whether they loved Him or not?'

'Well,' thought Lancelot to himself, 'I did not do so very wrong in trusting your intellect to cut through a sophism.'

'But what do you believe, Tregarva?'

'I believe this, sir—and your cousin will believe the same, if he will only give up, as I am sore afraid he will need to some day, sticking to arguments and doctrines about the Lord, and love and trust the Lord Himself. I believe, sir, that the judge of all the earth will do right—and what's right can't be wrong, nor cruel either, else it would not be like Him who loved us to the death, that's all I know, and that's enough for me. To whom little is given, of him is little required. He that didn't know his Master's will, will be beaten with few stripes, and he that did know it, as I do, will be beaten with many, if he neglects it—and that latter, not the former, is my concern.'

'Well,' thought Lancelot to himself, 'this great heart has gone down to the root of the matter the right and wrong of it. He, at least, has not forgotten God. Well, I would give up all the Teleologies and cosmogonies that I ever dreamt or read, just to believe what he believes—Heigho and well-a-day! Paul! but? I'll swear that was an other!'

'I hope not, sir, I'm sure I haven't seen the spraint of one here this two years.'

'There again—don't you see something move under that mail bank?'

Tregarva watched a moment, and then ran up to the spot, and throwing himself on his face on the edge, hant ova, grappled something—and was instantly, to Lancelot's astonishment, grappled in his turn by a rough, lank, white dog, whose teeth, however, could not get through the velvetreen sleeve.

'I'll give in, keeper! I'll give in. Don't ye harm the dog! He's deaf as a post, you knows.'

'I won't harm him if you take him off and come up quietly.'

This mysterious conversation was carried on with a human head, which peeped above the water, its arms supporting from beneath the growling dog—such a visage as only worn-out poachers, or tramping drovers, or London cliffhoppers carry; pear-shaped and retreating to a narrow peak above, while below the bleared cheeks, and drooping lips, and peering purblind eyes, perplexed, hopeless, dejected, and yet sneaking, bespeak their share in the 'inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.'—Savages without the resources of a savage—slaves without the protection of a master—to whom the cart-whip and the rice-sawup would be a change for the latter—for there, at least, is food and shelter.

Slowly and distrustfully a dripping scarecrow of rags and bones rose from his hiding-place in the water, and then stopped suddenly and seemed inclined to dash through the river, but Tregarva held him fast.

'There's two on ye! That's a shame! I'll surrender to no man but you, Paul. Hold off, or I'll set the dog on ye!'

'It's a gentleman fishing. He won't tell—will you, sir?' And he turned to Lancelot. 'Have pity on the poor creature, sir, for God's sake—it isn't often he gets it.'

'I won't tell, my man. I've not seen you doing any harm. Come out like a man, and let's have a look at you.'

The creature crawled up the bank, and stood, abject and shivering, with the dog growling from between his legs.

'I was only looking for a kingfisher's nest under now, I was, Paul Tregarva.'

'Don't lie, you were sitting right here. I saw a minnow be on the bank as I came up. Don't lie, I hate lies.'

'Well indeed, then—a man must live some how.'

'You don't seem to live by this trade, my friend,' quoth Lancelot, 'I cannot say it seems a prosperous business, by the look of your coat and trousers.'

'That Tim Goshling stole all my clothes, and no good may they do him, last time as I went to gaol I gave them him to keep, and he went off for a natty minnow, so there I am.'

'If you will play with the dogs,' quoth Tregarva, 'you know what you will be bit by. Haven't I warned you? Of course you were prosper as you make your bol so you must be in it. The Lord can't be expected to let those prosper that forget Him. What money would it be to you if He did let you prosper by setting snares all church time, as you were last Sunday, instead of going to church?'

'I say, Paul Tregarva, I've told you my mind about that afore. If I don't do what I knows to be right and good always, there ain't no use in me a damning myself all the days by going to church to hear more.'

'God help you!' quoth poor Paul.

'Now, I say,' quoth Crawy, with the air of a man who took the whole thing as a matter of course, no more to be repaid at than the rain and wind—'what be you a-guing to do with now this time? I do hope you won't have me up to bench. Tain't a month now as I'm out o' prison along o' they in topmugs, and I should, you see—with a look up and down and round at the gay lay-meadows, and the fleet water, and the soft gleaming clouds, while to Lancelot seemed most pathetic,—'I should like to be a gall o' fresh air, like, afore I goes in again.'

Tregarva stood over him and looked down at him, like some huge stately bloodhound on a troubling mangy cat. 'Good heavens,' thought Lancelot, as his eye wandered from the sad steadfast dignity of the one to the dogged

helpless misery of the other—'can those two be really fellow-citizens? fellow-Christians?—even animals of the same species? Hard to believe!'

True, Lancelot; but to quote you against yourself, Bacon, or rather the instinct which taught Bacon, teaches you to discern the invisible common law under the deceitful phenomena of sense.

'I must have those eight-hines, Crawy,' quoth Tregarva, at length.

'Then I must starve. You might ever so well take away the dog. They're the life of me.'

'They're the death of you. Why don't you go and work, instead of idling about, stealing trout?'

'Be you a-laughing at a poor fellow in his trouble? Who'd give me a day's work, I'd like to know! It's twenty years too late for that!'

Lancelot stood listening. Yes, that wretch, too, was a man and a brother, at least so books used to say. Time was, when he had looked upon a poacher as a Pariah *hominum humanioris*—and only deplored that the law forbade him to shoot them down, like cats and otters, but he had begun to change his mind.

He had learnt, and learnt rightly, the self-indulgence, the danger, the cruelty, of indiscriminate alms. It looked well enough in theory, on paper. But but but, thought Lancelot, in practice, one can't help feeling a little of that un-economic feeling called pity. No doubt the fellow has committed an unpardonable sin in daring to come into the world when there was no call for him, one used to think, certainly, that children's opinions were not consulted on such points before they were born, and that therefore it might be hard to visit the sins of the fathers on the children, even though the labour market were a little overcrowded. *'more more more change but ah,*' like M. Lombard's doctors. No doubt, too, the fellow might have got work if he had chosen in Kamsbatka or the Cannibal Islands. For the political economists have proved, beyond a doubt, that there is work somewhere or other for every one who chooses to work. But is unfortunately, society his neglectful to inform him of the state of the Cannibal Islands labour market, or to pay his passage thither when informed thereof, he has had to choose in the somewhat limited labour field of the Whitford Priors' moor, whose workhouse is already every winter filled with able-bodied men than he, between starvation and this— Well, as for employing him, one would have thought that there was a little work waiting to be done in those five miles of heather and snipe-bog, which I used to tramp over last winter— but those, it seems, are still on the "margin of cultivation," and not a remunerative investment—that is, to capitalists. I wonder if any one had made Crawy a present of ten acres of them when he came of age, and commanded him to till that or be hanged, whether he would not have found it a profitable

investment? But bygones are bygones, and there he is, and the moors, thanks to the rights of property—in this case the rights of the dog in the manger—belong to poor old Lavington—that is, the game and timber on them, and neither Crawy nor any one else can touch them. What can I do for him? Convert him? To what? For the next life, even Tregarva's talisman seems to fail. And for this life—perhaps if he had had a few more practical proofs of a divine justice and government that "kingdom of heaven" of which Luke talks, in the sensible bodily matters which he does appreciate, he might not be so unwilling to trust to it for the invisible spiritual matters which he does not appreciate. At all events, one has but one chance of winning him, and that is, through those five senses which he has left. What if he does spend the money in gross animal enjoyment? What will the amount of it be, compared with the animal enjoyments which my station allows me daily without reproach? A little more bacon, a little more beer, a little more tobacco, at all events they will be more important to him than a pair of new boots or an extra box of cigars to me. And Lancelot put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a sovereign. No doubt he was a great goose, but if you can answer his arguments, reader, I cannot.

'Look here—what are your eight-hines worth?'

'A matter of seven shillings, am't they now, Paul Tregarva?'

'I should suppose they are.'

'Then do you give me the huns, one and all, and there's a sovereign for you. No, I can't trust you with it all at once. I'll give it to Tregarva, and he shall allow you four shillings a week as long as it lasts, if you'll promise to keep old Squire Lavington—alive.'

It was pathetic and yet disgusting to see the disappointed of the poor creature. 'Well, thought Lancelot, if he deserves to be wretched so do I, why therefore, if we are one as bad as the other, should I not make his wickedness a little less for the time being?'

'I want come a near the water. You trust me—I mends them as is kind to me—and a thought seemed suddenly to lighten up his dull intelligence.

'I say, Paul, look you here. I see that Bantam into D * * * (other day)'

'What? is he down already?'

'With a dog—art, he and another of his pals—and I see can take out a silk line, I did. So says I, you mums be trying that one along o' the Whitford trout, they keepers is out o' nights so sure as the moon.'

'You didn't know that. I'm young again!'

'No, but I said it in course. I didn't want they a robbing here, so I think they worked mainly up Squire Warren's water.'

'I wish I'd caught them here, quoth Tregarva, grimly enough, 'though I don't think they came, or I should have seen the trick on the banks.'

'But he sayed like, as how he should be down here again about pleasant shooting.'

'Trust him for it. Let us know, now, if you see him.'

'And that I will, too. I wouldn't save a feather for that 'ere old rascal, Harry. If the devil don't have he, I don't see no use in keeping no devil. But I minds them as has mercy on me, though my name is Crawy. Ay,' he added bitterly, 'tain't so many kind turns as I gets in this life, that I can afford to forget 'er a one.' And he sneaked off, with the deaf dog at his heels.

'How did that fellow get his name, Tregarva?'

'Oh, most of them have nicknames round here. Some of them hardly know their own real names, sir.' ('A sure sign of low civilisation,' thought Lancelot.) 'But he got his a foolish way, and yet it was the ruin of him. When he was a boy of fifteen, he got minding away in church-time, as boys will, and took off his clothes to get in somewhere here in this very river, groping in the banks after craw-fish, and as the devil—for I can think no less—would have it, a big one caught him by the thigh with one claw and a foot with the other, and holds him there till Squire Lavington comes out to take his walk after church, and there he caught the boy, and gave him a thrashing there and then, naked as he stood. And the story got wind, and all the chaps round called him Crawy ever afterwards, and the poor fellow got quite reckless from that day, and never looked any one in the face again, and being ashamed of himself, you see, sir, was never ashamed of anything else—and there he is. That dogs his only friend, and gets a livelihood for them both. It's growing old now, and when it dies he'll starve.'

'Well—the world has no right to blame him for not doing his duty, till it has done its own by him a little better.'

'But the world will, sir, because it hates its duty, and cries all day long, like Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?"'

'Do you think it knows its duty? I have found it easy enough to see that something is diseased, Tregarva, but to find the medicine first, and to administer it afterwards, is a very different matter.'

'Well—I suppose the world will never be mended till the day of judgment.'

'In plain English, not mended till it is destroyed. Hopeful for the poor world! I should fancy, if I believed that, that the devil in the old history—which I still believe—had had the best of it with a vengeance, when he brought sin into the world and ruined it. I dare not believe that. How dare you, who say that God sent His Son into the world to defeat the devil?'

Tregarva was silent a while.

'Learning and the Gospel together ought to do something, sir, towards mending it. One would think so. But the prophets are against that.'

'As folks happen to read them just now

A hundred years hence they may be finding the very opposite meaning in them. Come, Tregarva, suppose I teach you a little of the learning, and you teach me a little of the Gospel—do you think we two could mend the world between us, or even mend Whitford Priory?'

'God knows, sir,' said Tregarva.

'Tregarva,' said Lancelot, as they were landing the next trout, 'where will that Crawy go when he dies?'

'God knows, sir,' said Tregarva.

Lancelot went thoughtful home, and sat down—not to answer Luke's letter—for he knew no answer but Tregarva's, and that, alas! he could not give, for he did not believe it, but only longed to believe it. So he turned off the subject by a question—

'You speak of yourself as being already a member of the Romish communion. How is this? Have you given up your curacy? Have you told your father? I fancy that if you had done so I must have heard of it ere now. I entreat you to tell me the state of the case, for, whether as I am, I am still an Englishman, and there are certain old superstitions still lingering among us—whenever we may have got them first about truth and common honesty—you understand me—'

'Do not be angry. But there is a prejudice against the truthfulness of Romish priests and Romish converts. It's no affair of mine. I see quite enough Protestant rogues and hares, to prevent my having any pleasure in proving Romanists, or any other persons, rogues and hares also. But I am a bit fond of you, it has sufficiently tend to be anxious for your good name. You used to be an open-hearted fellow enough. Do prove to the world that *coram, non autem* unfail, *qui tunc non coram*

CHAPTER XX

HVPEX VERBEN IN ALIS HIS TASTI SUCCEPTE

THE day after the Lavingtons' return, when Lancelot walked up to the Priory with a fluttering heart to inquire after all parties, and see how he found the square in a great state of excitement.

A large gang of poachers, who had come down from London by rail, had been devastating all the covers round, to stock the London markets by the first of October, and intended, as Tregarva had discovered, to pay Mr. Lavington's preserves a visit that night. They didn't care for country justice, not they. Weren't all their times paid by highly respectable game-dealers at the West End? They owned three dog-carts among them, a parcel by railway would bring them down but to any amount, they tossed their money away at the public houses like gentlemen, thanks to the Game Laws, their profits ran high, and when they had swept the country pretty clean of game,

why, they would just finish off the season by a stray highway robbery or two, and vanish into Babylon and their native night.

Such was Harry Verney's information as he strutted about the courtyard waiting for the squire's orders.

'But they've put their nose into a finze-lash, Master Smith! they have. We've got our posse-commontatus, fourteen men, sir, as'll play the whole vale to cricket, and whipe them, and every one'll light, for they're half poachers themselves, you see' (and Harry winked and chuckled), 'and they can't abide no interlopers to come down and take the sport out of their families.'

'But are you sure they'll come to night?'

'That 'ers Paul says so. Wonder how he found out—some of his underhand, colliguing, Methodist ways, I'll warrant. I seed him preaching to that 'ers Craw, three or four times, when he ought to have hauled him up. He consorts with them poachers, sir, uncommon. I hope he won't owe himself, that's all.'

'Nonsense, Harry.'

'Oh? Eh? Don't say did Harry don't know nothing, that's all. I've fixed his flint, any-
way.'

'Ah! Smith!' shouted the squire out of his study window, with a cheerful and appropriate oath. 'The very man I wanted to see! You must lead these keepers for me to-night. They always light better with a gentleman among them. Breeding tells, you know. Gooding tells.'

Lancelot felt a strong disgust at the occupation, but he was under too many obligations to the squire to refuse.

'Ay, I knew you were game, and the old man. And you'll find it capital fun. I used to think it so, I know, when I was young. My a shindy have I had her in my much's time, under the very windows, before the chase was disparked, when the fellows used to come down after the deer.'

Just then Lancelot turned and saw Argemone standing close to him. He almost sprang towards her—and retrated, for he saw that she had overheard the conversation between him and her father.

'What! Mr. Smith!' said she, in a tone in which tenderness and contempt, pity and aloofed carelessness, were strangely mingled. 'So! you're going to turn gamekeeper to night?'

Lancelot was blundering out something, when the squire interposed.

'Let her alone, Smith. Women will be tender hearted, you know. Quite right—but they don't understand these things. They fight with their tongues, and we with our fists, and then they fancy their weapons don't hurt—Ha! ha! ha!'

'Mr. Smith,' said Argemone in a low, determined voice, 'if you have promised my father to go on this horrid business—go. But promise me, too, that you will only look on, or I will never—'

Argemone had not time to finish her sentence before Lancelot had promised seven times over, and meant to keep his promise, as we all do.

About ten o'clock that evening Lancelot and Trigava were walking stealthily up a ride in one of the home-covers, at the head of some fifteen true young fellows, keepers, game-keepers, and *not extempore* 'watchers,' whom old Harry was marshalling and tutoring, with exhortations as many and as animated as if their ambition was '*Mourir pour la patrie*.'

'How does this sort of work suit you, Trigava, for I don't like it at all. The lightings all very well, but it's a poor cause.'

'Oh, sir, I have no worry on these Londoners. If it was these poor half-stayed labourers, that snare the same hares that have been eating up their garden stuff all the week, I can't touch them, sir, and that's truth, but these rithms—'

And yet, sir, wouldn't it be better for the parsons to preach to them, than for the keepers to break their heads?'

'Oh,' said Lancelot, 'the parsons say all to them that they can.'

Trigava shook his head.

'I doubt that, sir. But, no doubt, there's a great change for the better in the parsons. I remember the time, sir, that there wasn't an earnest clergyman in the vale, and now every other man you meet is trying to do his best. But these London parsons, sir, what's the matter with them? For all their societies and their schools, the devil seems to keep ahead of them sadly. I doubt they haven't found the right fly yet for publicans and sinners to rise at.'

A distant shot in the cover.

'There they are, sir. I thought that Craw wouldn't lead me false when I let him off.'

Well, fight away then and win. I have promised Miss Livingston not to hit a hand in the business.

'Then you're a lucky man, sir. But the squire's game is his own, and we must do our duty by our master.'

There was a rustle in the bushes and a tramp of feet on the turf.

'Here they are, sir, sure enough. The Lord keep us from murder this night!' And Trigava pulled off his neckcloth, and shook his huge limbs, as if to feel that they were all in their places, in a way that augured ill for the man who came across him.

They turned the corner of a ride and, in an instant, found themselves face to face with five or six armed men, with blackened faces, who without speaking a word, dashed at them, and the fight began, reinforcements came up on each side, and the engagement became general.

'The forest laws were sharp and stern,
The forest blood was keen,
They lashed together for life and death
Beneath the hollies green.

'The metal good and the walnut-wood
Did soon in splinters flee.

They tossed the orts to south and north,
And grappled knees to knees

'They wrestled up, they wrestled down,
They wrestled still and sore,
The herbage sweet beneath their feet
Was stamped to mud and gura.

And all the while the broad still moon stared down on them grim and cold, as it with a saturnine sneer at the whole humbug, and the silly birds about whom all this butchery went on, slept quietly over their heads, every one with his head under his wing. Oh! if pheasants had but understanding, how they would spit their sides with chucking and crowing at the follies which civilised Christian men perpetrate for their precious sake!

Had I the pen of Homer (though they say he never used one), or even that of the worthy who wasted precious years in writing a *Homer Burlesqued*, what heroic exploits might not I immortalise! In every stolid serf and cunning ruffian there, there was a heart as brave as Ajax's own, but then they fought with sticks instead of lances, and hampered away on fustian jackets instead of brazen shields, and therefore, poor fellows, they were beneath 'the dignity of poetry,' whatever that may mean. If one of your squeamish 'dignity-of-poetry' critics had just had his head among the gun stocks for five minutes that night, he would have found it grim tragic earnest enough, not without a touch of fun though, here and there.

Lancelot leant against a tree and watched the not with folded arms, mindful of his promise to Argemone, and envied Tregarva as he buried his assailants right and left with unerring strength, and led the fan of battle royally. Little would Argemone have valued the real proof of love which he was giving her as he looked on sulkily, while his fingers tingled with longing to be up and doing. Strange—that mere lust of fighting, common to man and animals, whose traces even the lamb and the civilised child evince in their mock-fights, the earliest and most natural form of play. Is it, after all, the one human propensity which is utterly evil, incapable of being turned to any righteous use? Gross and animal, no doubt, it is, but not the less really pleasant, as every Irishman and many an Englishman knows well enough. A curious instance of this, by the bye, occurred in Paris during the February Revolution. A fat English coachman went out, from mere curiosity, to see the fighting. As he stood and watched, a new passion crept over him; he grew madder and madder as the bullets whistled past him; at last when men began to drop by his side, he could stand it no longer, seized a musket, and rushed in, careless which side he took,—

'To drink delight of battle with his peers.'

He was not heard of for a day or two, and then they found him stiff and cold, lying on his face across a barricade, with a bullet through his heart. Sedentary persons may call him a

stupid fool. Be it so. *Homo sum humani nil à me alienum puto.*

Lancelot, I verily believe, would have kept his promise, though he saw that the keepers gave ground, finding Cookney skill too much for their clumsy strength, but at last Harry Verney, who had been fighting as venomously as a wild cat, and had been once before saved from a broken skull by Tregarva, rolled over at his very feet with a couple of poachers on him.

'You won't see an old man murdered, Mr Smith?' cried he imploringly.

Lancelot tore the ruffians off the old man right and left. One of them struck him, he returned the blow, and, in an instant, promises and Argemone, philosophy and anti-game-law prejudices, were swept out of his head, and 'he went,' as the old romances say, 'hurling into the midst of the press,' as mere a wild animal for the moment as angry bull or boar. An instant afterwards, though, he burst out laughing, in spite of himself, as 'The Battersea Bantam,' who had been ineffectually dancing round Tregarva, like a gamecock spurring at a bull, turned off with a voice of ineffable disgust,—

'That big cove's a yokel, ta ut creditable to waste science on him. You're my man, if you please, sir,'—and the little wiry lump of courage and conceit, rascality and good humour, flew at Lancelot, who was three his size, 'with a heroism worthy of a better cause,' as respectable papers, when they are not too frightened, say of the French.

'Do you want any more?' asked Lancelot.

'Quite a pleasure, sir, to meet a scientific gentleman. Beg your pardon, sir, stay a moment while I wipe my face. Now, sir, time, if you please.'

Alas for the little man! in another moment he tumbled over and lay senseless—Lancelot thought he had killed him. The gang saw their champion fall, gave ground, and limped off, leaving three of their party groaning on the ground, beside as many Whitford men.

As it was in the beginning, so is it to be to the end, my foolish brothers! From the poet to the prime minister—wearing yourselves for very vanity! The soldier is not the only man in England who is fool enough to be shot at for a shilling a day.

But while all the rest were busy picking up the wounded men and securing the prisoners, Harry Verney alone held on, and as the poachers retreated slowly up the ride, he followed them, peering into the gloom, as if in hopes of recognising some old enemy.

'Stand back, Harry Verney, we know you, and we'd be loth to harm an old man,' cried a voice out of the darkness.

'Eh! Do you think old Harry'd turn back when he was once on the track of ye? You soft-footed, gun-drinking, counter-skipping Cookney rascals, that fancy you're to carry the county before you, because you get your fines paid by

London tradesmen! Eh! What do you take old Harry for?

Go back, you old fool! and a volley of oaths followed. 'If you follow us we'll tire at you, as sure as the moon's in heaven!'

'Fire away, then! I'll follow you to—' and the old man paced stealthily but firmly up to them.

Tregarva saw his danger and sprang forward, but it was too late.

'What, you will have it, then?'

A sharp crack followed,—a bright flash in the darkness—every white birch-stem and jagged oak-leaf shone out for a moment as bright as day—and in front of the glare Lancelot saw the old man throw his arms wildly upward, fall forward and disappear on the dark ground.

'You've done it! off with you!' And the rivals rushed off up the ride.

In a moment Tregarva was by the old man's side, and lifted him tenderly up.

'They've done for me, Paul. Old Harry's got his gruel! He's heard his last shot fired! I knewed it 'ud come to this, and I said it. Eh! Didn't I, now, Paul?' And as the old man spoke, the workings of his lungs pumped great jets of blood out over the still hather-flowers as they slept in the moonshine, and dabbled them with smoking gore.

'Here, men,' shouted the colonel, 'up with him at once, and home! Here, put a brace of your guns together, muzzle and lock. Help him to sit on them, Lancelot! There, Harry, put your arms round their necks. Tregarva, hold him up behind. Now then, men, left legs foremost—keep step—march!' And they moved off towards the Priory.

'You seem to know everything, colonel,' said Lancelot.

The colonel did not answer for a moment.

'Lancelot, I learnt this dodge from the only friend I ever had in the world, or ever shall have, and a week after I marched him home to his deathbed in this very way.'

'Paul—Paul Tregarva,' whispered old Harry, 'put your head down here upon my mouth, there's a man, it's wet, uncommon wet.' It was his own life-blood. 'I've been a beast to you, Paul. I've hated you, and envied you, and tried to ruin you. And now you've saved my life once this night, and here you be nursing of me as my own son might do, it he was here, poor fellow! I've ruined you, Paul, the Lord forgive me!'

'Pray! pray!' said Paul, 'and He will forgive you. He is all mercy. He pardoned the thief on the cross—'

'No, Paul, no thief,—not so bad as that, I hope, anyhow; never touched a feather of the squire's. But you dropped a song, Paul, a bit of writing.'

Paul turned pale.

'And—the Lord forgive me!—I put it in the squire's fly-book.'

'The Lord forgive you! Amen!' said Paul solemnly.

Wearily and slowly they stepped on towards the old man's cottage. A messenger had gone on before, and in a few minutes the squire, Mrs. Lavington, and the girls were round the bed of their old retainer.

They went off right and left for the doctor and the vicar, the squire was in a frenzy of rage and grief.

'Don't take on, master, don't take on,' said old Harry, as he lay, while the colonel and Honoria vainly endeavoured to staunch the wound. 'I knowed it would be so, sooner or later, 'twas all in the way of business. They haven't carried off a bird, squire, not a bird, we was too many for 'em—ch, Paul, ch?'

'Where is that cursed doctor?' said the squire. 'Save him, colonel, save him, and I'll give you—'

Alas! the charge of shot at a few feet distance had entered like a bullet, tearing a great ragged hole—There was no hope, and the colonel knew it, but he said nothing.

'The second keeper, sighed Argemone, 'who has been killed here? Oh, Mr. Smith, must this be? Is God's blessing on all this?'

Lancelot said nothing. The old man lighted up at Argemone's voice.

'There's the beauty, there's the pride of Whitford. And sweet Miss Honor too,—so kind to nurse a poor old man! But she never would let him teach her to catch perch, would she? She was always too tender-hearted. Ah, squire, when we're dead and gone,—dead and gone,—squire, they'll be the pride of Whitford still! And they'll keep up the old place—won't you, my darlings? And the old name, too! For, you know, there must always be a Lavington in Whitford Priory, till the Nun's-pool runs up to Ashy Down.'

'And a curse upon the Lavingtons,' sighed Argemone to herself in an undertone.

Lancelot heard what she said.

The vicar entered, but he was too late. The old man's strength was failing, and his mind began to wander.

'Windy,' he murmured to himself, 'windy, dark and windy—birds won't be—not old Harry's fault. How black it grows! We must be gone by nightfall, squire. Where's that young dog gone? Arter the larks, the brute!'

Old Squire Lavington sobbed like a child.

'You will soon be home, my man,' said the vicar. 'Remember that you have a Saviour in heaven. Cast yourself on His mercy.'

Harry shook his head.

'Very good words, very kind,—very heavy gamebag, though! Never get home, never any more at all. Where's my boy Tom to carry it? Send for my boy Tom. He was always a good boy till he got along with them poachers.'

'Listen,' he said, listen! There's bells a-ringing—ringing in my head. Come you here, Paul Tregarva.'

He pulled Tregarva's face down to his own, and whispered,—

'Them's the bells a-ringing for Miss Honor's wedding.'

Paul started and drew back. Harry chuckled and grinned for a moment in his old foxy, peering way, and then wandered off again.

'What's that thumping and roaring?' Ah—' it was the failing pulsation of his own heart. 'It's the weir, the weir—a washing me away—thundering over me—Squire, I'm drowning, —drowning and choking! Oh, Lord, how deep! Now it's running quieter—now I can breathe again—swift and only—running on, running on, down to the sea. See how the grayling sparkle! There's a pike! Tain't my fault, squire, so help me—Don't swear, now, squire, old men and dying man'n't swear, squire. How steady the river runs down! Lower and slower—lower and slower—now it's quite still—still—still—'

His voice sank away—he was dead!

No! once more the light flashed up in the socket. He sprang upright in the bed, and held out his withered paw with a kind of wild majesty, as he shouted,—

'There ain't such a heap of hares on any moor in the county. And them's the last words of Harry Veiney!'

He fell back—shuddered—a rattle in his throat—another—and all was over.

CHAPTER X

'MURDER WILL OUT,' AND LOVE TOO

ARGEMONE need never have known of Lancelot's share in the poaching affray, but he dared not conceal anything from her. And so he boldly went up the next day to the Parson, not to beg pardon, but to justify himself, and succeeded. And, before long, he found himself fairly installed as her pupil, nominally in spiritual matters, but really in subjects of which she little dreamed.

Every day he came to read and talk with her, and whatever objections Mrs. Lavington expressed were silenced by Argemone. She would have it so, and her mother neither dared nor knew how to control her. The daughter had utterly out-read and out-thought her less educated parent, who was clinging in honest bigotry to the old forms, while Argemone was wandering forth over the chaos of the strange new age,—a poor homeless Noah's dove, seeking rest for the sole of her foot and finding none. And now all motherly influence and sympathy had vanished, and Mrs. Lavington, in fear and wonder, let her daughter go her own way. She could not have done better, perhaps, for Providence had found for Argemone a better guide than her mother could have done, and her new pupil was rapidly becoming her teacher. She was matched, for the first time, with a man who was her own equal in intellect and know-

ledge, and she felt how real was that sexual difference which she had been accustomed to consider as an insolent calumny against woman. Proudly and indignantly she struggled against the conviction, but in vain. Again and again she argued with him, and was vanquished,—or at least, what is far better, made to see how many different sides there are to every question. All appeals to authority he answered with a contemptuous smile. 'The best authorities?' he used to say. 'On what question do not the best authorities flatly contradict each other? And why? Because every man believes just what it suits him to believe. Don't fancy that men reason themselves into convictions, the prejudices and feelings of their hearts give them some idea or theory, and then they find facts at their leisure to prove their theory true. Every man sees facts through narrow spectacles, red, or green, or blue, as his nation or his temperament colours them; and he is quite right, only he must allow us the liberty of having our spectacles too. Authority is only good for proving facts. We must draw our own conclusions.' And Argemone began to suspect that he was right,—at least to see that her opinions were mere hearsays, picked up at her own will and fancy, while his were living, daily-growing ideas. Her mind was made his as the vase of cut flowers by the side of the rugged tree, whose roots are feeding deep in the mother earth. In him she first learnt how one great truth received into the depths of the soul germinates there, and bears fruit a thousandfold, explaining, and connecting, and glorifying innumerable things, apparently the most unlike and insignificant, and daily she became a more reverent listener, and gave herself up, half against her will and conscience, to the guidance of a man whom she knew to be her inferior in morals and in orthodoxy. She had worshipped intellect, and now it had become her tyrant, and she was ready to give up every belief which she once had prized, to flatter like a moth round its fascinating flame.

Who can blame her, poor girl? For Lancelot's humility was even more irresistible than his eloquence. He assumed no superiority. He demanded her assent to truths, not because they were his opinions, but simply for the truth's sake, and on all points which touched the heart he looked up to her as infallible and inspired. In questions of morality, of taste, of feeling, he listened not as a lover to his mistress, but rather as a baby to its mother, and thus, half unconsciously to himself, he taught her where her true kingdom lay, that the heart, and not the brain, enshrines the priceless pearl of womanhood, the oracular jewel, the 'Urn and Thummin,' before which grown man can only inquire and adore.

And, in the meantime, a change was passing upon Lancelot. His morbid vanity—that brawl-begotten child of struggling self-conceit and self-disgust—was vanishing away, and as Mr. Tennyson says in one of those priceless u/j/

of him, before which the shade of Theocritus must hide his diminished head,—

'He was altered, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.'

He had, at last, found one person who could appreciate him. And in deliberate confidence he set to work to conquer her and make her his own. It was a traitorous return, but a very natural one. And she, sweet creature! walked straight into the pleasant snare, utterly blind, because she fancied that she saw clearly. In the pride of her mysticism she had fancied herself above so commonplace a passion as love. It was a curious feature of lower humanity, which she might investigate and analyse humbly: a cold scientific spectator, and, in her mingled pride and pity she used to rebuke Lancelot in metaphysical disquisitions about love and beauty, like that first one in then walk home from Muchamstead, from which a less celestially innocent soul would have shrunk. She thought, forsooth, as the old proverb says, that she could deal in honey, without putting her hand to her mouth. But Lancelot knew better, and nipped her for his own. And duly his self-confidence and sense of rightful power developed, and with them, paradoxical as it may seem, the bitterest self-dismay. The contact of her stainless innocence, the growing certainty that the destiny of that innocence was inevitably bound up with his own, made him shrink from her whenever he remembered his own guilty career. To remember that there were passages in it which she must never know—that she would cast him from her with abhorrence if she once really understood their viciousness! To think that, amid all the closest bonds of love, there must for ever be an awful, silent gulf in the past, of which they must never speak! That she would bring to him what he could never, never bring to her!—The thought was unbearable. And as hideous recollections used to rise before him, devilish caricatures of his former self, moaning and mowing at him in his dreams, he would start from his lonely bed and pace the room for hours, or saddle his horse and ride all night long aimlessly through the awful woods, vainly trying to escape himself. How gladly, at those moments, he would have welcomed entrance of a material hell, to escape from the more awful spiritual hell within him,—to hury back that pearl of innocence which he had cast recklessly to be trampled under the feet of his own swinish passions! But, no, that which was done could never be undone,—never, to all eternity. And more than once, as he wandered restlessly from one room to another, the barrels of his pistols seemed to glitter with a cold, devilish smile, and call to him,—

'Come to us! and with one touch of your finger send that bursting spirit which throbs against your brow to flit forth fire, and nevermore to defile her purity by your presence.'

But no, again a voice within seemed to

command him to go on, and claim her, and win her, spite of his own viciousness. And in after years, slowly, and in fear and trembling, he knew it for the voice of God, who had been leading him to become worthy of her through that bitter shame of his own unworthiness.

As One higher than them would have it, she took a fancy to read Homer in the original, and Lancelot could do no less than offer his services as translator. She would prepare for him portions of the *Odyssey*, and every day that he came up to the library he used to comment on it to her, and so for many a week, in the dark wainscoted library, and in the dim grey alleys of the old gardens, and under the brown autumn trees, they quarrelled together in that unexhausted mine, among the records of the rich Titan-youth of man. And step by step Lancelot opened to her the everlasting significance of the poem, the unconscious purity which lingers in it, like the last rays of the Paradise dawn, its sense of the dignity of man as man, the religious reverence with which it speaks of all human ties, human struggle and beauty—ay, even of merely animal human appetites—as God-given and God-like symbols. She could not but listen and admire, when he introduced her to the stern paganism of Schiller's Gods of Greece, for on this subject he was more eloquent than any. He had gradually, in fact, as we have seen, dropped all faith in anything but Nature, the slightest fact about a bone or a weed was more important to him than all the books of divinity which Argemone lent him—to be laid by unread.

'What do you believe in?' she asked him one day sally.

'In *thou*!' he said, stamping his foot on the ground. 'In the earth I stand on, and the things I see walking and growing on it. There may be something beside it—what you call a spiritual world. But if He who made me intended me to think of spirit first, He would have let me see it first. But as He has given me material senses, and put me in a material world, I take it as a fair hint that I am meant to use those senses first, whatever may come after. I may be intended to understand the unseen world, but if so, it must be, as I suspect, by understanding the visible one—and there are enough wonders there to occupy me for some time to come.'

'But the Bible?' (Argemone had given up long ago wasting words about the 'Church').

'My only Bible as yet is Bacon. I know that he is right, whoever is wrong. If that Hebrew Bible is to be believed by me, it must agree with what I know already from science.'

What was to be done with so intractable a heretic? Call him an infidel and a Materialist, of course, and scold him off with horror. But Argemone was beginning to find out that, when people are really in earnest, it may be better sometimes to leave God's methods of educating them alone, instead of calling the poor honest seekers hard names, which the speakers themselves don't understand.

But words would fail sometimes, and in default of them Lancelot had recourse to drawings, and manifested in them a talent for thinking in visible forms which put the climax to all Argemone's wonder. A single profile, even a mere mathematical figure, would, in his hands, become the illustration of a spiritual truth. And, in time, every fresh lesson on the *Odyssey* was accompanied by its illustration—some bold and simple outline drawing. In Argemone's eyes the sketches were immaculate and inspired, for their chief, almost their only fault, was just those mere anatomical slips which a woman would hardly perceive, provided the forms were generally graceful and bold.

One day his fancy attempted a bolder flight. He brought a large pen-and-ink drawing, and laying it silently on the table before her, fixed his eyes intensely on her face. The sketch was labelled, the 'Triumph of Woman'. In the foreground, to the right and left, were scattered groups of men, in the dresses and insignia of every period and occupation. The distance showed, in a few bold outlines, a dreary desert, broken by alpine ridges, and interwoven here and there by a wandering watercourse. Long shadows pointed to the half-risen sun, whose disc was gliding above the waste horizon. And in front of the sun, down the path of the morning beams, came Woman, clothed only in the armour of her own loveliness. Her bearing was stately, and yet modest, in her face pensive tenderness seemed wedded with earnest joy. In her right hand lay a cross, the emblem of self-sacrifice. Her path across the desert was marked by the flowers which sprang up beneath her steps, the wild gazelle stept forward trustingly to lick her hand, a single wandering butterfly fluttered round her head. As the group, one by one, caught sight of her, a human tenderness and intelligence seemed to light up every face. The scholar dropt his book, the miser his gold, the savage his weapons, even in the visage of the half-slumbering not some nobler recollection seemed wistfully to struggle into life. The artist caught up his pencil, the poet his lyre, with eyes that beamed forth sudden inspiration. The sage, whose broad brow rose above the group like some torrent furrowed Alp, scathed with all the temptations and all the sorrows of his race, watched with a thoughtful smile that preacher more mighty than himself. A youth, decked out in the most fantastic fopperies of the middle age, stood with clasped hands and brimming eyes, as remorse and pleasure struggled in his face, and as he looked, the fierce sensual features seemed to melt, and his flesh came again to him like the flesh of a little child. The slave forgot his fetters, little children clapped their hands, and the toil-worn, stunted, savage woman sprang forward to kneel at her feet, and see herself transfigured in that new and divine ideal of her sex.

Descriptions of drawings are clumsy things at

best, the reader must fill up the sketch for himself by the eye of faith.

Entranced in wonder and pleasure, Argemone let her eyes wander over the drawing. And her feelings for Lancelot amounted almost to worship, as she apprehended the harmonious unity of the manifold conception,—the rugged boldness of the groups in front, the soft grandeur of the figure which was the load-star of all their emotions—the virginal purity of the whole. And when she fancied that she traced in those ideal aquiline lineaments, and in the crisp rugglets which floated like a cloud down to the knees of the figure, some traces of her own likeness, a dream of a new destiny flitted before her,—she dashed to her very neck, and as she bent her face over the drawing and gazed, her whole soul seemed to rise into her eyes, and a single tear dropped upon the paper. She laid her hand over it, and then turned hastily away.

'You do not like it'. I have been too bold,' said Lancelot fearfully.

'Oh, no! no!' It is so beautiful—so full of deep wisdom! But—ah!—You may leave it.'

Lancelot slipped silently out of the room, he hardly knew why, and when he was gone Argemone caught up the drawing, pressed it to her bosom, covered it with kisses, and hid it, as too precious for any eyes but her own, in the farthest corner of her secretaire.

And yet she fancied that she was not in love!

The vicar saw the growth of this intimacy with a fast-lengthening face, for it was very evident that Argemone could not serve two masters so utterly contradictory as himself and Lancelot, and that either the lover or the father-confessor must speedily resign office. The vicar had had great disadvantages, by the bye, in fulfilling the latter function, for his visits at the Priory had been all but forbidden, and Argemone's 'spiritual state' had been directed by means of a secret correspondence,—a method which some clergymen, and some young ladies too, have discovered, in the last few years, to be quite consistent with moral delinquency and total obedience. John Bull, like a stupid fellow as he is, has still his doubts upon the point, but he should remember that though St. Paul tells women when they want advice to ask their husbands at home, yet if the poor woman has no husband, or, as often happens, her husband's advice is unpleasant, to whom is she to go but to the next best substitute, her spiritual confessor, or favourite clergyman? In sad earnest, neither husband or parent deserves pity in the immense majority of such cases. Woman will have guidance. It is her delight and glory to be led, and if her husband or her parents will not meet the cravings of her intellect, she must go elsewhere to find a teacher, and run into the wildest extravagances of private judgment in the very hope of getting rid of it, just as poor Argemone had been led to do.

And, indeed, she had of late wandered into very strange paths. would to God they were as

uncommon as strange! Both she and the vicar had a great wish that she should lead a 'devoted life', but then they both disclaimed to use common means for their object. The good old English plan of district visiting, by which ladies can have more on the bodies and souls of those below them, without casting off the holy discipline which a home, even the most impenetrable, alone supplies, savoured too much of mere 'Protestantism'. It might be God's plan for christianising England just now, but that was no reason, alas! for its being their plan, they wanted something more 'Catholic,' more in accordance with Church principles (for, indeed, is it not the business of the Church to correct the errors of Providence?), and what they sought they found at once in a certain favourite establishment of the vicar's, a Church-of-England *beguinage*, or quasi-Protestant nunnery, which he fostered in a neighbouring city, and went thither on all high tides to confess the young ladies, who were in all things nuns, but bound by no vows, except, of course, such as they might choose to make for themselves in private.

Here they laboured among the lowest haunts of misery and sin, piously and self-denyingly (enough, sweet souls! in hope of 'the peculiar crown,' and a higher place in heaven than the relations whom they had left behind them 'in the world,' and unshackled by the interference of parents, and other such merely fleshly relationships, which, as they cannot have been instituted by God merely to be trampled under foot on the path to holiness, and cannot well have instituted themselves (unless, after all, the Materialists are right, and this world does grind of itself, except when its Maker happens to interfere once every thousand years), must needs, have been instituted by the devil. And so more than one girl in that nunnery, and out of it, too, believed in her inmost heart, though her 'Catholic principles,' by a happy inconsistency, forbade her to say so.

In a moment of excitement, fascinated by the romance of the station, Argemone had proposed to her mother to allow her to enter this *beguinage*, and called in the vicar as advocate; which produced a correspondence between him and Mrs. Lavington, atomy on her side, provokingly calm on his; and when the poor lady, tired of raging, had descended to an affecting appeal to his human sympathies, entreating him to spare a mother's feelings, he had answered, with the same impassive fanaticism, that 'he was surprised at her putting a mother's selfish feelings in competition with the sanctity of her child,' and that, 'had his own daughter shown such a desire for a higher vocation, he should have esteemed it the very highest honour', to which Mrs. Lavington answered, naively enough, that 'it depended very much on what his daughter was like.'—So he was all but forbidden the house. Nevertheless he contrived, by means of this same secret correspondence, to keep alive in Argemone's mind the longing to turn nun, and fancied honestly that he was doing God

service, while he was pampering the poor girl's lust for singularity and self-glorification.

But, lately, Argemone's letters had become less frequent and less confiding, and the vicar, who well knew the reason, had resolved to bring the matter to a crisis.

So he wrote earnestly and peremptorily to his pupil, urging her, with all his subtle and refined eloquence, to make a final appeal to her mother, and, if that failed, to act 'as her conscience should direct her', and enclosed an answer from the superior of the convent to a letter which Argemone had in a mad moment asked him to write. The superior's letter spoke of Argemone's joining her as a settled matter, and of her room as ready for her, while it lauded to the skies the peaceful activity and usefulness of the establishment. This letter troubled Argemone exceedingly. She had never before been compelled to face her own feelings, either about the nunnery or about Lancelot. She had taken up the fancy of becoming a Sister of Charity, not as Honoria might have done, from genuine love of the poor, but from 'a sense of duty.' Almsgiving and visiting the sick were one of the methods of earning heaven prescribed by her new creed. She was ashamed of her own laziness by the side of Honoria's simple benevolence, and, sad though it may be to have to say it, she longed to outdo her by some signal act of self-sacrifice. She had looked to this nunnery, too, as an escape, once and for all, from her own luxury, just as people who have not strength to be temperate take refuge in total abstinence, and the thought of menial services towards the poor, however distasteful to her, came in quite prettily to fill up the little ideal of a life of romantic asceticism and mystic contemplation, which gave the true charm in her eyes to her wild project. But now—just as a held had opened to her cravings after poetry and art, wider and richer than she had ever imagined—just as those simple childlike views of man and nature, which she had learnt to despise, were assuming an awful holiness in her eyes—just as she had found a human soul to whose regeneration she could devote all her energies—to be required to give all up, perhaps for ever (and she felt that it at all, it ought to be for ever).—it was too much for her little heart to bear, and she cried bitterly, and tried to pray, and could not, and longed for a strong and tender bosom on which to lay her head, and pour out all her doubts and struggles, and there was none. Her mother did not understand—hardly loved her. Honoria loved her, but understood her even less than her mother. Pride—the pride of intellect, the pride of self-will—had long since sealed her lips to her own family.

And then, but of the darkness of her heart, Lancelot's image rose before her stronger than all, tenderer than all: and as she remembered his magical faculty of anticipating all her thoughts, embodying for her all her vague surmises, he seemed to beckon her towards him.

—She shuddered and turned away. And now she first became conscious how he had haunted her thoughts in the last few months, not as a soul to be saved, but as a living man—his face, his figure, his voice, his every gesture and expression, rising clear before her, in spite of herself, by day and night.

And then she thought of his last drawing, and the looks which had accompanied it,—unmistakable looks of passionate and adoring love. There was no denying it—she had always known that he loved her, but she had never dared to confess it to herself. But now the earthquake was rattle, and all the secrets of her heart burst upward to the light, and she faced the thought in shame and terror. 'How unjust I have been to him! how cruel! thus to cut him out in hopeless love!'

She lifted up her eyes, and saw in the mirror opposite the reflection of her own exquisite beauty.

'I could have known what I was doing! I knew all the while! And yet it is so delicious to feel that any one loves me! Is it selfishness? It is selfishness to pamper my vanity on an affection which I do not, will not return. I will not be thus in debt to him, even for his love. I do not love him. I do not, and even if I did, to give myself up to a man of whom I know so little, who is not even a Christian, much less a *'hunchman'*. Ay! and to give up my will to any man! to become the subject, the slave, of another human being! I, who have worshipped the belief in woman's independence, the hope of woman's enfranchisement, who have felt how glorious it is to live like the angels, single and self-sustained! What if I cut the Gordian knot, and here make, once for all, a vow of perpetual celibacy?'

She flung herself on her knees—she could not collect her thoughts.

'No,' she said, 'I am not prepared for this. It is too solemn to be undertaken in this miserable whirlwind of passion. I will rest, and meditate, and go up formally to the little chapel, and there devote myself to God, and in the meantime, to write at once to the superior of the *'Beguines'*, to go to my mother, and tell her once for all—What? Must I lose him! must I give him up? Not his love—I cannot give up that—would that I could! but no! he will love me for ever. I know it as well as if an angel told me. But to give up him! Never to see him! never to hear his voice! never to walk with him among the beech woods any more! Oh, Argemone! Argemone! miserable girl! and is it come to this? And she threw herself on the sofa and hid her face in her hands.

Yes, Argemone, it is come to this, and the best thing you can do is just what you are doing—to lie there and cry yourself to sleep, while the angels are laughing kindly (if a soul can public, who settles everything for them, will permit them to laugh) at the rickety old windmill of sham-Popery which you have taken for a real giant.

At that same day and hour, as it chanced, Lancelot, little dreaming what the said windmill was grinding for him, was scribbling a hasty and angry answer to a letter of Lake's, which, perhaps, came that very morning in order to put him into a proper temper for the demolishing of windmills. It ran thus,—

'Ay, my good Cousin,—So I expected—

*'Sive mari roagno torbentibus aequora ventis
Et terra magnam alterius spectare laborem'*

Pleasant and easy for you Protestants (for I will call you what you are, in spite of your own denials, a truly consistent and logical Protestant—and therefore a Materialist) easy for you, I say, to sit on the shore in cold, cruel self-satisfaction, and tell the poor wretch buffeted with the waves what he ought to do while he is choking and drowning. Thank Heaven,

the storm has stranded me upon the everlasting Rock of Peter,—but it has been a sore trouble to reach it. Protestants, who look at creeds as things to be changed like coats, whenever they seem not to fit them, little know what a Catholic huddled busy suffer.

If they did, they would be more merciful and more chary to the requirements of us, just as we are in the very throes of a new-born existence. The excellent man to whose care I have committed myself has a way and a tender heart. He saw no harm in my concealing from my father the spiritual reason of my giving up my career (for I have given it up), and only giving the outward, but equally true reason, that I found it on the whole an ineligible and distressing post.

I know you will apply to such an act that disgusting monosyllable of which Protestants are so fond. He felt with me and for me—for my horror of giving pain to my father, and for my veiled and excited state of mind and strangely enough to show how differently according to the difference of the organs, the same object may appear to two people. He quoted in my favour that very verse which you wrote against me. He wished you to show my father that I had only changed my heaven, and not my character, by becoming an Ultramontane-Catholic.

That, as far as his esteem and affection were founded on anything in me the ground of it did not vanish with my conversion. If I had told him at once of my altered opinions, he would have henceforth viewed every word and action with a prejudiced eye.

Protestants are so huddled—but if, after seeing me for a month or two the same Lake that he had ever known me, he were gradually informed that I had all the while held that creed which he had considered incompatible with such a life as I hope mine would be, you must see the effect which it ought to have.

I don't doubt that you will condemn of all this. . . All I can say is, that I cannot sympathize with that superstitious reverence for mere verbal truth which is so common among Protestants. . . It seems to me they throw away the spirit of truth,

in their idolatry of its letter. For instance,—what is the use of informing a man of a true fact but to induce a true opinion in him? But if, by clinging to the exact letter of the fact, you create a false opinion in his mind, as I should do in my father's case, if by telling him at once of my change I gave him an unjust horror of Catholicism,—you do not tell him the truth. . . You may speak what is true to you,—but it becomes an error when received into his mind. . . If his mind is a refracting and polarising medium—if the crystalline lens of his soul's eye has been changed into tourmaline or Labrador spar—the only way to give him a true image of the fact is to present it to him already properly altered in form, and adapted to suit the opacity of his vision, in order that the very refractive power of his faculties may, instead of distorting it, correct it and make it straight for him, and so a virtual wrong in fact may possess him with a right opinion.

'You see the whole question turns on your Protestant dedication of the intellect. If you really believed, as you all say you do, that the nature of man, and therefore his intellect among the rest, was utterly corrupt, you would not be so superstitiously careful to tell the truth as you call it, because you would know that man's heart, if not his head, would needs turn the truth into a lie by its own corruption.

. . . The proper use of reasoning is to produce opinion,—and if the subject in which you wish to produce the opinion is diseased, you must adapt the medicine accordingly.'

To all which Lancelot with several strong curses, returned the following answer:

'And this is my consent, Laik!—Well, I shall believe henceforward that there is, after all, a thousand times greater moral gulf fixed between Popery and Tractarianism than between Tractarianism and the extreme Protestantism. My dear fellow, I won't bother you by cutting up your charming ambiguous middle terms, which make reason and reasoning idle to all, or your theory that the office of reasoning is to induce opinions—(the devil take opinions, right or wrong—I want facts, faith in real facts!) or about deifying the intellect—as if all sound intellect was not in itself divine light—a revelation to man of absolute laws independent of him, as the very heathens hold. But thus I will do: thank you most sincerely for the compliment you pay us Cismontane heretics. We do return some dim belief in a God—even I am beginning to believe in believing in Him. And therefore, as I begin to suppose, it is that we reverence facts as the word of God, His acted words and will, which we dare not falsify, which we believe will tell their own story better than we can tell it for them. If our eyes are dimmed, we think it safer to clear them, which do belong to us, than to hovel, by the light of those very already dimmed eyes, the objects round, which do not belong to us. Whether we are consistent or not about the corruptness of man, we are

about the incorruptness of God, and therefore about that of the facts by which God teaches men; and believe, and will continue to believe, that the blackest of all sins, the deepest of all Atheisms, that which, above all things, proves no faith in God's government of the universe, no sense of His presence, no understanding of His character, is—a lie.

'One word more—unless you tell your father within twenty-four hours after receiving this letter, I will. And I, being a Protestant (it cursing Popery means Protestantism), mean what I say.'

As Lancelot walked up to the Priory that morning, the Reverend Pannigus O'Blareaway dashed out of a cottage by the roadside, and seized him neck and shoulders by the shoulders. He was a specimen of humanity which Lancelot could not help at once liking and despising—a quaint mixture of coarset and earnestness, uniting the shrewdness of a stockjobber with the frolic of a schoolboy broke loose. He was rector of a place in the west of Ireland, containing some ten Protestants and some thousand Papists. Being, unfortunately for himself, a red hot Orangeman, he had thought fit to quarrel with the priest, in consequence of which he found himself deprived both of tithes and congregation, and after receiving three or four Rockite letters, and a charge of slugs through his hat (of which he always talked as it being shot at was the most pleasant and amusing feature of Irish life), he repaired to England, and then, after trying to set up as popular preacher in London, declaiming at Exeter Hall, and writing for all the third rate magazines, found himself unemployed at Lower Whitford. He worked there, as he said himself, 'like a horse', spent his mornings in the schools, his afternoons in the cottages, preached four or five extempore sermons every week to overflowing congregations, took the lead, by virtue of the 'gift of the gab,' at all 'religious' meetings of ten miles round, and really did a great deal of good in his way. He had an unblushing candour about his own worldly ambition, with a tremendous boggle, and prided himself on exaggerating deliberately both of these excellences.

'The top of the morning to ye, Mr Smith. Ye haven't such a thing as a cigar about ye? I've been preaching to school-children till me throat's as dry as the slaw of a lime burner's coat.'

'I am ~~very~~ sorry, but, really, I have left my case at home.'

'Oh! ah! take and I forgot. Ye mustn't be smokin' the nasty things going up to the castle Oeh, Mr Smith, but you're the lucky man!'

'I am much obliged to you for the compliment,' said Lancelot gruffly, 'but really I don't see how I deserve it.'

'Deserve it! Sure luck's all, and that's your luck, and not your deserts at all. To have the handsomest girl in the county dyin' for love of ye'—(Pannigus had a happy knack of blurtin' out truths—when they were pleasant ones).

'And she just the beautifullest creature that ever spilt shoe-leather, barring Lady Philandria Mountfunkey, of Castle Mountfunkey, Quane's County, that shall be nameless.'

'Upon my word, O'Blareaway, you seem to be better acquainted with my matters than I am. Don't you think, on the whole, it might be better to mind your own business?'

'Me own business! Poker o' Moses! and ain't it me own business! Haven't ye spilt me tenderest hopes! And good luck to ye in that same, for ye're as pretty a rider as ever kicked coping-stones out of a wall, and poor Paddy loves a sportsman by nature. Oh! but ye've got a hand of trumps this time. Didn't I mate the vicar the other day, and spake my mind to him?'

'What do you mean?' asked Lancelot, with a strong expletive.

'Faix, I told him he might as well *Faugh a ballagh*—make a rid road and get out of that, with his bowings and his crossings, and his Popery made asy for small minds, for there was a gun a-held that would wipe his eye, - naming yourself, ye Protestant.'

'All I can say is, that you had really better mind your own business, and I'll mind my own.'

'Och,' said the good-natured Irishman, 'and it's you must mind my business, and I'll mind yours, and that's all fair and aqual. Ye've cut me out intirely at the Priory, ye Tory, and so ye're bound to give me a hit somehow. Couldn't ye look me out a fine fat widow, with an illigant little fortune? For what's England made for except to find poor Paddy a wife and money? Ah, ye may laugh, but I'd buy me a chapel at the West End, me talents are thrown away here intirely, wasting me swatness on the desert air, as Tom Moore says' (Pannurgus used to attribute all quotations whatsoever to Irish geniuses), 'and I flatter meself I'm the boy to shute the Gospel to the aristocracy.'

Lancelot burst into a roar of laughter, and escaped over the next gate, but the Irishman's coarse hints stuck by him as they were intended to do. 'Dying for the love of me!' He knew it was an unpudent exaggeration, but, somehow, it gave him confidence, 'there is no smoke,' he thought, 'without fire.' And his heart beat high with new hopes, for which he laughed at himself all the while. It was just the cordial which he needed. That conversation determined the history of his life.

He met Argemone that morning in the library, as usual, but he soon found that she was not thinking of Homer. She was moody and abstracted, and he could not help at last saying, —

'I am afraid I and my class are *de trop* this morning, Miss Lavington.'

'Oh, no, no. Never that.' She turned away her head. He fancied that it was to hide a tear.

Suddenly she rose, and turned to him with a clear, calm, gentle gaze.

'Listen to me, Mr Smith. We must part to-day, and for ever. This intimacy has gone on—too long, I am afraid, for your happiness. And now, like all pleasant things in this miserable world, it must cease. I cannot tell you why; but you will trust me. I thank you for it—I thank God for it. I have learnt things from it which I shall never forget. I have learnt, at least from it, to esteem and honour you. You have vast powers. Nothing, nothing, I believe, is too high for you to attempt and succeed. But we must part, and now, God be with you. Oh, that you would but believe that these glorious talents are His loan! That you would but be a true and loyal Knight to Him who said—'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls!'

—Ay,' she went on, more and more passionately, for she felt that not she, but One mightier than herself was speaking through her, 'then you might be great indeed. Then I might watch your name from afar, rising higher and higher daily in the ranks of God's own heroes. I see it—and you have taught me to see it—that you are meant for a faith nobler and deeper than all doctrines and systems can give. You must become the philosopher, who can discover new truths—the artist who can embody them in new forms, while poor I— And that is another reason why we should part. Hush! hear me out. I must not be a clog, to drag you down in your course. Take this, and farewell, and remember that you once had a friend called Argemone.'

She put into his hands a little Bible. He took it, and laid it down on the table.

For a minute he stood silent and rooted to the spot. Disappointment, shame, rage, hatred, all boiled up madly within him. The bitterest insults rose to his lips—'Flirt, cold-hearted pedant, fanatic!'—but they sank again unspoken, as he looked into the celestial aure of those eyes, calm and pure as a soft evening sky. A mighty struggle between good and evil shook his heart to the roots, and, for the first time in his life, his soul breathed out one real prayer, that God would help him now or never to play the man. And in a moment the darkness passed, a new spirit called out all the latent strength within him, and gently and proudly he answered her,—

'Yes, I will go. I have had mad dreams, concerted and insolent, and have met with my deserts. Brute and fool as I am, I have aspired even to you! And I have gained, in the sun shine of your condescension, strength and purity.—Is not that enough for me! And now I will show you that I love you—by obeying you. You tell me to depart—I go for ever.'

He turned away. Why did she almost spring after him?

'Lancelot! one word! Do not misunderstand me, as I know you will. You will think me so cold, heartless, fickle.—Oh, you do not know—you never can know—how much I, too, have felt!'

He stopped, spell-bound. In an instant his conversation with the Irishman flashed up before him with new force and meaning. A thousand petty incidents, which he had driven contemptuously from his mind, returned as triumphant evidences, and, with an impetuous determination, he cried out,—

'I see—I see it all, Argemone! We love each other! You are mine, never to be parted!'

What was her womanhood, that it could stand against the energy of his manly will? The almost coarse simplicity of his words silenced her with a delicious violence. She could only bury her face in her hands, and sob out,—

'Oh, Lancelot, Lancelot, whither are you forcing me?'

'I am forcing you no whither. God, the Father of spirits, is leading you! You, who believe in Him, how dare you fight against Him?'

'Lancelot, I cannot—I cannot listen to you—read that!'

 And she handed him the vicar's letter. He read it, tossed it on the carpet, and crushed it with his heel.

'Wretched pedant! Can your intellect be deluded by such barefaced sophistries? "God's will," forsooth! And if your mother's opposition is not a sign that God's will—if it mean anything except your own will, or that—that man's is against this mad project, and not for it, what sign would you have? So "celibacy is the highest state!" And why? Because "it is the safest and the easiest road to heaven?" A pretty reason, vicar! I should have thought, that that was a sign of a lower spirit and not a higher. Noble spirits show their nobleness by daring the most difficult paths. And even if marriage was but one weed-field of temptations, as these miserable pedants say, who have either never tried it, or misused it to their own shame, it would be a greater deed to conquer its temptations than to flee from them in cowardly longings after ease and safety!'

She did not answer him, but kept her face buried in her hands.

'Again, I say Argemone, will you fight against Fate—Providence—God—call it what you will! Who made us meet at the chapel? Who made me, by my accident, a guest in your father's house? Who put it into your heart to care for my poor soul? Who gave us this strange attraction towards each other, in spite of our unlikeness? Wonderful that the very chain of circumstances which you seem to fancy the offspring of chance or the devil, should have first taught me to believe that there is a God who guides us! Argemone! speak, tell me, if you will, to go for ever, but tell me first the truth—You love me!'

A strong shudder ran through her frame—the ice of artificial years cracked, and the clear stream of her woman's nature welled up to the light, as pure as when she first lay on her mother's bosom. She lifted up her eyes, and with one long look of passionate tenderness she faltered out,—

'I love you!'

He did not stir, but watched her with clasped hands, like one who in dreams finds himself in some fairy palace, and fears that a movement may break the spell.

'Now go,' she said, 'go, and let me collect my thoughts. All this has been too much for me. Do not look sad—you may come again to-morrow.'

She smiled and held out her hand. He caught it, covered it with kisses, and pressed it to his heart. She half drew it back, frightened. The sensation was new to her. Again the delicious feeling of being utterly in his power came over her, and she left her hand upon his heart, and blushed as she felt its passionate throbbings.

He turned to go—not as before. She followed with greedy eyes her new found treasure, and as the door closed behind him, she felt as if Lancelot was the whole world, and there was nothing beside him, and wondered how a moment had made him all in all to her, and then she sank upon her knees, and folded her hands upon her bosom, and her prayers for him were like the prayers of a little child.

CHAPTER XI

THE THUNDERSTORM THE FIRST

BUT what had become of the 'bit of writing' which Harry Vinney, by the instigation of his civil genius, had put into the squire's fly-book? Tregarva had waited in terrible suspense for many weeks, expecting the explosion which he knew must follow its discovery. He had confided to Lancelot the contents of the paper, and Lancelot had tried many stratagems to get possession of it, but all in vain. Tregarva took this as calmly as he did every thing else. Only once, on the morning of the *cloussament* between Lancelot and Argemone, he talked to Lancelot of leaving his place, and going out to seek his fortune, but some spell, which he did not explain, seemed to chain him to the Priory. Lancelot thought it was the want of money, and offered to lend him ten pounds whenever he liked, but Tregarva shook his head.

'You have treated me, sir, as no one else has done—like a man and a friend, but I am not going to make a market of your generosity. I will owe no man anything, save to love one another.'

'But how do you intend to live?' asked Lancelot, as they stood together in the cloisters.

'There's enough of me, sir, to make a good navigator if all trades fail.'

'Nonsense! you must not throw yourself away so.'

'Oh, sir, there's good to be done, believe me, among those poor fellows. They wander up and down the land like hogs and heathens, and no one tells them that they have a soul to be

save! Not one parson in a thousand gives a thought to them. They can manage old folks and little children, sir, but, somehow, they never can get hold of the young men—just those who want them most. There's a talk about ragged schools, now. Why don't they try ragged churches, sir, and a ragged service?' 'What do you mean?'

'Why, sir, the parsons are ready enough to save souls, but it must be only according to rule and regulation. Before the Gospel can be preached there must be three thousand pounds got together for a church, and a thousand for an endowment, not to mention the thousand pounds that the clergyman's education costs. I don't think of his own keep, sir, that's little enough, often, and those that work hardest get least pay, it seems to me. But after all that expense, when they've built the church, it's the tradesmen, and the gentry, and the old folk that fill it, and the working men never come near it from one year's end to another.'

'What's the cause, do you think?' asked Lancelot, who had himself remarked the same thing more than once.

'Half of the reason, sir, I do believe, is that same Prayer-book. Not that the Prayer-book isn't a fine book enough, and a true one, but don't you see, sir, to understand the virtue of it the poor fellows ought to be already just what you want to make them.'

'You mean that they ought to be thorough Christians already, to appreciate the spirituality of the liturgy.'

'You've hit it, sir. And so what comes of the present plan, how a navy drops into a church by accident, and there he has to sit like a fish out of water, through that hom'ly service, staring or sleeping, before he can hear a word that he understands, and, sir, when the sermon does come at last, it's not many of them can make much out of those fine book-words and long sentences. Why don't they have a short simple service, now and then, that might catch the ears of the roughs and the blowens, with out tiring out the poor thoughtless creatures' patience, as they do now?'

'Because,' said Lancelot, '—because—I really don't know why. But I think there is a simpler plan than even a ragged service.'

'What, then, sir?'

'Field-preaching. If the mountain won't come to Mahomet, let Mahomet go to the mountain.'

'Right, sir, right you are. "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in." And why are they to speak to them only one by one? Why not, by the dozen and the hundred? We Wesleyans know, sir,—for the matter of that, every soldier knows,—what virtue there is in getting a lot of men together, in a good and evil spread like wildfire through a crowd, and one man, if you can stir him up, will become leaven to leaven the whole lump. Oh why, sir, are they so afraid of field-preaching? Was not their Master and mine the prince of all field-preachers? Think, if the

Apostles had waited to collect subscriptions for a church before they spoke to the poor heathens, where should we have been now?'

Lancelot could not but agree. But at that moment a footman came up, and with a face half laughing, half terrified, said,—

'Tregarva, master wants you in the study. And please, sir, I think you had better go in too, master knows you're here, and you might speak a word for good, for he's raging like a mad bull.'

'I know it would come at last,' said Tregarva quietly, as he followed Lancelot into the house.

It had come at last. The squire was sitting in his study, purple with rage, while his daughters were trying vainly to pacify him. All the men-servants, groom, and helpers, were drawn up in line along the wall, and greeted Tregarva, whom they all heartily liked, with sly and sorrowful looks of warning.

'Here, you sir, you—, look at this! Is this the way you repay me? I, who have kept you out of the workhouse, treated you like my own child? And then to go and write filthy, rashty, Radical ballads on me and mine! This comes of your Methodism, you canting, sneaking hypocrite!—you viper! you sinner! you snake! you—!' And the squire, whose reasonableness was not large, at a loss for another synonym, rounded off his oration by a torrent of oaths, at which Argemone, taking Humana's hand, walked proudly out of the room, with one glance at Lancelot of mingled shame and love. This is your handwriting, you villain! you know it! (and the squire tossed the said paper across the table), 'though I suppose you'll be about it. How can you depend on fellows who speak evil of their betters? But all the servants are ready to swear it's your handwriting.'

'Beg your pardon, sir,' interposed the old butler, 'we didn't quite say that, but we'll all swear it isn't ours.'

'The paper is mine,' said Tregarva.

'Confound your goodness! He's no more ashamed of it than—Read it out, Smith, read it out every word, and let them all hear how this parson, this ballad-singing vagabond, whom I have bred up to insult me, dares to abuse his own master.'

'I have not abused you, sir,' answered Tregarva. 'I will be heard, sir.' He went on in a voice which made the old man start from his seat and clutch his fist, but he sat down again. 'Not a word in it is meant for you. You have been a kind and a good master to me. Ask where you will if I was ever heard to say a word against you. I would have sent off my right hand sooner than write about you or yours. But what I had to say about others lies there, and I am not ashamed of it.'

'Not against me? Read it out, Smith, and see if every word of it don't hit at me, and at my daughters, too, by—, worst of all! Read it out, I say!'

Lancelot hesitated, but the squire, who was utterly beside himself, began to swear at him also, as masters of hounds are privileged to do, and Lancelot, to whom the whole scene was becoming every moment more and more intensely ludicrous, thought it best to take up the paper and begin —

'A ROUGH RHYME ON A ROUGH MATTER

'The merry brown hares came leaping
(Over the crest of the hill,
Where the clover and corn lay sleeping
Under the moonlight still

'Leaving late and early,
Till under their bite and their tread
The swedes, and the wheat, and the barley,
Lay crinkled, and trampled, and dead

'A poor her a widow sat sighing
(On the side of the white chalk bank,
Where, under the gloomy fir woods
One spot in the icy throe sank

'She watched a long list of clover,
Where rabbit or hare never ran,
For its black sour humen covered over
The blood of a murdered man

'She thought of the dark plantation,
And the hares and her husband's blood,
And the voice of her illumination
Close up to the throne of God

'I am long past wailing and whining —
I have wept too much in my life
I've had twenty years of plugging
As an English labourer's wife

'A labourer in Christian England,
Where they cant of a saviour's name,
And yet was no more like the vermin
For a few more brace of game

'There's blood on your new fur (a) skims, squire,
There's blood on your pointer's feet,
There's blood on the game you sell, squire,
And there's blood on the game you eat

'You villain!' interposed the squire, 'when did I ever sell a head of game?'

'You have sold the labouring man, squire,
Body and soul to shame,
To pay for your seat in the House, squire,
And to pay for the feed of your hounds

'You made him a powder yourself, squire,
When you'd give neither work nor meat
And your barley-fed hares rode the girth
At our starving children's feet,

'When packed in my reeking chamber,
Man, maid, mother, and little ones lay,
While the rain pattered in on the rotting brick bed,
And the walls let in the day,

'When we lay in the burning fever
(On the mud of the cold clay floor,
Till you parted us all for three months, squire,
At the cursed workhouse door

'We quarrelled like brutes, and who wonders?
What self respect could we keep,
Worse housed than your hares and your pointers,
Worse fed than your hags and your sheep?'

'And yet he has the impudence to say he don't mean me!' grumbled the old man. 'Tregarva winced a good deal—as it he knew what was coming next, and then looked up relieved when he found Lancelot had omitted a stanza—which I shall not omit.

'Our daughters with base born babies
Have wandered away in their shame,
If your misses had slept, squire, where they did,
Your misses might do the same

'Can your lady patch hearts that are breaking
With handfuls of coins and rice,
Or by dealing out flannel and sheeting
A little below cost price?

'You may tire of the goal and the workhouse,
And take to allotments and schools,
But you've run up a debt that will never
Be repaid us by penny club rules

'In the season of shame and sadness,
In the dark and dreary day
When scrofula, gout, and madness,
Are eating your race away,

'When to kennels and byres and varlets
You have cast your daughters' bread,
And worn out with liquor and lurbs,
Your hair at your feet lies dead,

'When your youngest, the nearly mouthed rector,
Lays your soul red as the grave,
You will find in young God the protector
Of the friar and you fished your slave

'She looked at the list of clover,
And wept till her heart grew light,
And at last, when her passion was over,
Went wandering into the night

'But the merry brown hares came leaping,
(Over the meadows still,
Where the clover and corn lay sleeping
On the side of the white chalk hill

'Surely, sir,' said Lancelot, 'you cannot suppose that this latter part applies to you or your family?'

'If it don't, it applies to half the gentlemen in the vale and that's just as bad. What right has the fellow to speak evil of dignities?' continued he, quoting the early text in the Bible which he was inclined to make a rule absolute.

'What does such an insolent dog deserve? What don't he deserve, I say?'

'I think,' quoth Lancelot ambiguously, 'that a man who can write such ballads is not fit to be your gamekeeper, and I think he feel so himself, and Lancelot stole an encouraging look at Freggiva.

'And I say, sir,' the keeper answered, with an effort, 'that I leave Mr. Lavington's service here on the spot, once and for all.

'And that you may do my true fellow' warned the squire. 'Pay the casual his wages, steward, and then duck him soundly in the weir pool. He had better have stayed there when he fell in last.'

'So I had, indeed, I think. But I'll take none of your money. The day Harry Verney was buried I vowed that I'd touch no more of the wages of blood. I'm going, sir. I never harmed you, or meant a hard word of all this for you, or dreamt that you or any living soul would ever see it. But what I've seen myself, in spite of myself, I've set down here, and am not ashamed of it. And woe, he went on, with an almost prophetic solemnity in his tone and gesture—'woe to those who do these things' and woe to those also who, though they dare not do them themselves, yet excuse and defend

them who dare, just because the world calls them gentlemen, and not tyrants and oppressors.'

He turned to go. The squire, bursting with passion, springing up with a terrible oath, turned deadly pale, staggered, and dropped senseless on the floor.

They all rushed to lift him up. Tregarva was the first to take him in his arms and place him tenderly in his chair, where he lay back with glassy eyes, snoring heavily in a fit of apoplexy.

'Go, for God's sake, go,' whispered Lancelot to the keeper, 'and wait for me at Lower Whitford. I must see you before you stir.'

The keeper slipped away sadly. The ladies rushed in—a groom galloped off for the doctor—met him luckily in the village, and in a few minutes the squire was bled and put to bed, and showed hopeful signs of returning consciousness. And as Argemone and Lancelot leant together over his pillow, her hair touched her lover's, and her fragrant breath was warm upon his cheek, and her bright eyes met his and drank light from them, like glittering planets gazing at their sun.

The obnoxious ballad produced the most opposite effects on Argemone and on Honoria. Argemone, whose reverence for the formalities and the respectabilities of society, never very great, had of late utterly vanished before Lancelot's bad counsel, could think of it only as a work of art, and conceived the most romantic longing to raise Tregarva into some station where his talents might have free play. To Honoria, on the other hand, it appeared only as a very fierce, coarse, and impertinent satire, which had nearly killed her father. True, there was not a thought in it which had not at some time or other crossed her own mind, but that made her dislike all the more to see those thoughts put into plain English. That very intense tenderness and excitability which made her toil herself among the poor, and had called out both her admiration of Tregarva and her extravagant passion at his danger, made her also shrink with disgust from anything which thrust on her a painful reality which she could not remedy. She was a staunch believer, too, in that peculiar creed which allows every one to feel for the poor, except themselves, and considers that to plead the cause of working men is, in a gentleman, the perfection of virtue, but in a working man himself sheer high treason. And so beside her father's sickbed she thought of the keeper only as a scorpion whom she had helped to warm into life, and sighing assent to her mother, when she said, 'That wretch, and he seemed so pious and so obliging! who would have dreamt that he was such a horrid Radical!' she let him vanish from her mind and out of Whitford Priory, little knowing the sore weight of manly love he bore with him.

As soon as Lancelot could leave the Priory, he hastened home to find Tregarva. The keeper had packed up all his small possessions and brought them down to Lower Whitford, through

which the London coach passed. He was determined to go to London and seek his fortune. He talked of turning coal-heaver, Methodist preacher, anything that came to hand, provided that he could but keep independence and a clear conscience. And all the while the man seemed to be struggling with some great purpose,—to feel that he had a work to do, though what it was, and how it was to be done, he did not see.

'I am a tall man,' he said, 'like Saul the son of Kish, and I am going forth, like him, sir, to find my father's asses. I doubt I shall have to look far for some of them.'

'And perhaps,' said Lancelot, laughing, 'to find a kingdom.'

'May be so, sir. I have found one already, by God's grace, and I'm much mistaken if I don't begin to see my way towards another.'

'And what is that?'

'The kingdom of God on earth, sir, as well as in heaven. Come it must, sir, and come it will some day.'

Lancelot shook his head.

Tregarva lifted up his eyes and said,--

'Are we not taught to pray for the coming of His kingdom, sir? And do you fancy that He who gave the lesson would have set all mankind to pray for what He never meant should come to pass?'

Lancelot was silent. The words gained a new and blessed meaning in his eyes.

'Well,' he said, 'the time, at least, of their fulfilment is far enough off. Union workhouses and child-murder don't look much like it. Talking of that, Tregarva, what is to become of your promise to take me to a village wake, and show me what the poor are like?'

'I can keep it this night, sir. There is a revel at Bonesake, about five miles up the river. Will you go with a discharged gamekeeper?'

'I will go with Paul Tregarva, whom I honour and esteem as one of God's own noble men, who has taught me what a man can be, and what I am not,'—and Lancelot grasped the keeper's hand warmly. Tregarva brushed his hand across his eyes and answered,--

'"I said in my haste, All men are liars," and God has just given me the lie back in my teeth. Well, sir, we will go to-night. You are not ashamed of putting on a smock-frock? For if you go as a gentleman, you will hear no more of them than a hawk does of a covey of partridges.'

So the expedition was agreed on, and Lancelot and the keeper parted until the evening.

But why had the vicar been rumbling on all that morning through pouring rain, on the top of the London coach? And why was he so anxious in his inquiries as to the certainty of catching the up-train? Because he had had considerable experience in that wisdom of the serpent, whose combination with the innocence of the dove, in somewhat ultramontane proportions, is recommended by certain late leaders of his school. He had made up his mind, after

his conversation with the Irishman, that he must either oust Lancelot at once or submit to be ousted by him, and he was now on his way to Lancelot's uncle and trustee, the London banker.

He knew that the banker had some influence with his nephew, whose whole property was invested in the bank, and who had besides a deep respect for the kindly and upright practical mind of the veteran Mainmorte. And the vicar knew, too, that he himself had some influence with the banker, whose son Luke had been his pupil at college. And when the young man lay sick of a dangerous illness, brought on by debauchery, into which weakness rather than vice had tempted him, the vicar had watched and prayed by his bed, nursed him as tenderly as a mother, and so won over his better heart that he became completely reclaimed, and took holy orders with the most earnest intention to pity the man therein, as repentant rakes will often do, half from a mere revulsion to asceticism, half from real gratitude for their deliverance. This good deed had placed the banker in the vicar's debt, and he loved and revered him in spite of his dread of 'Popish novelties'. And now the good priest was going to open to him just as much of his heart as should seem fit, and by saying a great deal about Lancelot's evil doings, opinions, and companions, and nothing at all about the perjury of Whitford, persuade the banker to use all his influence in drawing Lancelot up to London, and leaving a clear stage for his plans on Argemone. He caught the up train, he arrived safe and sound in town, but what he did there must be told in another chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THUNDERSTORM THE SECOND

WEARY with many thoughts, the vicar came to the door of the bank. There were several carriages there, and a crowd of people swarming in and out, like bees round a hive door, entering with anxious faces, and retreating with cheerful ones, to stop and talk earnestly in groups round the door. Every moment the mass thickened—there was a rum on the bank.

An old friend accosted him on the steps,—

'What have you, too, money here, then?'

'Neither here nor anywhere else, thank Heaven!' said the vicar. 'But is anything wrong?'

'Have not you heard? The house has sustained a frightful blow this week—railway speculations, so they say—and is hardly expected to survive the day. So we are all getting our money out as fast as possible.'

'By way of bundling up the brained reed, eh?'

'Oh, every man for himself. A man is under no obligation to his banker that I know of.' And the good man bustled off with his pockets full of gold.

The vicar entered. All was hurry and anxiety. The clerks seemed trying to brazen out their own terror, and shovelled the rapidly lessening gold and notes across the counter with an air of indignant nonchalance. The vicar asked to see the principal.

'If you want your money, sir—' answered the official, with a disdainful look.

'I want no money. I must see Mr. Smith on private business, and instantly.'

'He is particularly engaged.'

'I know it, and therefore I must see him. Take in my card, and he will not refuse me.' A new vista had opened itself before him.

He was ushered into a private room, and as he waited for the banker, he breathed a prayer. For what? That his own will might be done—a very common style of petition.

Mr. Smith entered, hurried and troubled. He caught the vicar eagerly by the hand, as if glad to see a face which did not glare on him with the cold selfish stamp of 'business,' and then drew back again, afraid to commit himself by any sign of emotion.

The vicar had settled his plan of attack, and determined boldly to show his knowledge of the banker's distress.

'I am very sorry to trouble you at such an unfortunate moment, sir, and I will be brief; but, as your nephew's spiritual pastor—' (He knew the banker was a stout Church man.)

'What of my nephew, sir? No fresh misfortune, I hope?'

'Not so much misfortune, sir, as misadventure—I might say frailty—but frailty which may become ruinous.'

'How? how? some *malveillance*?' interrupted Mr. Smith, in a peevish, excited tone. 'I thought there was some horror on the tapis—at least, so I heard from my unfortunate son who has just gone over to Rome. There's another misfortune—Nothing but misfortune, and your teaching, sir, by the bye, I am afraid has helped me to that one.'

'Gone over to Rome?' asked the vicar slowly.

'Yes, sir, gone to Rome—to the pope, sir—to the devil, sir! I should have thought you likely to know of it before I did.'

The vicar stared fixedly at him a moment, and burst into honest tears. The banker was moved.

'Pon my honour, sir, I beg your pardon. I did not mean to be rude, but—but— To be plain with a clergyman, sir, so many things coming together have quite unmanned me. Pooh, pooh,' and he shook himself as if to throw off a weight, and, with a face once more quiet and business-like, asked, 'And now, my dear sir, what of my nephew?'

'As for that young lady, sir, of whom you spoke, I can assure you, once for all, as her clergyman, and therefore more or less her confidant, that your nephew has not the slightest chance or hope in that quarter.'

'How, sir! You will not throw obstacles in the way?'

'Heaven, sir, I think, has interposed far more insuperable obstacles—in the young lady's own heart—than I could ever have done. Your nephew's character and opinions, I am sorry to say, are not such as are likely to command the respect and affection of a pure and pious Churchwoman.'

'Opinions, sir? What, is he turning Pajest, too?'

'I am afraid, sir, and more than afraid, for he makes no secret of it himself, that his views tend rather in the opposite direction, to an infidelity so subversive of the commonest principles of morality, that I expect, weekly, to hear of some unblushing and disgraceful outrage against decency, committed by him under its fancied sanction. And you know, as well as myself, the double danger of some profligate outbreak, which always attends the miseries of a disappointed earthly passion.'

'True, very true. We must get the boy out of the way, sir. I must have him under my eye.'

'Exactly so, sir,' said the subtle vicar, who had been driving at this very point. 'How much better for him to be here, using his great talents to the advantage of his family in an honourable profession, than to remain where he is, debauching body and mind by hopeless dreams, godless studies, and frivolous excesses.'

'When do you return, sir?'

'An hour hence, if I can be of service to you.'

The banker paused a moment.

'You are a gentleman' (with emphasis on the word), 'and as such I can trust you.'

'Say, rather, as a clergyman.'

'Pardon me, but I have found you cloth give little additional cause for confidence. I have been as much bitten by clergymen. I have seen as sharp practices among them, in money matters as well as in religious squabbles, as I have in any class. Whether it is that their book education leaves them very often ignorant of the plain rules of honour which bind men of the world, or whether their zeal makes them think that the end justifies the means, I cannot tell, but—'

'But,' said the vicar, half smiling, half severely, 'you must not disparage the priesthood before a priest.'

'I know it, I know it, and I beg your pardon—but if you knew the cause I have to complain. The shrewdness, sir, of a staggering parson has set rolling this very avalanche, which gathers size every moment, and threatens to overwhelm me now, unless that idle dog Lancelot will condescend to bestir himself and help me.'

The vicar heard, but said nothing.

'Me, at least, you can trust,' he answered proudly, and honestly, too—for he was a gentleman by birth and breeding, unselfish and chivalrous to a fault—and yet, when he heard the banker's words, it was as if the inner voice had whispered to him, 'Thou art the man!'

'When do you go down?' again asked Mr. Smith. 'To tell you the truth, I was writing to Lancelot when you were announced! but the post will not reach him till to-morrow at noon, and we are all so busy here that I have no one to whom I can trust to carry down an express.'

The vicar saw what was coming. Was it his good angel which prompted him to interpose?

'Why not send a parcel by rail?'

'I can trust the rail as far as D—; but I cannot trust those coaches. If you could do me so great a kindness—'

'I will. I can start by the one o'clock train, and by ten o'clock to-night I shall be in Whitford.'

'Are you certain?'

'If God shall please, I am certain.'

'And you will take charge of a letter? Perhaps, too, you could see him yourself, and tell him—you see I trust you with everything that my fortune, his own fortune, depends on his being here to-morrow morning. He must start to-night, sir, to-night, tell him, if there were twenty Miss Lavingtons in Whitford—or he is a ruined man!'

The letter was written, and put into the vicar's hands, with a hundred entreaties from the terrified banker. A cab was called and the clergyman rattled off to the railway terminus.

'Well,' said he to himself, 'God has indeed blessed my errand, giving, as always, "exceeding abundantly more than we are able to ask or think." For some weeks, at least, this poor Lancelot is safe from the destroyer's clutches. I must improve to the utmost those few precious days in strengthening her in her holy purpose. But, after all, he will return, daring and cunning as ever, and then will not the fascination recommence?'

And, as he moved, a little fiend passed by, and whispered, 'Unless he comes up to night he is a ruined man!'

It was Friday, and the vicar had thought it a fit preparation for so important an errand to taste no food that day. Weakness and hunger, joined to the roar and bustle of London, had made him excited, nervous, unable to control his thoughts or light against a stupefying headache, and his self-weakness will punished him, by yielding him up an easy prey to his own fancies.

'Ay,' he thought, 'if he were ruined, after all, it would be well for God's cause. The Lavingtons, at least, would find no temptation in his wealth and Argemone—she is too proud, too luxurious, to marry a beggar. She might embrace a holy poverty for the sake of her own soul, but for the gratification of an earthly passion, never! Base and carnal delights would never tempt her so far.'

Alas, poor pedant! Among all that thy books taught thee, they did not open to thee much of the depths of that human heart which thy dogmas taught thee to despise as diabolical.

Again the little fiend whispered,—

'Unless he comes up to night he is a ruined man.'

'And what if he us?' thought the vicar. 'Riches are a curse, and poverty a blessing. Is it not his wealth which is ruining his soul? Idleness and fulness of bread have made him what he is—a luxurious and self-willed dreamer, battering on his own fancies. Were it not rather a boon to him to take from him the root of all evil?'

Most true, vicar. And yet the devil was at that moment transforming himself into an angel of light for thee.

But the vicar was yet honest. If he had thought that by cutting off his right hand he could have saved Laurence's soul (by canonical methods, of course; for who would wish to save souls in any other?), he would have done it without hesitation.

Again the little head whispered,

'Unless he comes up to night he is a ruined man.'

A terrible sensation seized him. Why should he give the letter to-night?

'You promised,' whispered the inner voice.

'No I did not promise exactly, in so many words—that is, I only said I would be at home to-night, if God pleased. And what if God should not please? I promised for his good. What if, on second thoughts, it should be better for him not to keep my promise?' A moment afterwards he tossed the temptation from him indignantly, but took it in. At every gaudy shop, at every smoke-gilded manufactory, at the face of every anxious victim of Mammon, of every sturdily, cheerful artisan, the good winked and pointed, crying, 'And what if he be ruined? Look at the thousands who have, and are miserable at the millions who have not, and are no sadder than their own tyrants.'

Again and again he thrust the thought from him, but more and more weakly. His whole frame shook, the perspiration stood on his forehead. As he took his railway ticket, his look was so haggard and painful that the clerk asked him whether he were ill. The train was just starting, he threw himself into a carriage, he would have locked himself in it he could, and felt an unexpressed relief when he found himself rushing past houses and market gardens, whirled onward, whether he would or not, in the right path—homeward.

But was it the right path? for again the temptation flitted past him. He threw himself back, and tried to ask counsel of One above, but there was no answer, nor any that regarded. His heart was silent, and dark as midnight fog. Why should there have been an answer? He had not listened to the voice within. Did he wish for a miracle to show him his duty?

'Not that I care for detection,' he said to himself. 'What is shame to me? Is it not a glory to be evil spoken of in the cause of God? How can the world appreciate the motives of those who are not of the world?' the divine

wisdom of the serpent at once the saint's peculiar weapon and a part of his peculiar cross, when men call him a deceiver, because they confound, forsooth, his spiritual subtlety with their earthly cunning. Have I not been called "har," "hypocrite," "traitor," often enough already, to bidden me towards bearing that unnamable again?

That led him into sad thoughts of his last few years' career, of the friends and pupils whose success to Rome had been attributed to his hypocrisy, his 'disguised Romanism', and then the remembrance of poor Luke Smith dashed across him for the first time since he left the bank.

'I must see him,' he said to himself, 'I must argue with him face to face. Who knows but that it may be given even to my unworthiness to snatch him from this wretched slough?'

And then he remembered that his way home lay through the city in which the new convert's parish was—that the coach stopped there to change horses, and again the temptation leapt up again, stronger than ever, under the garb of an imperative call of duty.

He made no determination for or against it. He was too weak in body and mind to resist, and in a half sleep, looking with an aching, tormented sense of something wanting which he could not find, he was swept down the line, got on the coach and mechanically almost without knowing it found himself set down at the city of A—and the coach rattling away down the street.

The spring from his stupor and called loudly after it in a few steps.

'You might as well try to catch the clouds, sir,' said the ostler. 'Common should make up their minds that they go down.'

Alas! so thought the vicar. But it was too late, and with a heavy heart, he asked the way to the little curate's house.

Further he went. Mr. Luke Smith was just at dinner, but the vicar was nevertheless shown into the bachelor's little dining room. But what was his disgust and disappointment at finding his late pupil *à table* over a comfortable fish dinner opposite a bulky vulgar, cunning-eyed man with a narrow rim of unshaven turned down over his still cravat of whose profession there could be no doubt.

'My dearest sir,' said the new convert, springing up with an air of extreme courtesy, 'what an unexpected pleasure! Allow me to introduce you to my excellent friend, Padre Inghirami.'

The padre rose, bowed deprecatingly, 'was overwhelmed with delight at being at last introduced to one of whom he had heard so much,' sat down again and poured himself out a bumper of sherry, while the vicar commenced making the best of a bad matter by pointing in the now necessary business of eating.

He had not a word to say for himself. Poor Luke was particularly jovial and tipsy and startlingly unlike his former self. The padre

went on staring out of the window, and talking in a loud forced tone about the astonishing miracles of the 'Ecstasica' and 'Addolorata', and the poor vicar, flushing the purpose for which he had sacrificed his own word of honour utterly frustrated by the priest's presence, sat silent and crestfallen the whole evening.

The priest had no intention of stirring. The late father-confessor tried to outstay his new rival, but in vain, the padre deliberately announced his intention of taking a bed, and the vicar, with a heavy heart, rose to go to his inn.

As he went out at the door he caught an opportunity of saying one word to the convert.

'My poor Luke! and are you happy? Tell me honestly, in God's sight tell me!'

'Happier than ever I was in my life! No more self-torture, physical or mental, now. These good priests thoroughly understand poor human nature, I can assure you.'

The vicar sighed, for the speech was vainly meant as a gentle rebuke to himself. But the young man ran on, half laughing.

'You know how you and the rest used to tell us what a sad thing it was that we were all cursed with consciences,—what a fearful miserable burden moral responsibility was, but that we must submit to it as an inevitable evil. Now that burden is gone, thank God! We of the True Church have some one to keep our consciences for us. The padre settles all about what is right or wrong, and we slip on as easily as—'

'A hog on a butterfly!' said the vicar bitterly.

'Exactly,' answered Luke. 'And, for your own showing, are clean grinders of a happy life here, not to mention heaven hereafter. God bless you! We shall soon see you one of us.'

'Never, so help me God!' said the vicar, all the more fiercely because he was almost at that moment of the young man's opinion.

The vicar stepped out into the night. The rain, which had given place during the afternoon to a bright sun and clear chilly evening, had returned with double fury. The wind was sweeping and howling down the lonely streets, and hushed the rain into his face, while gray clouds were rushing past the moon like terrified ghosts across the awful void of the black heaven. Above him giant poplars groined and bent, like giants cowering from the wrath of Heaven, yet rooted by grim necessity to their place of torture. The roar and tumult without him harmonised strangely with the discord within. He staggered and, strode along the splashy pavement, muttering to himself at intervals,—

'Rest for the soul? peace of mind? I have been promising them all my life to others. Have I found them myself? And here is this poor boy saying that he has gained them—in the very barbarian superstition which I have been anathematising to him! What is true, at this rate? What is false? Is anything right

or wrong, except in as far as men feel it to be right or wrong? Else whence does this poor fellow's peace come, or the peace of many a convert more? They have all, one by one, told me the same story. And is not a religion to be known by its fruits? Are they not right in going where they can get peace of mind?'

Certainly, vicar. If peace of mind be the *summum bonum*, and religion is merely the science of self-satisfaction, they are right, and your wisest plan will be to follow them at once, or failing that, to apply to the next best substitute that can be discovered—alcohol and opium.

As he went on, talking wildly to himself, he passed the Union workhouse. Opposite the gate, under the lee of a wall, some twenty men, women, and children were huddled together on the bare ground. They had been refused lodging in the workhouse, and were going to pass the night in that situation. As he came up to them coarse jests and snatches of low drinking-songs, ghastly as the laughter of lost spirits in the pit, mingled with the feeble wailings of some child of shame. The vicar recollected how he had seen the same sight at the door of Kensington Workhouse, walking home one night in company with Luke Smith, and how, too, he had commented to him on that fearful sign of the times, and had somewhat unfairly drawn a contrast between the ungentle cruelty of 'popular Protestantism' and the fancied 'benevolence' of the middle age. What wonder if his pupil had taken him at his word?

Delighted to escape from his own thoughts by anything like action, he pulled out his purse to give an alms. There was no silver in it, but only some fifteen or twenty sovereigns, which he that day received as payment for some bitter reviews in a leading religious periodical. Everything that night seemed to shame and confound him more. As he touched the money, there sprang up in his mind in an instant the thought of the articles which they pressed it, by one of those terrible, searing inspirations, in which the light which lighteth every man awakes as a lightning-flash of judgment, he saw them, and his own heart, for one moment, as they were, their blind prejudice, their reckless imputations of motives, their wilful concealment of any palliating causes, their party sickness, given without a shudder at the terrible accusations which they conveyed. And then the indignation, the shame, the reciprocal bitterness which those articles would excite, tearing still under the bleeding wounds of that Church which they professed to defend! And then, in this case, too, the thought rushed across him, 'What if I should have been wrong and my adversary right? What if I have made the heart of the righteous and whom God has not made sad? I! to have been dealing out Heaven's thunders, as if I were infallible! I! who am certain at this moment of no fact in heaven or earth except my own untruth! God!

who am I that I should judge another?' And the coins seemed to him like the price of blood—he fancied that he felt them red-hot to his hand, and, in his eagerness to get rid of the accursed thing, he dealt it away fiercely to the astonished group, amid whining and flattery, wrangling and ribaldry, and then, not daring to wait and see the use to which his money would be put, hurried off to the inn, and tried in uneasy slumbers to forget the time, until the mail passed through at daybreak on its way to Whitford.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VILLAGE REVEL

AT dusk that same evening the two had started for the village fair. A velvetreen shooting-jacket a pair of corduroy trousers, and a waistcoat, furnished by Tregarva, covered with flowers of every imaginable hue, tolerably disguised Lancelot, who was recommended by his conductor to keep his hands in his pockets as much as possible, lest their delicacy, which was, as it happened, not very remarkable, might betray him. As they walked together along the flashy turnpike road, overtaking, now and then, groups of two or three who were out on the same errand as themselves, Lancelot could not help remarking to the keeper how superior was the look of comfort in the boys and young men, with their ruddy cheeks and smart dresses, to the worn and haggard appearance of the elder men.

'Let them alone, poor fellows,' said Tregarva, 'it won't last long. When they've got two or three children at their heels, they'll look as thin and shabby as their own fathers.'

'They must spend a great deal of money on their clothes.'

'And on their stomachs too, sir. They never lay by a farthing, and I don't see how they can, when their children's pails, and their pouches are well filled.'

'Do you mean to say that they actually have not as much to eat after they marry?'

'Indeed and I do, sir. They get no more wages afterwards round here, and have four or five to clothe and feed off the same money that used to keep one, and that sum won't take long to work out, I think.'

'But do they not in some places pay the married men higher wages than the unmarried?'

'That's a worse trick still, sir, for it tempts the poor thoughtless boys to go and marry the first girl they can get hold of, and it don't want much persuasion to make them do that at any time.'

'But why don't the clergymen teach them to put into the savings banks?'

'One here and there, sir, says what he can, though it's of very little use. Besides, every one is afraid of savings banks now; not a year but one reads of some breaking and the lawyers

going off with the earnings of the poor. And if they didn't, youth's a foolish time at best, and the carnal man will be hankering after amusement, sir—amusement.'

'And no wonder,' said Lancelot, 'at all events, I should not think they got much of it. But it does seem strange that no other amusement can be found for them than the beer-shop. Can't they read? Can't they practise light and interesting handicrafts at home, as the German peasantry do?'

'Who'll teach 'em, sir? From the plough-tail to the reaping-hook, and back again, is all they know. Besides, sir, they are not like us Cornish, they are a stupid pig-headed generation at the best, these south country men. They're grown up babies who want the parson and the squire to be leading them, and preaching to them, and spurring them on, and coaxing them up, every moment. And as for scholarship, sir, a boy leaves school at nine or ten to follow the horses, and between that time and his wedding day he forgets every word he ever learnt, and becomes, for the most part, as thorough a heathen savage at heart as those wild Indians in the Brazils used to be.'

'And then we call them civilised Englishmen,' said Lancelot. 'We can see that your Indian is a savage, because he wears skins and feathers, but your Irish cottar or your English labourer, because he happens to wear a coat and trousers, is to be considered a civilised man.'

'It's the way of the world, sir,' said Tregarva, 'judging cruel judgment, according to the sight of its own eyes, always looking at the outsides of things and men, sir, and never much deeper. But as for reading, sir, it's all very well for me, who have been a keeper and dawdled about like a gentleman with a gun over my arm. But did you ever do a good day's labour-work in your life? If you had, man or boy, you wouldn't have been grum for much reading when you got home. You'd do just what these poor fellows do,—tumble into bed at eight o'clock, hardly waiting to take your clothes off, knowing that you must turn up again at five o'clock the next morning to get a breakfast of bread, and perhaps a dab of the squire's droppings, and then back to work again, and so on, day after day, sir, week after week, year after year, without a hope or a chance of being anything but what you are, and only too thankful if you can get work to break your back, and catch the rheumatism over.'

'But do you mean to say that their labour is so severe and incessant?'

'It's only God's blessing if it is incessant, sir, for if it stops, they starve, or go to the house to be worse led than the thieves in goal. And as for its being severe, there's many a boy, as their mothers will tell you, comes home night after night, too tired to eat their suppers, and tumbles, fasting, to bed in the same foul shirt which they've been working in all the day, never changing their rag of calico from week's end to week's end, or washing the skin that's under it once in seven years.'

'No wonder,' said Lancelot, 'that such a life of drudgery makes them brutal and reckless.'

'No wonder, indeed, sir, they've no time to think, they're born to be machines, and machines they must be, and I think, sir,' he added bitterly, 'it's God's mercy that they don't feel. Men that write books and talk at elections call this a free country, and say that the poorest and meanest has a free opening to rise and become prime minister, if he can. But you see, sir, the misfortune is, that in practice he can't, for one who gets into a gentleman's family, or into a little shop, and so saves a few pounds, fifty know that they've no chance before them, but day-labourer born, day-labourer live, from hand to mouth, scraping and pinching to get not much and beer even, but bread and potatoes, and then, at the end of it all, for a worthy reward half a crown a week of parish pay of the work-house. That's a lively hopeful prospect for a Christian man!'

'But,' said Lancelot, 'I thought this new Poor Law was to stir them up to independence.'

'Oh, sir, the old law has bit too deep—it made them slaves and beggars at heart. It taught them not to be ashamed of parish pay—to demand it as a right.'

'And so it is their right,' said Lancelot. 'In God's name, if a country is so ill-constituted that it cannot find its own citizens in work, it is bound to find them in loaf.'

'Maybe, sir, maybe God knows I don't grudge it them. It's a poor pittance at best, when they have got it. But don't you see, sir, how all poor-laws, old or new either, suck the independent spirit out of a man, how they make the poor wretch reckless, how they tempt him to spend every extra farthing in amusement?'

'How then?'

'Why, he is always tempted to say to himself, "Whatever happens to me, the parish must keep me. If I am sick it must do for me, if I am worn out it must feed me, if I die it must bury me, if I leave my children paupers the parish must look after them, and they'll be as well off with the parish as they were with me. Now they've only got just enough to keep body and soul together, and the parish can't give them less than that. What's the use of cutting myself off from sixpenny worth of pleasure here, and sixpenny worth there. I'm not saving money for my children, I'm only saving the farmers' rates." There it is, sir,' said Treggava, 'that's the bottom of it, sir,—"I'm only saving the farmers' rates. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."'

'I don't see my way out of it,' said Lancelot.

'So says everybody, sir. But I should have thought those members of parliament, and statesmen, and university scholars have been set up in the high places, out of the wood where we are all struggling and scrambling, just that they might see their way out of it, and if they don't, sir, and that soon, as sure as God is in heaven, these poor fellows will cut their way out of it.'

'And blindfolded and ignorant as they are,' said Lancelot, 'they will be certain to cut their way out just in the wrong direction.'

'I'm not so sure of that, sir,' said Treggava, lowering his voice. 'What is written? That there is One who hears the desire of the poor. "Lord, Thou preparest their hearts and Thine ear hearkeneth thereto; to help the fatherless and poor unto their right; that the man of the earth be no more exalted against them."'

'Why, you are talking like any Chartist, Treggava.'

'Am I, sir? I haven't heard much Scripture quoted among them myself, poor fellows, but to tell you the truth, sir, I don't know what I am becoming. I'm getting half mad with all I see going on and not going on, and you will agree, sir, that what's happened this day can't have done much to cool my temper or brighten my hopes, though, God's my witness, there's no spite in me for my own sake. But what makes me maddest of all, sir, is to see that everybody sees these evils, except just the men who can cure them—the squires and the clergy.'

'Why surely, Treggava, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of clergymen and landlords working heart and soul at this moment to better the condition of the labouring classes.'

'Ay, sir, they see the evils, and yet they don't see them. They do not see what is the matter with the poor men, and the pool of it is, sir, that the poor have no confidence in them. They'll take their dues, but they'll hardly take their schooling, and then advise they won't take at all. And why is it, sir? Because the poor have got in their heads in these days a strange confused fancy, maybe, but still a deep and a fierce one, that they haven't got what they call their rights. If you were to raise the wages of every man in this country from nine to twelve, twelve shillings a week to-morrow, you wouldn't satisfy them, at least, the only ones whom you would satisfy would be the mere hogs among them, who, as long as they can get a full stone will cure for nothing else.'

'What, in Heaven's name do they want?' asked Lancelot.

'They hardly know yet, sir, but they know well what they don't want. The question with them, sir, believe me, is not so much, How shall we get better fed and better housed, but where shall we depend upon for our food and for our houses? Why should we depend on the will and fancy of any man for our rights? They are asking ugly questions among themselves, sir, about what those two words, rent and taxes, mean, and about what that same strange word, freedom, means. Right or wrong, they've got the thought into their heads, and it's growing there, and they will find an answer for it. Depend upon it, sir, I tell you a truth, and they expect a change. You will hear them talk of it to-night, sir, if you've luck.'

'We all expect a change, for that matter,' said Lancelot. 'That feeling is common to all classes and parties just now.'

Tregarva took off his hat.

"For the world of the Lord hath spoken it." Do you know, sir, I hung at times that I did agree with those Chartists! If I did, I'd turn lecturer to-morrow. How a man could speak out thus! If he saw any door of hope, any way of salvation for these poor fellows, even if it was nothing better than salvation by Act of Parliament!

'But why don't you trust the truly worthy among the clergy and the gentry to heaven their own ranks and bring all right in time?'

'Because, sir, they seem to be going the way only to make things worse. The people have been so dependent on them heretofore that they have become thorough beggars. You can have no knowledge, sir, of the whining, canting, deceit, and lies which these poor miserable labourers' wives palm on charitable ladies. If they weren't angels, some of them, they'd look up their noses and never give away another farthing. And, sir, these free schools, and these penny clubs, and clothing clubs, and these heaps of money which are given away, all make the matter worse and worse. They make the labourer fancy that he is not to depend upon God and his own right hand, but on what his wife can worm out of the good nature of the rich. Why, sir, they growl as insolently now at the parson or the squire's wife if they don't get as much money as their neighbours, as they used to at the parish vestrymen under the old law. Look at that Lord Munchaus, sir, as sweet a gentleman as ever God made. It used to do me good to walk behind him when he came over his shooting, just to hear the gentle kind-hearted way in which he used to speak to every old soul he met. He spends his whole life and time about the poor, I hear. But, sir, as sure as you live he's making his people slaves and humbugs. He doesn't say, sir, that they want to be raised bodily out of this miserable hand-to-mouth state, to be brought mair up to him and set on a footing where they can shift for themselves. Without meaning it, sir, all his boundless charities are keeping the people down, and telling them they must stay down, and not help themselves, but wait for what he gives them. He sets prize labourers, sir, just as Lord Munchampstead sets prize oxen and pigs.'

Lancelot could not help thinking of that amusingly inconsistent, however well meant scene in *Coningsby*, in which Mr. Lytle is represented as trying to restore 'the independent order of peasantry,' by making them the receivers of public alms at his own gate, as if they had been middle-age serfs or vagabonds, and not citizens of modern England.

'It may suit the Mr. Lytles of this age,' thought Lancelot, 'to make the people constantly and visibly comprehend that property is their protector and their friend, but I question whether it will suit the people themselves, unless they can make property understand that it owes them something more definite than protection.'

Saddened by this conversation, which had helped to give another shake to the easygoing complacency with which Lancelot had been used to contemplate the world below him, and look on its evils as necessary, ancient and fixed as the universe, he entered the village fair, and was a little disappointed at his first glimpses of the village green. Certainly his expectations had not been very exalted, but there had run through them a hope of something melodramatic, dreams of May-pole dancing and athletic games, somewhat of village belle rivalry, of the Goun and Sylvia school, or, failing that, a few Tonelastons and Andriys, some grand earnest bluff humour here and there. But there did not seem much likelihood of it. Two or three apple and gingerbread stalls, from which dragged children were turning slowly and wistfully away to go home, a booth full of tannery samings, in front of which tawdry gals were coaxing mandarin youths, with held southernwood in their button holes, another long low booth, from every crevice of which reeked odours of stale beer and smoke, by courtesy denominated tobacco, in the fields accompaniment of a juggling hiddle and a lam-bomme, and the bass one of grumbled oaths and curses within—these were the means of relaxation which the party, freedom, and civilisation of fourteen centuries, from Hengist to Queen Victoria, had devised and made possible for the English peasant.

'There seems very little here to see,' said Lancelot, half peevishly.

'I think, sir,' quoth Tregarva, 'that very thing is what's most worth seeing.'

Lancelot could not help, even at the risk of detection, investing capital enough in sugar-plums and gingerbread to furnish the medals around with the material for a whole carnival of stomach aches, and he felt a great inclination to chide the fattening stall in a like manner on behalf of the poor belching and sickly looking gals round, but he was afraid of the jealousy of some beer-bewildered swain. The ill-looks of the young gals surprised him much. Here and there smiled a plump rosy face enough, but the majority seemed under-sized, under-fed, utterly wanting in grace, vigour, and what the penny-runners call 'inde health.' He remarked it to Tregarva. 'The keeper smiled mournfully.'

'You see these little creatures dragging home babies in arms nearly as big as themselves, sir. That and bad food, want of milk especially, accounts for their growing up no bigger than they do, and as for their sad countenances, sir, most of them must carry a lighter conscience before they carry a brighter face.'

'What do you mean?' asked Lancelot.

'The elegy man who enters the wishings and the baptisms knows well enough what I mean, sir. But we'll go into that booth, if you want to see the thick of it, sir, that's to say, if you're not ashamed.'

'I hope we need neither of us do any thing to be ashamed of there, and as for seeing, I began

to agree with you, that what makes the whole thing most curious is its intense dullness.'

'What upon earth is that?'

'I say, look out there!'

'Well, you look out yourself!'

This was caused by a violent blow across the shin with a thick stick, the deed of certain drunken whippers who were persisting in playing in the dark the never very lucrative game of three sticks a penny, conducted by a couple of gipsies. Poor fellows! there was one excuse for them. It was the only thing there to play at, except a set of skittles, and on those they had lost their money every Saturday night for the last seven years each at his own village beer shop.

So into the booth they turned, and as soon as Lancelot's eyes were accustomed to the reeking atmosphere, he saw seated at two long temporary tables of board fifty or sixty of 'My Brethren,' as clergymen call them in their sermons, wrangling, stupid, hoary, with sodden eyes and drooping lips—interspersed with more girls and brazen faced women, with duty flowers in their caps, whose whole business seemed to be to cast jealous looks at each other, and defend themselves from the coarse overtures of the swarms.

Lancelot had been already perfectly astonished at the foulness of language which prevailed, and the utter absence of anything like civilisation respect, almost of common decency, towards women. But lo! the language of the elder women was quite as disgusting as that of the men, if not worse. He whispered a remark on the point to Tregarva, who shook his head.

'It's the field work, sir—the held-work, that does it all. They get accustomed there from their childhood to hear words whose very meanings they shouldn't know, and the elder teach the younger ones, and the married ones are worst of all. It wears them out in body, sir, that field-work, and makes them brutes in soul and in manners.'

'Why don't they give it up? Why don't the respectable ones set their faces against it?'

'They can't afford it, sir. They must go a-field, or go hungry, most of them. And they get to like the gossip and scandal, and coarse fun of it, while their children are left at home to play in the roads, or fall into the fire, as plenty do every year.'

'Why not at school?'

'The big ones are kept at home, sir, to play at nursing those little ones who are too young to go. Oh, sir,' he added, in a tone of deep feeling, 'it is very little of a father's care, or a mother's love, that a labourer's child knows in these days!'

Lancelot looked round the booth with a hopeless feeling. There was awkward dancing going on at the upper end. He was too much sickened to go and look at it. He began examining the faces and foreheads of the company, and was astonished at the first glance by the lofty and ample development of brain in at least one half. There were intellects there—or

rather capacities of intellect, capable, surely, of anything, had not the promise of the brow been almost always belied by the loose and sensual lower features. They were evidently rather a degraded than an undeveloped race. 'The low forehead of the Kahyle and Koord,' thought Lancelot, 'is compensated by the grim sharp lip, and glittering eye, which prove that all the small capabilities of the man have been called out into clear and vigorous action. But here the very features themselves, both by what they have and what they want, testify against that society which carelessly wastes her most precious wealth, the manhood of her masses.' Tregarva! you have observed a good many things—did you ever observe whether the men with the large foreheads were better than the men with the small ones?'

'Ay, sir, I know what you are driving at. I've heard of that new fangled notion of scholars, which, if you'll forgive my plain speaking, expects man's brains to do the work of God's grace.'

'But what have you remarked?'

'All I ever saw was, that the stupid looking ones were the greatest blackguards, and the clever-looking ones the greatest rogues.'

Lancelot was rebuked, but not surprised. He had been for some time past suspecting, from the bitter experience of his own heart, the favourite modern theory which revives the Neo-Platonism of Alexandria, by making intellect synonymous with virtue, and then punishing, like poor bewildered Proclus, the 'physical understanding' of the brain with the 'pure intellect' of the spirit.

'You'll see something, if you look round, sir, a great deal easier to explain—and, I should have thought, a great deal easier to cure—than want of wits.'

'And what is that?'

'How different-looking the young ones are from their fathers, and still more from their grandfathers! Look at those three or four old grammers talking together there. For all their being stunk with age and wealth, you won't see such fine-grown men anywhere else in this booth.'

It was too true. Lancelot recollected now having remarked it before when at church, and having wondered why almost all the youths were so much smaller, clumsier, lower-brained, and weaker-jawed than their elders.

'Why is it, Tregarva?'

'Worse food, worse lodging, worse nursing—and, I'm sore afraid, worse blood. There was too much filthiness and drunkenness went on in the old war-times, not to leave a taint behind it for many a generation. The prosperity of fools shall destroy them!'

'Oh!' thought Lancelot, 'for some young sturdy Lancashire or Lothian blood, to put new life into the old frozen South Saxon veins! Even a drop of the warm enthusiastic Celtic would be better than none. Perhaps this Irish immigration may do some good, after all.'

Perhaps it may, Lancelot. Let us hope so, since it is pretty nearly inevitable.

Sadder and sadder, Lancelot tried to listen to the conversation of the men round him. To his astonishment he hardly understood a word of it. It was half articulate, nasal, guttural, made up almost entirely of vowels, like the speech of savages. He had never before been struck with the significant contrast between the sharp, clearly-defined articulation, the vivid and varied tones of the gentleman, or even of the London street-boy, when compared with the coarse, half-formed growls, as of a company of seals, which he heard round him. That single fact struck him, perhaps, more deeply than any, it connected itself with many of his physiological fancies, it was the parent of many 'thoughts and plans of his after life. Here and there he could distinguish a half sentence. An old shrunken man opposite him was drawing figures in the spilt beer with his pipe-stem, and discomfing of the glorious times before the great war, 'when there was more food than there were mouths, and more work than there were hands.' 'Poor human nature!' thought Lancelot, as he tried to follow one of those unintelligible discussions about the relative prices of the loaf and the bushel of flour, which ended, as usual, in more swearing, and more quarrelling, and more beer to make it up. 'Poor human nature!' always looking back, as the German sage says, to some lanced golden age, never looking forward to the real one which is coming.

'But I say, vather,' droned out some one, 'they say there's a sight more money in England now than there was afore the war-time.'

'Ewee, booy,' said the old man, 'but it's gone into two few hands.'

'Well,' thought Lancelot, 'there's a glimpse of practical sense, at least.' And a peellar who sat next him, a bold, black bluskered bully from the Potteries, hazarded a joke.

'It's all along of this new sky-and-tough-it turning. They used to spread the money broadcast, but now they chills it all in one place, like bone-dust under their fancy plants, and we poor self-sown chaps gets none.'

This gutland of fauces was received with great applause, whereat the peellar, emboldened, proceeded to observe mysteriously that 'donkeys took a beating, but horses kicked at it and that they'd found out that in Staffordshire long ago. You want a good Chastel lecturer down here, my coveys, to show you donkeys of labouring men that you have got iron on your heels, if you only know'd how to use it.'

'And what's the use of rinting?' asked some one querulously.

'Why, if you don't root the farmers will starve you.'

'And if we do, they'd turn soldiers—yeomanry, as they call it, though there ain't a yeoman among them in these parts, and then

they takes sword and kills us. So, not or none, they has it all their own way.'

Lancelot heard many more scraps of this sort. He was very much struck with their dead of violence. It did not seem cowardice. It was not loyalty—the English labourer has fallen below the capability of so spiritual a feeling, Lancelot had found out that already. It could not be apathy, for he heard nothing but complaint upon complaint banded from mouth to mouth the whole evening. They seemed rather sunk too low in body and mind,—too stupefied and spiritless,—to follow the example of the manufacturing districts, above all, they were too ill-informed. It is not mere starvation which goads the Lancashire weaver to madness. It is starvation with education, an empty stomach and a cultivated, even though miscultivated, mind.

At that instant a huge hulking farm-boy rolled into the booth roaring, doltily, the end of a song, with a punctuation of his own invention—

'He'll make me a lady. You'll come to be your
And, faithfully, love me. Although, I, be a
poor rrrr

Lancelot would have laughed heartily at him anywhere else, but the whole scene was just a jest, and a gleam of pathos and tenderness seemed to shine even from that dogmatic—a vista, as it were, of true genial nature in the far distance. But as he looked round again, 'What hope,' he thought, 'of its realisation? Arcadian dreams of pastoral innocence and graceful industry, I suppose, are to be henceforth monopolised by the stage or the boudoir? Never, so help me God!'

The insane howls of the newcomer seemed to have awakened the spirit of music in the party.

'Coon, Blackbird, go us song. Blackbird, bo!' cried a dozen voices to an impudently duck-eyed gipsy boy, of some thirteen years old.

'Put a gu table. Now then, pipe up.'

'What will we hear?'

'Mary, go us Mary.'

'I shall make a girls cry, quoth Blackbird, with a grin.

'Do a good, too, they likes it sing away.

And the boy began, in a broad country twang, which could not overpower the sad melody of the air, or the rich sweetness of his flute-like voice,—

'Young Mary walked sadly down through the green
cherry.

And sighed as she looked at the babe at her breast.

'My roses are faded, my false love a roger
The green grasses they call me, 'Come home to
your rest.'

'Then by rode a soldier in gorgeous arraying,
And "Where is your bride-ring my fair maid?"
he cried.

'I never had a bridle ring, by false man's betraying,
Nor token of love but this babe at my side.

'The gold could not buy me, sweet words could
deceive me,
So faithful and lonely till death I must roam."

"Oh, Mary, sweet Mary, look up and forgive me,
With wealth and with glory your true love comes
home."

"So give me my own babe, those soft arms adorning
I'll wed you, and cherish you, never to stray.
For it's nearly a dark and a wild cloudy morning,
Turns out by the noon time a smothering day."

"A bad moral that, sir," whispered Treguva,
"Better than none," answered Lancelot.

"It's well if you are right, sir, for you'll hear
no other."

The keeper spoke truly, in a dozen different
songs, more or less coarsely, but, in general with
a dash of pathetic sentiment, the same case of
lawless love was enfolded. It seemed to be
their only notion of the romantic. Now and
then there was a poaching song, then one of the
lowest flash London school—high and all was
raised in chorus in presence of the women.

"I am afraid that you do not think me for
having brought you to any place so night for a
gentleman," said Treguva, seeing Lancelot's sad
face.

"Because it is so night for a gentleman, there-
fore I do thank you. It is right to know what
one's own flesh and blood are doing."

"Back to that song, sir! that's an old one.
I don't think they'd get on to singing that."

The Blackbird was again on the tub, but
seemed this time disinclined to exhibit.

"Outw' me, boy, it wasn't him thy mouth!"

"I heard."

"O' who?"

"Keeper there."

His pointer to Treguva, there was a large
growl round the room.

"I am no keeper," shouted Treguva, starting
up. "I was turned off this morning for speaking
my mind about the squares, and now I'm one of
you, to live and die."

This answer was received with a murmur of ap-
plause, and a fellow in a scarlet merino necker-
chief, three waistcoats, and a hasty shooting-
jacket, who had been crying Lancelot for some
time, pulled up behind them, and whispered in
Treguva's ear,

"Perhaps you'd like an engagement in our
line, young man, and your friend there, he seems
a sporting gent too—We could show him very
pretty shooting."

Treguva answered by the lust and lust oath
Lancelot ever heard from him, and turning to
him, as the rascal sneaked off, —

"That's a poaching crimp from London, sir,
tempting these poor boys to sin, and drink, and
drunkenness, and the lot, and the hulk."

"I fancy I saw him somewhere the night of
our row—you understand?"

"So do I, sir, but the re's no'nse talking of it."

Blackbird was by this time prevailed on to
sing, and burst out as melodious as ever, while
all heads were cocked on one side in delighted
attention.

"I need a vire of Monday night,
A vire both great and high,
But I woot not tell you where, my boys,
Nor woot not tell you why."

The farmer he comes screeching out,
To save 'uns new brood mare,
Zays I, "You and your stock may roam,
For aught us poor chaps care."

"Chorus, boys, chorus!"

And the chorus burst out,

"Then here's a curse on farmers all
As rob and grind the poor,
To reap the fruit of all their works
In hell for evermore!"

"A blind cowl damn come to the vire,
No more is she could get,
Zays, "Here's a luck I wadn't ash'p
To lose this blessed belt.
They rob us of our turling rigdles,
Our bits of chips and sticks,
Till poor folks now 'in t'warn their lands,
Peev'd by vire's ricks."
"Then, etc."

And again the boy's debate voice rang out
the ferocious chorus, with something, Lancelot
fancied, of headish exultation, and every worn
face lighted up with a coarse laugh, that in-
cluded no mice—but also no men.

Lancelot was sickened, and rose to go.
As he turned, his arm was seized suddenly
and firmly. He looked round, and saw a coarse,
handsome, shrewdly-dressed girl looking intently
into his face. He shook her angrily off.

"You needn't be so proud, Mr. Smith, I've
had my hand on the arm of as good as you.
Ah, you needn't stuff. I know you. I know
you, I say, well enough. You used to be with
him. Who is he?"

"Whom do you mean?"

"He?" answered the girl, with a fierce, sm-
riled look, as if there could be no one else in
the world.

"Coland Blackledge," whispered Treguva.
"Ay, he it is!" And now walk further off,
bloodhound, and let me speak to Mr. Smith.
He is in Norway," she ran on eagerly. "When
will he be back? When?"

"Why do you want to know?" asked Lancelot.

"When will he be back?" she kept on tirelessly
repeating the question, and then burst out,
"Cuse you gentlemen all! (Goads!) you are
all in a league against us poor girls! You can
hunt alone when you betray us, and be fast
enough then! But when we come for justice,
you all herd together like a flock of rooks,
and turn so delicate and honourable all of a
sudden to each other! When will he be back,
I say?"

"In a month," answered Lancelot, who saw
that something really important lay behind the
girl's wildness.

"Too late!" she cried wildly, clapping her
hands together, "too late!" Here—tell him
you saw me, tell him you saw Mary, tell him
where and in what a pretty place, too, for maid,
master, or man! What are you doing here?"

"What is that to you, my good girl?"

"True. Tell him you saw me here, and tell
him, when next he hears of me, it will be in a
very different place."

She turned and vanished among the crowd.

Lancelot almost ran out into the night,— into a trail of lights, two drunken men, two jealous wives, and a brute who struck a poor, thin, worn-out woman, for trying to coax him home. Lancelot rushed up to interfere, but a man seized his upraised arm.

'He'll only beat her all the more when he getteth home.'

'She has stood that every Saturday night for the last seven years, to my knowledge,' said Tregarva, 'and worse, too, at times.'

'Good God! is there no escape for her from her tyrant?'

'No, sir. It's only you gentlefolks who can afford such luxuries; your poor man may be tied to a halter, or your poor woman to a cushion, but once done, done for ever.'

Well, thought Lancelot, 'we English have a characteristic way of proving the holiness of the marriage tie. The angel of Justice and Pity cannot sever it, only the stronger demon of Money.'

Then way home lay over Ashy Down, a lofty chalk promontory, round whose foot the river made a sudden bend. As they paced along over the cheery hedgeless stubbles, they both started at a ghostly 'Ha! ha! ha!' rang through the air over their heads, and was answered by a like cry, faint and distant, across the wolds.

'That's those storm-crowns, at least, so I hope, said Tregarva. 'He'll be round again a minute.'

And again, right between them and the clear, cold moon, 'Ha! ha! ha!' resounded over their heads. They gazed up into the cloudless, star bespangled sky, but there was no sign of living thing.

'It's an old sign to me,' quoth Tregarva, 'God grant that I may remember it in this black day of mine.'

'How so?' asked Lancelot, 'I should not have feared you a superstitious man.'

'Names go for nothing, sir, and what my forefathers believed in I am not going to be concerned enough to disbelieve in a hurry. But if you heard my story you would think I had reason enough to remember that devil's laugh up there.'

'Let me hear it, then.'

'Well, sir, it may be a long story to you, but it was a short one to me, for it was the making of me out of hand, there and then, "said be God." But if you will have it—'

'And I will have it, friend Tregarva,' quoth Lancelot, lighting his pipe.

'I was about sixteen years old, just after I came home from the Brazils—'

'What! have you been in the Brazils?'

'Indeed and I have, sir, for three years, and one thing I learnt there, at least, that's worth going in—'

'What's that?'

'What the Garden of Eden must have been like. But those Brazils, under God, were the cause of my being here, for my father, who was a mine-captain, lost all his money there, by no

man's fault but his own, and not his either, the world would say, and when we came back to Cornwall he could not stand the hal work, nor I neither. Out of that burning sun, sir, to come hither here, and work in the levels, up to our knees in warm water, with the thermometer at 85°, and then up a thousand feet of ladder to grass sticking wet with heat, and find the Easterly sleet driving across those open furze-crofts—he couldn't stand it, sir,—he w—stand it long, even of those who stay in Cornwall. We miners have a short lease of life, consumption and stints break us down before we're fifty.'

'But how came you here?'

'The doctor told my father, and me too, sir, that we must give up mining, or die of decline—so he came up here, to a sister village that was married to the square's goodness, and here he died, and the square, God bless him and forgive him, took a fancy to me, and made me under-keeper. And I loved the life, for it took me among the woods and the rivers, where I could think of the Brazils, and busy myself back again. But, mustn't talk of that—where God wills is all right. And it is a fine life for nothing and thinking, a grumblers' for it's an ill life at best. Now that's over,' he mumbled, with a sigh, 'and the Lord has fulfilled His words to me that He spoke the last night that ever I heard a stone plaver cry.'

'What on earth can you mean?' asked Lancelot, deeply interested.

'Why, sir, it was a wild whirling gray night, with the air full of sleet and rain, and my father sent me over to Redruth town to bring home some truck or other. And as I came back I got drenched with the sleet, and I lost my way across the moors. You know those Cornish tinze moors, sir?'

'No.'

Well, then, they are burrowed like a rabbit warren with old mine-shafts. You can't go in some places ten yards without finding great, ghastly black holes, covered in with tinze, and weeds and bits of rotting timber, and when I was a boy I couldn't keep from them. Something seemed to draw me to go and peep down, and drop pebbles in, to hear them rattle against the sides, fathoms below. All they plunged into the ugly black still water at the bottom. And I used to be always after them in my dreams, when I was young, falling down them, down, down, all night long, till I woke screaming, for I fancied they were hell's mouths, every one of them. And it stands to reason, sir, we miners hold that the lake of fire can't be far below. For we find it grow warmer and warmer, and warmer, the further we sink a shaft, and the learned gentlemen have proved, sir, that it's not the blasting powder, nor the men's breaths, that heat the mine.'

Lancelot could but listen.

'Well, sir, I got into a great furze-croft, full of deads (those are the earth-heaps they throw out of the shafts), where no man in his senses dare go forward or back in the dark, for fear of

the shafts, and the wind and the snow were so sharp, they made me quite stupid and sleepy, and I knew if I stayed there I should be frozen to death, and if I went on, there were the shafts ready to swallow me up, and what with fear and the howling and raging of the wind, I was like a mazed boy, sir. And I knelt down and tried to pray, and then, in one moment, all the evil things I'd ever done, and the bad words and thoughts that ever crossed me, rose up together as clear as one page of a print-book, and I knew that if I died that minute I should go to hell. And then I saw through the ground all the water in the shafts glaring like blood, and all the sides of the shafts were red hot, as if hell was coming up. And I heard the knockers knocking, or thought I heard them, as plain as I hear that grasshopper in the hedge now.

'What are the knockers?'

'They are the ghosts, the miners hold, of the old Jews, sir, that crucified our Lord, and were sent for slaves by the Roman emperors to work the mines, and we find their old smelting-houses, which we call Jews' houses, and their blocks of tin, at the bottom of the great bogs, which we call Jews' tin, and there's a town among us, too, which we call Market Jew, but the old name was Marazion, that means the Bitterness of Zion, they tell me. Isn't it so, sir?'

'I believe it is,' said Lancelot, utterly puzzled in this new field of romance.

'And bitter work it was for them, no doubt, poor souls! We used to break into the old shafts and adits which they had made, and find old stag's-horn pickaxes, that crumbled to pieces when we brought them to grass, and they say that if a man will listen, sir, of a still night, about those old shafts, he may hear the ghosts of them at working, knocking, and picking, as clear as if there was a man at work in the next level. It may be all an old fancy. I suppose it is. But I believed it when I was a boy, and it helped the work in me that night. But I'll go on with my story.'

'Go on with what you like,' said Lancelot.

'Well, sir, I was down on my knees among the furze-bushes, and I tried to pray, but I was too frightened, for I felt the beast I had been, sir, and I expected the ground to open and let me down every moment, and then there came by over my head a rushing, and a cry, "Ha! ha! ha! Paul!" it said, and it seemed as if all the devils and witches were out on the wind a-laughing at my misery. "Oh, I'll mend—I'll repent," I said, "indeed I will," and again it came back,—"Ha! ha! ha! Paul!" it said. I know afterwards that it was a bird, but the Lord sent it to me for a messenger, no less, that night. And I shook like a reed in the water, and then, all at once, a thought struck me. "Why should I be a coward? Why should I be afraid of shafts, or devils, or hell, or anything else? If I am a miserable sinner, there's One died for me—I

owe Him love, not fear at all. I'll not be frightened into doing right—that's a rascally reason for repentance." And so it was, sir, that I rose up like a man, and said to the Lord Jesus, right out into the black, dumb air,—"If you'll be on my side this night, good Lord, that died for me, I'll be on your side for ever, villain as I am, if I'm worth making any use of." And there and then, sir, I saw a light come over the bushes, brighter and brighter, up to me, and there rose up a voice within me, and spoke to me, quite soft and sweet,—"Fear not, Paul, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." And what more happened I can't tell, for when I woke I was safe at home. My father and his folk had been out with lanterns after me, and there they found me, sure enough, in a dead faint on the ground. But this I know, sir, that those words have never left my mind since for a day together, and I know that they will be fulfilled in me this tide, or never.'

Lancelot was silent a few minutes.

'I suppose, Tregarva, that you would call this your conversion?'

'I should call it one, sir, because it was one.'

'Tell me now, honestly, did any real, practical change in your behaviour take place after that night?'

'As much, sir, as if you put a soul into a hog, and told him that he was a gentleman's son, and if, every time he remembered that, he got spirit enough to conquer his hogghishness, and behave like a man, till the hogghishness died out of him, and the manliness grew up and bore fruit in him, more and more each day.'

Lancelot half understood him, and sighed.

A long silence followed, as they paced on past lonely farmyards, from which the rich manure-water was draining across the road in foul black streams, festering and steaming in the dull night air. Lancelot sighed as he saw the fruitful materials of food running to waste, and thought of the 'over population' cry, and then he looked across to the useless brown moorland on the opposite side of the valley, that lay idle and dreary under the autumn moon, except where here and there a squatter's cottage and rood of fruitful garden gave the lie to the laziness and ignorance of man, who pretends that it is not worth his while to cultivate the soil which God has given him. 'Good heavens!' he thought, 'had our forefathers had no more enterprise than modern landlords, where should we all have been at this moment? Everywhere waste! Waste of manure, waste of land, waste of muscle, waste of brain, waste of population—and we call ourselves the workshop of the world!'

As they passed through the miserable hamlet street of Ashy, they saw a light burning in window. At the door below a haggard woman was looking anxiously down the village.

'What's the matter, Mistress Cooper?' asked Tregarva.

'Here's Mrs. Crane's poor girl lying sick of

the fever—the Lord help her! and the boy died of it last week. We sent for the doctor this afternoon, and he's busy with a poor soul that's in her trouble, and now we've sent down to the squire's, and the young ladies, God bless them! sent answer they'd come themselves straight-way.

'No wonder you have typhus here,' said Lancelot, 'with this filthy open drain running right before the door. Why can't you clean it out?'

'Why, what harm does that do?' answered the woman peevishly. 'Beside, here's my master gets up to his work by five in the morning, and not back till seven at night, and by then he ain't in no humour to clean out gutters. And where's the water to come from to keep a place clean? It costs many a one of us here a shilling a week the summer through to pay for the water up the hill. We've work enough to fill our kettles. The muck must just lie in the road, smell or none, till the rain carries it away.'

Lancelot sighed again.

'It would be a good thing for Ashy, Tregarva, if the wen pool did, some fine morning, run up to Ashy Down, as poor Harry Verney said on his deathbed.'

'There won't be much of Ashy left by that time, sir, if the landlords go on pulling down cottages at their present rate, driving the people into the towns, to huddle together there like hogs, and walk out to their work four or five miles every morning.'

'Why,' said Lancelot, 'wherever one goes one sees comfortable new cottages springing up.'

'Wherever you go, sir, but what of wherever you don't go? Along the roadsides, and round the gentlemen's parks, where the cottages are in sight, it's all very smart, but just go into the outlying hamlets—a white sepulchre, sir, is many a great estate, outwardly swept and garnished, and inwardly full of all uncleanness, and dead men's bones.'

At this moment two cloaked and veiled figures came up to the door, followed by a servant. There was no mistaking those delicate footsteps, and the two young men drew back with fluttering hearts, and breathed out silent blessings on the ministering angels, as they entered the crazy and reeking house.

'I'm thinking, sir,' said Tregarva, as they walked slowly and reluctantly away, 'that it is hard on the gentlemen to leave all God's work to the ladies, as nine-tenths of them do.'

'And I'm thinking, Tregarva, that both for ladies and gentlemen, prevention is better than cure.'

'There's a great change come over Miss Argemone, sir. She used not to be so ready to start out at midnight to visit dying folk. A blessed change!'

Lancelot thought so too, and he thought that he knew the cause of it.

Argemone's appearance, and their late conversation, had started a new covey of strange

fancies. Lancelot followed them over hill and dale, glad to escape a moment from the incubus of that evening, but even over them there was a cloud of sadness. Harry Verney's last words, and Argemone's accidental whisper about 'a curse upon the Lavingtons,' rose to his mind. He longed to ask Tregarva, but he was afraid—not of the man, for there was a delicacy in his truthfulness which encouraged the most utter confidence, but of the subject itself, but curiosity conquered.

'What did old Harry mean about the Nun-pool?' he said at last. 'Every one seemed to understand him.'

'Ah, sir, he oughtn't to have talked of it! But dying men, at times, see over the dark water into deep things deeper than they think themselves. Perhaps that's one speaks through them. But I thought every one knew the story.'

'I do not, at least.'

'Perhaps it's so much the better, sir.'

'Why? I must insist on knowing. It is necessary—proper, that is—that I should hear everything that concerns—'

'I understand, sir, so it is, and I'll tell you. The story goes, that in the old Popish times, when the nuns held Whitford Priory, the first Mr. Lavington that ever was came from the king with a warrant to turn them all out, poor souls, and take the lands for his own. And they say the head lady of them—prioress, or abbess, as they called her—withstood him, and cursed him, in the name of the Lord, for a hypocrite who robbed harmless women under the cloak of punishing them for sins they'd never committed (for they say, sir, he went up to court, and slandered the nuns there for drunkards and worse). And she told him, "That the curse of the nuns of Whitford should be on him and his, till they helped the poor in the spirit of the nuns of Whitford, and the Nun-pool run up to Ashy Down."

'That time is not come yet,' said Lancelot.

'But the worst is to come, sir. For he or his, sir, that night, said or did something to the lady that was more than woman's heart could bear, and the next morning she was found dead and cold, drowned in that wen-pool. And there the gentleman's eldest son was drowned, and more than one Lavington beside. Miss Argemone's only brother, that was the heir, was drowned there too, when he was a little one.'

'I never heard that she had a brother.'

'No, sir, no one talks of it. There are many things happen in the great house that you must go to the little house to hear of. But the country-folk believe, sir, that the nuns' curse holds true, and they say that Whitford folks have been getting poorer and wickered ever since that time, and will, till the Nun-pool runs up to Ashy, and the Lavingtons' name goes out of Whitford Priory.'

Lancelot said nothing. A presentiment of evil hung over him. He was utterly down-

hearted about Tregarva, about Argemone, about the poor. The truth was, he could not shake off the impression of the scene he had left, utterly disappointed and disgusted with the 'revue'. He had expected, as I said before, at least to hear something of pastoral sentiment and of genial frolicsome humour, to see some innocent, simple enjoyment. But instead, what had he seen but vanity, jealousy, hoggrish sensuality, dull vacuity, diabolical struggling for one night to forget their drudgery? And yet withal, those songs, and the effect which they produced, showed that in these poor creatures, too, lay the germs of pathos, taste, melody, soft and noble affections. 'What might have we,' thought he, 'to hinder their development? Art, poetry, music, science, ay, even those athletic and graceful exercises on which we all pride ourselves, which we consider necessary to soften and refine ourselves, what God has given us a monopoly of them?—what is good for the rich man is good for the poor. Over-education? And what of that? What if the poor be raised above "their station"? What might have we to keep them down? How long have they been our born thralls in soul, as well as in body? What might have we to say that they shall know no higher recreation than the hog, because, forsooth, if we raised them they might refuse to work *for us*? Are we to fix how far their minds may be developed? Has not God fixed it for us, when He gave them the same passions, talents, tastes, as our own?'—

Tregarva's meditations must have been running in a very different channel, for he suddenly burst out, after a long silence—

'It's a pity these lads can't be put down. They do a lot of harm, run all the young gals round, the Dissenters' children especially, for they run utterly wild, their parents have no hold on them at all.'

'They tell them that they are children of the devil,' said Lancelot. 'What wonder if the children take them at their word, and act accordingly?'

'The parson here, sir, who is a God-fearing man enough, tried hard to put down this one, but the milkmaids were too strong for him.'

'To take away their only amusement, in short. He had much better have set to work to amuse them himself.'

'His business is to save souls, sir, and not to amuse them. I don't see, sir, what Christian people want with such vanities.'

Lancelot did not argue the point, for he knew the prejudices of Dissenters on the subject, but it did strike him that if Tregarva's brain had been a little less preponderant, he, too, might have found the need of some recreation besides books and thought.

By this time they were at Lancelot's door. He bid the keeper a hearty good-night, made him promise to see him next day, and went to bed and slept till nearly noon.

When he walked into his breakfast room, he found a note on the table in his uncle's hand-

writing. The vicar's servant had left it an hour before. He opened it hastily, rang the bell firmly, ordered out his best horse, and, huddling on his clothes, galloped to the nearest station, caught the train, and arrived at his uncle's bank—it had stopped payment two hours before.

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

YES! the bank had stopped. The ancient firm of Smith, Brown, Jones, Robinson, and Co., which had been for some years just expanding from a solid golden organism into a colubine fœtus and huge balloon of thrummary paper, had at last worn through and collapsed, dropping its car and human contents miserably into the Thames mud. Why detail the pitiable *post-mortem* examination resulting? Lancelot sat down over it for many a long day, not, indeed, mourning its private losses, but at the thorough holocaust of the system which it exposed, about which he spoke his mind pretty freely to his uncle, who bore it good-humouredly enough. Indeed, the discussions to which it gave rise rather comforted the good man, by turning his thought from his own losses to general principles. 'I have ruined you, my poor boy,' he used to say, 'so you may as well take your money's worth out of me in bullying.' Nothing, indeed, could surpass his honest and manly sorrow for having been the cause of Lancelot's legerity, but as to persuading him that his system was wrong, it was quite impossible. Not that Lancelot was blind upon him, on the contrary, he assured him repeatedly of his conviction that the precepts of the Bible had nothing to do with the laws of commerce, that though the Jews were forbidden to take interest of Jews, Christians had a perfect right to be as hard as they liked on 'brother' Christians, that there could not be the least harm in short-jobbing, for though it did, to be sure, add nothing to the wealth of the community—only convert money out of your neighbour's pocket into your own—yet was not that all for in trade? If a man did not know the real value of the shares he sold you you were not bound to tell him. Again, Lancelot quite agreed with his uncle that though covetousness might be idolatry, yet money-making could not be called covetousness, and that, on the whole, though making haste to be rich was denounced as a dangerous and ruinous temptation in St. Paul's times, that was not the slightest reason why it should be so now. All these concessions were made with a freedom which caused the good banker to suspect at times that his shrewd nephew was laughing at him in his sleeve, but he could not but subscribe to them for the sake of consistency, though as a staunch Protestant it puzzled him a little at times to find it necessary to justify himself by

gutting his 'infidel' nephew to explain away so much of the Bible for him. But men are accustomed to do that nowadays, and so was he.

Once only did Lancelot break out with his real sentiments when the banker was planning how to re-establish his credit, to set to work, in fact, to blow over again the same bubble which had already burst under him.

'If I were a Christian,' said Lancelot, 'like you, I would call this credit system of yours the devil's selfish counterfeit of God's order of unselfish love and trust, the child of that miserable dream which, as Dr Chalmers well said, expects universal selfishness to do the work of universal love. Look at your credit system, how—not in its abuse, but in its very essence—it sows the seeds of self-destruction. In the first place, a man's credit depends, not upon his real worth and property, but upon his reputation for property; daily and hourly he is tempted, he is forced, to puff himself, to pretend to be richer than he is.'

The banker sighed and shrugged his shoulders. 'We all do it, my dear boy.'

'I know it. You must do it, or be more than human. There is he the first, and look at he the second. This credit system is founded on the universal faith and honour of men towards men. But do you think faith and honour can be the children of selfishness? Men must be chivalrous and disinterested to be honourable. And you expect them all to you in universal faith each for his own selfish interest? You forget that if that is the prime motive, men will be honourable only as long as it suits that same selfish interest.'

The banker shrugged his shoulders again.

'Yes, my dear uncle,' said Lancelot, 'you all forget it, though you suffer for it daily and hourly, though the honourable men among you complain of the stain which has fallen on the old chivalrous good faith of English commerce, and say that now, abroad as well as at home, an Englishman's word is no longer worth other men's bonds. You see the evil, and you deplore it in disgust. Ask yourself honestly, how can you battle against it, while you allow in practice, and in theory too, except in church on Sundays, the very falsehood from which it all springs? That a man is bound to get wealth, not for his country, but for himself, that, in short, not patriotism, but selfishness, is the bond of all society. Selfishness can collect, not unite, a herd of cowardly wild cattle, that they may feed together, hressl together, keep off the wolf and bear together. But when one of your wild cattle falls sick, what becomes of the corporate feelings of the herd then? For our man of your class who is nobly helped by his fellows, are not the thousand left behind to perish? Your Bible talks of society, not as a herd, but as a living tree, an organic individual body, a holy brotherhood and kingdom of God. And here is an idol which you have set up instead of it!'

But the banker was deaf to all arguments.

No doubt he had plenty, for he was himself a just and generous, ay, and a God-fearing man in his way, only he regarded Lancelot's young fancies as too visionary to deserve an answer, which they most probably are, else, having been broached as often as they have been, they would surely, ere now, have provoked the complete refutation which can, no doubt, be given to them by hundreds of learned volumes of so-called commerce. And here I beg my readers to recollect that I am in no way answerable for the speculations, either of Lancelot or any of his acquaintances, and that those papers have been, from beginning to end, as in name, so in nature, Yost's honest sample of the questions which, good or bad, are fermenting in the minds of the young of this day, and are rapidly becoming the minds of the rising generation. No doubt they are all as full of fallacies as possible, but as long as the saying of the German sage stands true, that 'the destiny of any nation, at any given moment, depends on the opinions of its young men under five-and-twenty,' so long it must be worth while for those who wish to preserve the present order of society to justify its acknowledged evils some-what, not only to the few young men who are interested in preserving them, but also to the many who are not.

Though, therefore, I am neither Plymouth Brother nor Communist, and as thoroughly convinced as the newspapers can make me, that to assert the duties of property is only to plot its destruction, and that a community of goods must needs imply a community of wives (as every one knows was the case with the apostolic Christians), I shall take the liberty of naming Lancelot's fanciful conduct without exorbitant comment, certain that he will still receive his just reward of condemnation; and that, if I find facts, sensible people will find dishonour for them. His behaviour was, indeed, most singular; he absolutely refused a good commercial situation which his uncle promised him. He did not believe in being 'eaten by a bit of the dog that bit him,' and he refused, also, the really generous offers of the creditors to allow him sufficient maintenance.

'No,' he said, 'no more pay without work for me. I will earn my bread or starve. It seems God's will to teach me what poverty is. I will see that His intention is not left half fulfilled. I have sinned and only in the stern delight of a just penance can I gain self-respect.'

'But, my dear nephew,' said his uncle, 'you are just the innocent one among us all. You, at least, were once a sleeping partner.'

'And therein lies my sin, I took money which I never earned, and cared as little how it was gained as how I spent it. Henceforth I shall touch no farthing which is the fruit of a system which I cannot approve. I accuse no one. Actions may vary in rightfulness, according to the age and the person. But what may be right for you, because you think it

right, is surely wrong for me because I think it wrong.

So, with grim determination, he sent to the hammers every article he possessed, till he had literally nothing left but the clothes in which he stood. 'He could not rest,' he said, 'till he had pulled out all his borrowed peacock's feathers.' When they were gone he should be able to see, at last, whether he was jackdaw or eagle. And wonder not, reader, at this same strength of will. The very genius, which too often makes its possessor self-indulgent in common matters, from the intense capability of enjoyment which it brings, may also, when once his whole being is stirred into motion by some great object, transform him into a hero.

And he carried a letter, too, in his bosom, night and day, which routed all coward fears and sad forebodings as soon as they arose, and converted the lonely and aghast lodging to which he had retired with a tarry palmer peopled with bright phantoms of future bliss. 'I need not say from whom it came.

'Beloved!' (it ran) 'Darling! you need not pain yourself to tell me anything. I know all, and I know, too (do not ask me how), your noble determination to drink the wholesome cup of poverty to the very dregs.

'Oh that I were with you! Oh that I could give you my fortune! but that is not yet, alas! in my own power. No! rather would I share that poverty with you, and strengthen you in your purpose. And yet I cannot bear the thought of you, lonely perhaps wretched, but courage! though you have lost all, you have found me, and now you are knitting me to you for ever—justifying my own love to me by your nobleness, and am I not worth all the world to you? I dare say this to you, you will not think me conceited! Can we misunderstand each other's hearts? And all this while you are alone! Oh! I have no mind for you! Since I heard of your misfortune I have not tasted pleasure. The light of heaven has been black to me, and I have lived only upon love. I will not taste comfort while you are wretched. Would that I could be poor like you! Every night upon the bare floor I lie down to sleep, and fancy you in your little chamber, and nestle to you, and cover that dear face with kisses. Strange! that I should dare to speak thus to you, whom a few months ago I had never heard of! Wonderful simplicity of love! How all that is pushish and artificial flies before it! I seem to have begun a new life. If I could play now, it would be only with little children. Farewell! be great—a glorious future is before you and me in you!'

Lancelot's answer must remain untold, perhaps the veil has been already too far lifted which hides the sanctuary of such love. But, alas! to his letter no second had been returned, and he felt—though he dared not confess it to himself—a gloomy presentiment of evil flit across him as he thought of his fallen fortunes, and the altered light in which his aunt would

be regarded by Argemone's parents. Once he blamed himself bitterly for not having gone to Mr. Lavington the moment he discovered Argemone's affection, and ensuring—as he then might have done—his consent. But again he felt that no sloth had kept him back, but adoring reverence for his God-given treasure, and humble astonishment at his own happiness, and he fled from the thought into renewed examination into the state of the masses, the effect of which was only to deepen his own determination to share their lot.

But at the same time it seemed to him but fun to live, as long as it would last, on that part of his capital which his creditors would have given nothing for—namely, his information, and he set to work to write. But, alas! he had but a 'small literary connection', and the *entrée* of the initiated ring is not obtained in a day.

Besides, he would not write trash. It was in far too grim a humour for that, and if he wrote on important subjects, able editors always were in the habit of entrusting them to old contributors,—men, in short, in whose judgment they had confidence—not to say anything which would commit the magazine to anything but its own little party theory. And behold! poor Lancelot found himself of no party whatsoever. He was in a minority of one against the whole world on all points, right or wrong. He had the unhappiest knack (as all geniuses have) of seeing connections, humorous or awful, between the most seemingly antipodal things, of illustrating every subject from three or four different spheres which it is anathema to mention in the same page. If he wrote a physical science article, able editors asked him what the sterner scrap of high churchman did in the middle of it? If he took the same article to a high-church magazine, the editor could not commit himself to any theory which made the earth more than six thousand years old, and was afraid that the public taste would not approve of the allusions to freemasonry and Soyer's soup. And worse than that, one and all—Jew, Turk, Muslim, and heretic, as well as the orthodox—joined in pious horror at his irreverence,—the shocking way he had of jumbling religion and politics—the human and the divine—the theories of the pulpit with the facts of the exchange.

The very atheists, who laughed at him for believing in a God, agreed that that, at least, was inconsistent with the dignity of the God—who did not exist. . . . It was Syncretism . . . Pantheism.

'Very well, friends,' quoth Lancelot to himself, in bitter rage, one day, 'if you choose to be without God in the world, and to honour Him by denying Him . . . do so! You shall have your way, and go to the place whither it seems leading you just now at railroad pace. But I must live. Well, at least, there is some old college nonsense of mine, written three years ago, when I believed, like you, that all heaven and earth was put together out of

separate bits, like a child's puzzle, and that each topic ought to have its private little pigeon-hole all to itself in a man's brain, like drugs in a chemist's shop. Perhaps it will suit you, friends, perhaps it will be system-frozen, and narrow, and dogmatic, and cowardly, and godless enough for you'.

So he went forth with them to market, and behold! they were brought forthwith. There was verily a demand for such, and in spite of the ten thousand ink-fountains which were daily pouring out similar Stygian liquors, the public thirst remained unslaked. 'Well,' thought Lancelot, 'the negro race is not the only one which is afflicted with manias for doing duty. By the bye, where is poor Luke?'.

Ah! where was poor Luke? Lancelot had received from him one short and hurried note, blotted with tears, which told how he had admonished his father, and how his father had refused to see him, and had forbade him the house, and how he had offered him an allowance of fifty pounds a year (it should have been five hundred, he said, if he had possessed it), which Luke's director, sensibly enough, had compelled him to accept. And there the letter ended abruptly, leaving the writer evidently in lower depths than he had either experienced already, or expected at all.

Lancelot had offered to go with him with his father, but in vain. Not that the good man was hard-hearted: he would cry like a child about it all to Lancelot when they sat together after dinner. But he was utterly beside himself, what with grief, shame, terror, and astonishment. On the whole the sorrow was a real comfort to him: it gave him something besides his bankruptcy to think of, and, distracted between the two different griefs, he could brood over neither. But of the two, certainly his son's conversion was the worst in his eyes. The bankruptcy was intelligible, measurable, it was something known and classified—part of the ill which flesh (great as last, commercial ill) is heir to. But going to Rome!—

'I can't understand it. I won't believe it. It's so foolish, you see, Lancelot—so foolish—like an ass that eats thistles.' 'There must be some reason, —there must be—something we don't know, sir! Do you think they could have persuaded to make him a cardinal?'.

Lancelot quite agreed that there were reasons for it, that they—or, at least, the banker—did not know.

'Depend upon it, they promised him something—some unseen advantage, perhaps. Else why on earth could a man go over? It's out at the corner of nature!'

Lancelot tried in vain to make him understand that a man might sacrifice everything to conscience, and actually give up all worldly wealth for what he thought right. The banker turned on him with angry resignation—

'Very well—I suppose he's done right, then? Suppose you'll go next! Take up false

religion, and give up everything for it! Why, then, he must be honest, and if he's honest, he's in the right, and I suppose I'd better go too!'

Lancelot argued but in vain. The idea of disinterested sacrifice was so utterly foreign to the good man's own creed and practice, that he could but see one pair of alternatives.

'Either he is a good man, or he's a hypocrite. Either he's right, or he's gone over for some vile selfish end, and what can that be but money?'

Lancelot gently hinted that there might be other selfish ends besides pecuniary ones—saving one's soul, for instance.

'Why, if he wants to save his soul, he's right. What ought we all to do, but try to save our souls? I tell you there's some sinister reason. They've told him that they expect to convert England. I should like to see them do it!—and that he'll be made a bishop. Don't argue with me, or you'll drive me mad. I know those Jesuits!'

And as soon as he began upon the Jesuits, Lancelot prudently held his tongue. The good man had worked himself up into a perfect frenzy of terror and suspicion about them. He suspected concealed Jesuits among his footmen and his housemaids, Jesuits in his counting-house, Jesuits in his dining-room.

'Hang it, sir! how do I know that there isn't a Jesuit listening to us now behind the curtain?'

'I'll go and look,' quoth Lancelot, and suited the action to the word.

'Well, if there isn't there might be. They're everywhere, I tell you. That vicar of Whitford was a Jesuit. I was sure of it all along, but the man seemed so pious, and certainly he did my poor dear boy a deal of good. But he ruined you, you know. And I'm convinced—no, don't contradict me, I tell you I won't stand it. I'm convinced that this whole mass of crime is a part of these Jesuits,—I'm as certain of it as if they'd told me!'

'For what end?'

'How the diabolical I tell! And I a Jesuit, to understand then sneaking, and shamming—I'm sick of it! No longer but rogues wherever one turns!'

And then Lancelot used to try to persuade him to take poor Luke back again. But vague terror had steeled his heart.

'What! Why, he'd convert us all! He'd convert his sisters! He'd bring his popery in here, or his nuns disguised as ladies-maids, and we should all go over, every one of us, like a set of nine-pins!'

'You seem to think Protestantism a rather shaky cause, if it is so easy to be upset.'

'Sir! Protestantism is the cause of England, and Christianity, and civilisation, and freedom, and common sense, sir!—and that's the very reason why it's so easy to pervert men from it; and the very reason why it's a lost cause, and popery, and Antichrist, and the gates of hell are coming in like a flood to prevail against it!'

'Well,' thought Lancelot, 'that is the very strangest reason for it's being a lost cause! Perhaps if my poor uncle believed it really to be the cause of God Himself, he would not be in such extreme fear for it, or fancy it required such a hotbed and greenhouse culture.'

Really, if his sisters were little girls of ten years old, who looked up to him as an oracle, their would be some reason in it.

But those tall, ball-gung, fluting, self-satisfied cousins of mine—who would have been glad enough, either of them, two months ago, to snap up me, infidelity, bad character, and all, as a charming rich young *roué* if they have not learnt enough Protestantism in the last five-and-twenty years to take care of themselves, Protestantism must have very few adherents, or else be very badly carried out in practice by those who talk loudest in favour of it.

I heard them praising O'Blaraway's "innuety," by the bye, the other day. So he is up & town at last at the summit of his ambition. Well, he may suit them. I wonder how many young creatures like Argemone and Ianke he would keep from Popery!

But there was no use arguing with a man in such a state of mind, and gradually Lancelot gave it up, in hopes that time would bring the good man to his sense again, and that a father's feelings would prove themselves stronger, because more divine, than a so-called Protestant's fears, though that would have been, in the banker's eyes, and in the Jesuit's also, so do extremes meet—the very reason for expecting them to be the weaker, for it is the rule with all bigots that the right cause is always a lost cause, and therefore requires—God's weapons of love, truth, and reason long well known to be too weak to be defended, if it is to be saved, with the devil's weapons of bad logic, spite, and calumny.

At last, in despair of obtaining tidings of his cousin by any other method, Lancelot made up his mind to apply to a certain remarkable man, whose 'conversion' had preceded Ianke's about a year, and had, indeed, mainly caused it.

He went—and was not disappointed. With the most winning courtesy and sweetness, his story and his request were patiently listened to. 'The outcome of your speech, then, my dear sir, as I apprehend it, is a request to me to send back the fugitive lamb into the jaws of the well-meaning, but still lupine wolf?'

This was spoken with so sweet and arch a smile that it was impossible to be angry.

'On my honour, I have no wish to convert him. All I want is to have human speech of him—to hear from his own lips that he is content. Whither should I convert him? Not to my own platform—for I am nowhere. Not to that which he has left, . . . for if he could have found standing ground there, he would not have gone elsewhere for rest.'

'Therefore they wait out from you, because they were not of you,' said the 'Father,' half

'Most true, sir. I have felt long that argument was bootless with those whose root-idea of Deity, man, earth, and heaven, were as utterly different from my own as if we had been created by two different beings.'

'Do you include in that catalogue those ideas of truth, love, and justice which are Duty itself? Have you no common ground in them?'

'You are an elder and a better man than I.'

It would be insolent in me to answer that question, except in one way, and

'In that you cannot answer it. Be it so.'

You shall see your cousin. You may make what efforts you will for his re-conversion. The Catholic Church,' continued he, with one of his rich, deep-meaning smiles, 'is not, like popular Protestantism, driven into shrinking terror at the approach of a foe. She has too much truth in herself, and in Him who gives to her the power of truth, to expect every grey meadow to alight away her lambs from the fold.'

'I assure you that your gallant permission is unnecessary. I am beginning, at least, to believe that there is a Father in Heaven who educates His children, and I have no wish to interfere with His methods. Let my cousin go his way—he will learn something which he wanted, I doubt not, on his present path, even as I shall on mine.'

'*Se tu segui la tua stella* is my motto.' Let it be his too, wherever the star may guide him. If it be a will o' the wisp, and lead to the morass, he will only learn how to avoid morasses better for the future.'

'*Au Divin stella!* It is the star of Bethlehem which he follows—the star of Mary immaculate, all loving.'

And he bowed his head reverently. 'Would that you, too, would submit yourself to that guidance.'

You, too, would seem to want some loving heart whereto to rest.'

Lancelot sighed. 'I am not a child, but a man, I want not a mother to pet, but a man to rule me.'

Slowly his companion raised his thin hand, and pointed to the crucifix which stood at the other end of the apartment.

'Behold him!' and he bowed his head once more—and Lancelot, he knew not why, did the same—and yet in an instant he threw his head up proudly, and answered with George Fox's old reply to the Puritans,

'I want a live Christ, not a dead one. That is noble—beautiful—it may be true—but it has no message for me.'

'He died for you.'

'I care for the world, and not myself.'

'He died for the world.'

'And has deserted it, as folks say now, and become—an absentee, performing His work by deputies. Do not start, the blasphemy is not mine, but those who preach it. No wonder that the owners of the soil think it no shame to desert their estates, when preachers tell them that He to whom they say all power is given in heaven and earth has deserted His.'

'What would you have, my dear sir?' asked the father.

'What the Jews had. A king of my nation, and of the hearts of my nation, who would teach soldiers, artists, craftsmen, statesmen, poets, priests, if priests there must be. I want a human lord who understands me and the millions round me, pities us, teaches us, orders our history, civilisation, development for us. I come to you, full of manhood, and you send me to a woman. I go to the Protestants, full of desires to right the world—and they begin to talk of the next life, and give up this as lost.'

A quiet smile lighted up the thin wan face, full of unfathomable thoughts, and he replied, again half to himself, —

'Am I God, to kill or to make alive, that thou sendest me to me to recover a man of his leprosy? Farewell. You shall see your cousin here at noon to-morrow. You will not refuse my blessing, or my prayers, even though they be offered to a mother?'

'I will refuse nothing in the form of human love.' And the father blessed him fervently, and he went out.

'What a man!' said he to himself, 'or rather the wreck of what a man! Oh, for such a heart, with the tears and sorrows of a truly English brain!'

Next day he met Lake in that room. Their talk was short and sad. Lake was on the point of entering an order devoted especially to the worship of the Blessed Virgin.

'My father has sent me out. I must go to her feet. She will have mercy, though man has none.'

'But why enter the order? Why take an irrevocable step?'

'Because it is irrevocable, because I shall enter an utterly new life, in which old things shall pass away, and all things become new, and I shall forget the very names of Parent, Englishman, Citizen, — the very existence of that strange Babel of man's building, whose roar and ocean oppress me every time I walk the street. Oh, for solitude! meditation, penance! Oh, to make up by latter self-punishment my ingratitude to her who has been leading me on, for years, home to her bosom! The all-prevailing mother, daughter of Gabriel, spouse of Deity, slower at the earth, whom I have so long despised! Oh, to follow the example of the blessed Mary of Oignies, who every day inflicted on her most holy person eleven hundred stripes in honour of that all-perfect maiden!'

'Such an honour, I could have thought, would have pleased better Kali, the murder-goddess of the Thugs,' thought Lancelot to himself, but he had not the heart to say it, and he only replied, —

'So torture propitiates the Virgin! That explains the strange story I read lately, of her having appeared in the Covenens, and informed the peasantry that she had sent the potato disease on account of their neglecting her

shrines, that unless they repented, she would next year destroy their cattle, and the third year themselves.'

'Why not?' asked poor Lake.

'Why not, indeed! If God is to be capricious, proud, revengeful, why not the Son of God? And if the Son of God, why not His mother?'

'You judge spiritual feelings by the carnal test of the understanding, your Protestant horror of asceticism lies at the root of all you say. How can you comprehend the self-satisfaction, the absolute delight, of self-punishment?'

'So far from it, I have always had an infinite respect for asceticism, as a noble and manful thing — the only manful thing to my eyes left in Popery, and fast dying out of that under Jesuit influence. You recollect the quarrel between the Tablet and the Jesuits, over Faber's unlucky homily about St. Rose of Lima? But really, as long as you honour asceticism as a means of appeasing the angry deities, I shall prefer to St. Donum's cross or St. Hedwig's thimbles, John Mytton's two hours' crawl in the sea in his shirt, after a flock of wild ducks. They both endured like heroes, but the former for a selfish, if not a blasphemous end, the latter, as a man should, to test and strengthen his own powers of endurance.'

There, I will say no more. Go your way in God's name. There must be lessons to be learnt in all strong and self-restraining action. So you will learn something from the scourge and the hair shirt. We must all take the latter medicine of suffering, I suppose.'

'And, therefore, I am the wiser, in forcing the draught on myself.'

'Provided it be the right draught, and do not require another and still bitterer one to expel the effects of the poison. I have no faith in people's doctoring themselves, either physically or spiritually.'

'I am not my own physician, I follow the rules of an infallible Church, and the examples of her canonised saints.'

'Well, perhaps they may have known what was best for themselves. But as for you and me here, in the year 1849. How ever, we shall argue on for ever. Forgive me if I have offended you.'

'I am not offended. The Catholic Church has always been a persecuted one.'

'Then walk with me a little way, and I will persecute you no more.'

'Where are you going?'

'To —' Lancelot had not the heart to say whither.

'To my father's. Ah! what a son I would have been to him now, in his extreme need! And he will not let me! Lancelot, is it impossible to move him? I do not want to go home again to live there. I could not face that, though I longed but this moment to do it. I cannot face the self-satisfied, pitying looks — the everlasting suspicion that they

suspect me to be speaking untruths, or proselytising in secret. 'Cruel and unjust!'

Lancelot thought of a certain letter of *Lark's*—but who was he, to break the banished word?

'No, I will not see him. Better thus, better vanish, and be known only according to the spirit by the spirits of saints and confessors and their successors upon earth. No! I will die, and give no sign.'

'I must see somewhat more of you, indeed.'

'I will meet you here, then, two hours hence. Not that house—even along the way which leads to it—I cannot go. It would be too painful to think that you were walking towards it, the old house where I was born and bred. And I shut out even though it be for the sake of the kingdom of heaven!'

'Oh for the sake of your own share therein, my poor cousin!' thought Lancelot to himself, 'which is a very different matter.'

'Whither, after you have been——?' Lark could not get out the word home.

'To Claude Mellet's.'

'I will walk part of the way thither with you, but he is a very bad companion for you.'

'I can't help that. I cannot live, and I am going to him painter. It is not the road in which to find a fortune, but still, the very sign-painters live somehow, I suppose. I am going this very afternoon to Claude Mellet and must. I sold the list of my treasured MSS. to a fifth-rate magazine this morning for what it would fetch. It has been like cutting one's own children, but, at least, they have fed me. So now "to fresh fields and pastures new".'

CHAPTER XX

DESIRED MACHINES.

WHEN Lancelot reached the banker's a letter was put into his hand, it bore the Whitford postmark, and Mrs. Livingston's handwriting. He tore it open, it contained a letter from Argemont, which, it is needless to say, he read before her mother's.

'My beloved! my husband!—Yes—though you may think me tickle and proud. I will call you so to the last, for were I huckle, I could have asked myself the agony of writing this, and as for pride, oh! how that darling vice has been crushed out of me! I have rolled at my mother's feet with bitter tears and vain entreaties—and been refused, and yet I have obeyed her after all. We must write to each other no more. This our last letter must explain the forced silence which has been driving me mad with fear that you would suspect me. And now you may call me weak, but it is your love which has made me strong to do this—which has taught me to see with new intensity

my duty, not only to you, but to every human being to my parents. By this self-sacrifice alone can I atone to them for all my past untruthfulness. Let me, then, thus be worthy of you. Hope that by this submission we may win even her to change. How calmly I write! but it is only my hand that is calm. As for my heart, read Tennyson's *Retainer*, and then know how I feel towards you! Yes, I love you madly, the world would say. I seem to understand now how women have died of love. Ay, that indeed would be blessed, for then my spirit would seek out yours, and hover over it for ever! Farewell, beloved! and let me hear of you through your deeds. A feeling at my heart, which should not be, although it is, a sad one, tells me that we shall meet soon—soon.'

Stupefied and sickened, Lancelot turned carelessly to Mrs. Livingston's cover, whose blameless respectability thus uttered itself—

'I cannot deceive you or myself by saying I regret that providential circumstance should have been permitted to break off a connection which I always felt to be most unsuitable, and I rejoice that the intercourse my dear child has had with you has not so far undermined her principles as to prevent her yielding the most full obedience to my wishes. I intend to be in future correspondence with you. Hoping that all that has occurred will be truly blessed to you, and that your thoughts to another world will be a true concern for the safety of your immortal soul.'

'Fareyou, yours truly,

'C. LIVINGSTON.'

'Another world!' said Lancelot to himself.

It is most merciful of you certainly, my dear madam, to put one in mind of the existence of another world, which such as you have then your own way in this one,' and thrusting the letter quietly into the fire, he tried to collect his thoughts.

What had he lost? The dear mother, himself, the less he— and if mother him Argemont's letters were so new a want, that the craving for them was not yet satisfied. His intense imagination, resting on the delicious certainty of her truth, seemed ready to fill the silence with bright hopes and noble purposes. She herself had said that he would see her soon. But yet—but yet—why did that vision to death strike chilly through him? They were not words— a melancholy fancy, such as women love at times to play with. He would test it soon. At least here was another reason for bestirring himself at once to win fame in the noble profession he had chosen. And yet his brain reeled as he went upstairs to his much-sought private room.

There, however, he found a person cloaked with the banker, whose remarkable appearance drove everything else out of his mind. He was a huge, shaggy, toil-worn man, the deep melancholy earnestness of whose rugged features

reminded him almost ludicrously of one of Lancelot's bloodhounds. But withal there was a tenderness—a genial, though covert humour—playing about his massive features, which awakened in Lancelot at first sight a fantastical longing to open his whole heart to him. He was dressed like a foreigner, but spoke English with perfect fluency. The banker sat listening, quite crestfallen, beneath his intense and melancholy gaze, in which, nevertheless, there twinkled some rays of kindly sympathy.

'It was all those foreign railways,' said Mr. Smith pensively.

'And it serves you quite right,' answered the stranger. 'Did I not warn you of the folly and sin of sinking capital in foreign countries while English land was crying out for tillage and English poor for employment?'

'My dear friend' (in a deprecating tone), 'it was the best possible investment I could make.'

'And pray, who told you that you were sent into the world to make investments?'

'But, —
'But not to butts, or I would stir a finger towards helping you. What are you going to do with this money if I procure it for you?'

'Work till I can pay back that poor fellow's fortune,' said the banker, earnestly pointing to Lancelot. 'And if I could lend my conscience of that, I would not care if I starved myself, hardly if my own children died.'

'Spoken like a man!' answered the stranger. 'Work for that and I'll help you. Be a new man, once and for all, my friend. Don't even make this your first object. Say to yourself, not "I will invest this money where it shall pay me most," but "I will invest it where it shall give most employment to English hands and produce most manufactures for English bodies." In short, seek first the kingdom of God and His justice with this money of yours, and see if all other things—profits, not suchlike included—are not added unto you.'

'And you are certain you can obtain the money?'

'My good friend the Begum of the Cammel Islands has more than she knows what to do with—and she owes me a good turn—you know.'

'What are you jesting about now?'

'Did I never tell you? The new king of the Cammel Islands, just like your European ones, ran away, and would neither govern himself nor let any one else govern—so one morning his ministers, getting impatient, ate him, and then asked my advice. I recommended they to put his mother on the throne, who being old and tough, would run less danger, and since then everything has gone on smoothly as anywhere else.'

'Are you mad?' thought Lancelot to himself as he started at the speaker's matter-of-fact face.

'No, I am not mad, my young friend,' quoth he, facing right round upon him, as if he had divined his thoughts.

'I—I beg your pardon, I did not speak,' stammered Lancelot, ashamed at a pair of eyes

which could have looked down the boldest unscrupulousness in three seconds.

'I am perfectly well aware that you did not. I must have some talk with you. I've heard a good deal about you. You wrote those articles in the — *Review* about George Sand, did you not?'

'I did.'

'Well, there was a great deal of noble feeling—and a great deal of abominable nonsense. You seem to be very anxious to reform society?'

'I am.'

'Don't you think you had better begin by reforming yourself?'

'Really, sir,' answered Lancelot, 'I am too old for that worn-out quibble. The root of all my sins has been selfishness and sloth. And I to cure them by becoming still more selfish and slothful? What part of myself can I reform except my notions? and the very sin of my notions has been as I take it that I—
'doing nothing to reform others, never fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil, as your Prayer book has it.'

'My Prayer book?' answered the stranger, with a quaint smile.

'Upon my word, Lancelot,' interposed the banker, with a frightful look, 'you must not get into an argument—you must be more respectful—you don't know to whom you are speaking.'

'And I don't much care,' answered he. 'Life is really too grim earnest in these days to stand on ceremony. I am sick of blind leaders of the blind, of respectable pretences to the respectable, who draw out second-hand trivialities which they neither practise nor wish to see practised. I've had enough of all my life of Scrooges and Pharisees in white cravats, living on men's lives, burdens, and grivous to be borne—and then not troubling them themselves with one of their fingers.'

'Silence, sir,' roared the banker while the stranger threw himself into a chair and burst into a storm of laughter.

'Upon my word, friend Minnion, hates another of Hans Andersen's ugly ducks.'

'I really do not mean to be rude,' said Lancelot, recollecting himself, but I am nearly desperate. If your heart is in the right place, you will understand me; if not, the less we talk to each other the better.'

'Most true,' answered the stranger, 'and I do understand you—and it is as I hope we see more of each other hereafter—we will see if we cannot solve one or two of these problems between us.'

At this moment Lancelot was summoned downstairs, and bound to his great pleasure, Trugva waiting for him. That worthy personage bowed to Lancelot reverently and then faintly.

'I am quite ashamed to intrude myself upon you, sir, but I could not rest without coming to ask whether you have had any news.'—He

broke down at this point in the sentence, but Lancelot understood him.

'I have no news,' he said. 'But what do you mean by standing off in that way, as if we were not old and fast friends? Remember, I am as poor as you are now, you may look me in the face and call me your equal, if you will, or your inferior, I shall not deny it.'

'Pardon me, sir,' answered Tregarva, 'but I never felt what a real substantial thing rank is, as I have since this sad misfortune of yours.'

'And I have never till now found out its worthlessness.'

'You're wrong, sir, you are wrong, look at the difference between yourself and me. When you've lost all you have, and seven times more, you're still a gentleman. No man can take that from you. You may look the proudest duchess in the land in the face, and claim her as your equal, while I, sir— I don't mean, though, to talk of myself—but suppose that you had loved a pious and a beautiful lady, and among all your worship of her, and your awe of her, had felt that you were worthy of her, that you could become her comforter, and her pride, and her joy, if it wasn't for that accursed gulf that men had put between you, that you were no gentleman, that you didn't know how to walk, and how to pronounce, and when to speak, and when to be silent, not even how to handle your own knife and fork without disgusting her, or how to keep your own body clean and sweet— Ah, sir, I see it now as I never did before, what a wall all these little defects build up round a poor man, how he longs and struggles to show himself as he is at heart, and cannot, till he feels sometimes as if he was enchanted, pent up, like folks in fairy tales, in the body of some dumb beast. But, sir,' he went on, with a concentrated bitterness which Lancelot had never seen in him before, 'just because this gulf which rank makes is such a deep one, therefore it looks to me all the more devilish, not that I want to pull down any man to my level, I despise my own level too much, I want to rise, I want those like me to rise with me. Let the rich be as rich as they will—I, and those like me, covet not money, but manners. Why should not the workman be a gentleman, and a workman still? Why are they to be shut out from all that is beautiful, and delicate, and winning, and stately?'

'Now perhaps,' said Lancelot, 'you begin to understand what I was driving at on that night of the revel.'

'It has come home to me lately, sir, bitterly enough. If you knew what had gone on in me this last fortnight, you would know that I had cause to curse the state of things which brings a man up a savage against his will, and cuts him off, as if he were an ape or a monster, from those for whom the same Lord died, and on whom the same Spirit rests. Is that God's will, sir? No, it is the devil's will. "Those whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder."'

Lancelot coloured, for he remembered with

how much less reason he had been lately invoking in his own cause those very words. He was at a loss for an answer, but seeing, to his relief, that Tregarva had returned to his usual impassive calm, he forced him to sit down, and began questioning him as to his own prospects and employment.

About them Tregarva seemed hopeful enough. He had found out a Wesleyan minister in town who knew him, and had, by his means, after assisting for a week or two in the London City Mission, got some similar appointment in a large manufacturing town. Of the state of things he spoke more sadly than ever. 'The rich cannot guess, sir, how lugubrious a feeling is rising in these days. It's not only those who are outwardly poorest who long for change, the middling people, sir, the small town shopkeepers especially, are nearly past all patience. One of the City Mission assured me that he has been watching them these several years past, and that nothing could beat their fortitude and industry, and their determination to stand peaceably by law and order, but yet, this last year or two, things 'are growing too bad to bear. Do what they will, they cannot get their bread, and when a man cannot get that, sir—'

'But what do you think is the reason of it?'

'How should I tell, sir? But if I had to say, I should say this—just what they say themselves—that there are too many of them. Go where you will, in town or country, you'll find half a dozen shops struggling for a custom that would only keep up one, and so they're forced to undersell one another. And when they've got down prices all they can by fair means, they're forced to get them down lower by foul—to sand the sugar, and shoe-leave the tea, and put Satan only that prompts 'em knows what—into the bread, and then they don't thrive—they can't thrive, God's curse must be on them. They begin by trying to out each other and eat each other up, and while they're eating up their neighbours, their neighbours eat up them, and so they all come to ruin together.'

'Why, you talk like Mr. Mill himself, Tregarva, you ought to have been a political economist, and not a City missionary. By the bye, I don't like that profession for you.'

'It's the Lord's work, sir. It's the very sending to the Gentiles that the Lord promised me.'

'I don't doubt it, Paul, but you are meant for other things, if not better. There are plenty of smaller men than you to do that work. Do you think that God would have given you that strength, that brain, to waste on a work which could be done without them? Those limbs would certainly be good capital for you, if you turned a live model at the Academy. Perhaps you'd better be mine, but you can't even be that if you go to Manchester.'

The giant looked hopelessly down at his huge limbs.

'Well, God only knows what use they are of just now. But as for the brain, sir—in

much learning is much sorrow. One had much better work than read, I find. If I read much more about what men might be, and are not, and what English soil might be, and is not, I shall go mad. And that puts me in mind of one thing I came here for, though, like a poor rude country fellow as I am, I clean forgot it a-thinking of— Look here, sir, you've given me a sight of books in my time, and God bless you for it. But now I hear that—that you are itornund to be a poor man like us, and that you shan't be, while Paul Tregarva has aught of yours. So I've just brought all the books back, and there they be in the hall, and may God reward you for the loan of them to his poor child! And so, sir, farewell,' and he rose to go.

'No, Paul, the books and you shall never part.'

'And I say, sir, the books and you shall never part.'

'Then we two can never part'—and a sudden rapids flashed over him—'and we will not part, Paul! The only man whom I utterly love, and trust, and respect on the face of God's earth, is you, and I cannot lose sight of you. If we are to earn our bread, let us earn it together, if we are to endure poverty, and sorrow, and struggle to hurl out the way of bettering these wretched misdoers round us, let us learn our lesson together, and help each other to spell it out.'

'Do you mean what you say?' asked Paul slowly.

'I do.'

'Then I say what you say. Where thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Come what will, I will be your servant, for good luck or bad, for ever.'

'My equal, Paul, not my servant.'

'I know my place, sir. When I am as learned and as well-bred as you, I shall not refuse to call myself your equal, and the sooner that day comes, the better I shall be pleased. Till then I am your friend and your brother, but I am your scholar too, and I shall not set up myself against my master.'

'I have learnt more of you, Paul, than ever you have learnt of me. But let it as you will, only whatever you may call yourself, we must eat at the same table, live in the same room, and share alike all this world's good things—on we shall have no right to share together this world's bad things. If that is your bargain, there is my hand on it.'

'Amen!' quoth Tregarva, and the two young men joined hands on that sacred bond—now growing rarer and rarer year by year—the utter friendship of two equal manful hearts.

'And now, sir, I have promised—and you would have me keep my promise—to go and work for the City Mission in Manchester—at least for the next month, till a young man's place who has just left is filled up. Will you let me go for that time? and then, if you hold your present mind, we will join home and

fortunes thenceforth, and go wherever the Lord shall send us. There's work enough of His waiting to be done. I don't doubt but if we are willing and able, He will set us about the thing we're meant for.'

As Lancelot opened the door for him, he lingered on the steps, and grasping his hand, said, in a low, earnest voice: 'The Lord be with you, sir. Be sure that He has mighty things in store for you, or He would not have brought you so low in the days of your youth.'

'And so,' as John Bunyan has it, 'he went on his way,' and Lancelot saw him no more till— but I must not outrun the order of time.

After all, this visit came to Lancelot truly. It had roused him to hope, and turned off his feelings from the startling news he had just heard. He stepped along arm-in-arm with Luke, cheerful and gate-distant, and as he thought of Tregarva's complaints,—

'The beautiful!' he said to himself, 'they shall have it! At least they shall be awakened to feel then need of it, then right to it. What a high destiny, to be the artist of the people! to devote one's powers of painting, not to mimicking obsolete figures, Pagan or Popsic, but to representing to the working men of England the triumphs of the Past and the yet greater triumphs of the Future!'

Luke began at once questioning him about his father.

'And is he contrite and humbled? Does he see that he has sinned?'

'In what?'

'It is not for us to judge, but surely it must have been some sin on either of his which has drawn down such a sore judgment on him.'

Lancelot smiled, but Luke went on, not perceiving him.

'Ah! we cannot find out for him. Nor has he, alas! as a Protestant, much likelihood of finding out for himself. In our holy Church he would have been compelled to denigrate his faults by methodical self-examination, and lay them out by one before his priest for advice and pardon, and so start a new and free man once more.'

'Do you think,' asked Lancelot with a smile, 'that he who will not confess his faults either to God or to himself, would confess them to man? And would his priest honestly tell him what he really wants to know? which sin of his has called down this so-called judgment? It would be imputed, I suppose, to some vague generality, to inattention to religious duties, to idolatry of the world, and so forth. But a Roman priest would be the last person, I should think, who could tell him fairly, in the present case, the cause of his affliction, and I question whether he would give a patient hearing to any one who told it him.'

'How so? Though, indeed, I have remarked that people are perfectly willing to be told they are miserable sinners, and to confess themselves such in a general way, but

if the preacher once begins to specify, to fix on any particular act or habit, he is accused of personality or partiality; his hearers are ready to confess guilty to any sin but the very one with which he charges them. But surely this is just what I am arguing against you Protestants—just what the Catholic use of confession obviates.

"Attempts to do so, you mean?" answered Lancelot. "But what if your religion preaches formally that which only renounces in our religion as a fast dying superstition? That those judgments of God, as you call them, are not judgments at all in any true use of the word, but capricious acts of punishment on the part of Heaven, which have no more reference to the fault which provokes them than if you cut off a man's finger because he made a bad use of his tongue. That is put, but only a part, of what I meant just now, by saying that people represent God as capricious, proud, revengeful."

"But do not Protestants themselves confess that our sins provoke God's anger?"

"You common crowd, which it talks rightly of God as one "who has no passions," ought to make you speak more reverently of the possibility of any act of ours disturbing the everlasting equanimity of the absolute Love. Why will men so often impute to God the miseries which they bring upon themselves?"

"Because, I suppose, then pride makes them more willing to confess themselves sinners than souls."

"Right, my friend, they will not remember that it is of "then pleasant vices that God makes whips to scourge them." Oh, I at least have felt the deep wisdom of that saying of Wilhelm Meister's harper, that it is

"Voices from the depths of Nature warn
Which rise upon the guilty heart proclaim."

"Of nature— if those eternal laws of hers which we daily break. Yes! it is not because God's temper changes, but because God's universe is unchangeable, that such as I, such as you poor fellow, having sown the wind, must reap the whirlwind. I have fed my self-esteem with luxuries and not with virtue, and, being them, have nothing left. He has sold himself to a system which is its own punishment. And yet the last place in which he will look for the cause of his misery is in that very money-mongering to which he now clings as frantically as ever. But soot is throughout the world. Only look down over that hedge-parapet, at that huddled-mouthed sewer, vomiting its pestilential noxious across the mud. There it runs, and will run, hurrying to the sea vast stores of wealth, elaborated by Nature's chemistry into the ready materials of food, which proclaim, too, by their own foul smell, God's will that they should be buried out of sight in the fruitful all-regenerating grave of earth: there it runs, turning them all into the seeds of pestilence, filth, and drunkenness.—And then, when it obeys the laws which we despise, and the pestilences is

come at last, men will pray against it, and confess it to be "a judgment for their sins", but if you ask *what* sin, people will talk about "*les vices d'habitude*," as Fourier says, and tell you that it is presumptuous to lay into God's secret counsels, unless, perhaps, some fanatic should inform you that the cholera has been drawn down on the poor by the encroachment of Maynooth by the rich."

"It is most fearful, indeed, to think that these diseases should be confined to the poor—that a man should be exposed to cholera, typhus, and a host of attendant diseases, simply because he is born into the world an artisan, while the rich, by the mere fact of money, are exempt from such curses, except when they come in contact with those whom they call on Sunday "their brethren," and on week days the "masses.""

"Thank Heaven that you do see that, then in a country calling itself civilized and Christian, pestilence should be the peculiar heritage of the poor! It is past all comment."

"And yet we send these pestilences a judgment, even on them, for their dirt and profligacy?"

"And how should they be clean without water? And how can you wonder if their appetites, sickened with filth and self-disgust, crave after the gun-shop for temporary strength, and then for temporary forgetfulness? Every London doctor knows that I speak the truth: would that every London preacher would tell that truth from his pulpit!"

"Then would you too say that God punishes our class for the sins of another?"

"Some would say," answered Lancelot, half aside, "that He may be punishing them for not demanding that *right* to live like human beings, to all those social circumstances which shall not make the children's life one long disease. But are not these pestilences a judgment on the rich, too, in the truest sense of the word? Are they not the broad, unmistakable seal to God's opinion of a state of society which confesses its corrupt relations to be so utterly rotten and confused that it usually cannot afford to save yearly millions of pounds' worth of the materials of food, not to mention thousands of human lives? Is not every man who allows such things hastening the ruin of the society in which he lives, by helping to foster the indignation and fury of its victims? Look at that group of stunted, haggard artisans who are passing us. What if one day they should call to account the landlords whose covetousness and ignorance make their dwellings hell on earth?"

By this time they had reached the artist's house.

Lanka refused to enter. "He had done with this world, and the painters of this world."

And with a tearful last farewell, he turned away up the street, leaving Lancelot to gaze at him slow, painful steps, and algaet, earth hard men.

"Ah!" thought Lancelot, "here is the end of your anthropology! At first, your ideal was

is an angel! But your angel is merely an unsexed woman, and so you are forced to go back to the humanity after all—but to a woman, not a man? And this, in the nineteenth century, when men are telling us that the poetic and enthusiastic have become impossible, and that the only possible state of the world henceforward will be a universal good-humoured hive, of the Franklin-Benthamite type?—a vast prosaic Cockaigne of steam mills for grinding sausage—in those who can get it then! And all the while, in spite of all Manchester schools, and high and dry orthodox schools, here are the dauntless phantasms, new and old, sane and insane, starting up suddenly into live practical power, to give their prosaic themes the lie—Kapels, conversions, Minionsisms, Misnomerisms, Calibanisms, Continual revolutions, Paris days of June—Ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky, and yet ye cannot discern the signs of this time!

He was ushered upstairs to the door of his studio, at which he knocked, and was answered by a loud 'Come in.' Lancelot heard a rustle as he entered, and caught sight of a most charming little white foot retreating hastily through the folding doors into the inner room.

The artist, who was seated at his easel, held up his brush as a signal of silence, and did not even raise his eyes till he had finished the touches on which he was engaged.

'And now—what do I see?' the last man I should have expected! I thought you were far down in the country. And what brings you to me with such serious and business-like looks?

'I am a penniless youth.

'What?

'Ruined by my last shilling, and I want to turn artist.'

'Oh, ye gracious powers! Come to my arms, brother! it last with me in the holy order of those who must work or starve. Long have I wept in secret over the perniciousfulness of your pursuit!'

'Diy you tears, then, now?' said Lancelot. 'An I neither have ten pounds in the world, nor intend to have till I can earn them.'

'Artist?' ran on Millot, 'tho' you shall be an artist indeed! You shall stay with me, and become the English Michael Angelo—or, if you are bold enough, go to Rome, and utterly eclipse Overbeck, and throw Schadow for ever into the shade!'

'I have you a supper,' said Lancelot, 'for this evening attempt at a pin.'

'Agreed! Here, Sabina, send to Covent Garden for huge rose-gays, and get out the best bottle of Brandy. We will pass an evening worthy of Homer, and with gaulants and libations honour the muse of painting.'

'Luxurious dig!' said Lancelot, 'with all you can't about poverty.'

As he spoke, the folding doors opened, and an exquisite little brunette danced in from the inner room, in which, by the bye, had been

going on all the while a suspicious nothing, as of garments hastily arranged. She was dressed gracefully in a loose French morning gown, down which Lancelot's eye glanced toward the little foot, which, however, was now hidden in a tiny velvet slipper. The artist's wife was a real beauty, though without a single perfect feature, except a most delicious little mouth, a skin like velvet, and clear brown eyes, from which beamed earnest simplicity and ardent good humour. She darted forward to her husband's friend, while her rippling brown hair, fantastically arranged, fluttered about her neck, and seizing Lancelot's hands successively in both of hers, broke out in an ancient prettily tinged with French,

'Charming! delightful! And so you are really going to turn painter! And I have longed so to be introduced to you! Clench has been raving about you these two years, you already seem to me the oldest friend in the world. You must not go to Rome. We shall keep you. Mr. Lancelot, positively you must come and live with us—we shall be the happiest trio in London. I will make you so comfortable that you must let me atone for your look for you.'

And he was smiling sometimes. 'And I Lancelot smiling.

'Ah,' she said blushing, and shaking her pretty little head at Clench, 'thoroughly! how he has betrayed me! When he is at his ease, he is so much a seventh heaven that he so nothing thinks of nothing but his own dreams.'

At this moment when a step sounded on the stairs, the door opened, and there entered, to Lancelot's astonishment, the stranger, which had just puzzled him so much at his much.

Clench rose reverentially, and came forward, but Sabina was before him with him, and running up to her visitor, kissed his hand again and again, almost kneeling to him.

'The dear master!' she cried, 'what a delightful surprise! we have not seen you for a fortnight past, and gave you up for lost.'

'Where do you come from, my dear master?' asked Clench.

From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it, answered he, smiling, and laying his hand on his hip, 'my dear pupils. And you are both well and happy.'

'Perfectly, and doubly delighted at your presence to-day, for your advice will come in a providential moment for my friend here.'

'Ah,' said the strange man, 'well met once more! So you are going to turn painter.'

He bent a severe and searching look on Lancelot.

'You have a painter's face, young man,' he said, 'go on and prosper. What branch of art do you intend to study?'

'The ancient Italian painters as my first step.'

'Ancient? it is not four hundred years since Perugino died! But I should suppose you do not intend to ignore classical art.'

'You have divined rightly. I wish, in the

study of the antique, to arrive at the primeval laws of unfallen human beauty.'

'Were Phidias and Praxiteles, then, so primeval? the world had lasted many a thousand years before their turn came. If you intend to begin at the beginning, why not go back at once to the garden of Eden, and there study the true antique?'

'If there were but any relics of it,' said Lancelot, puzzled, and laughing

'You would find it very near you, young man, if you had but eyes to see it.'

Claude Mellot laughed significantly, and Sabina clapped her little hands.

'Yet till you take him with you, master, and show it to him, he must needs be content with the Royal Academy and the Elgin marbles.'

'But to what branch of painting, pray,' said the master to Lancelot, 'will you apply your knowledge of the antique? Will you, like this foolish fellow here' (with a kindly glance at Claude), 'fritter yourself away on Nymphs and Venuses, in which neither he nor any one else believes?'

'Historic art, as the highest,' answered Lancelot, 'is my ambition.'

'It is well to aim at the highest, but only when it is possible for us. And how can such a school exist in England now? You English must learn to understand your own history before you paint it. Rather follow in the steps of your Turners, and Landseers, and Stanfields, and Crosslands, and add your contribution to the present noble school of naturalist painters. That is the niche in the temple which God has set you English to fill up just now. These men's patient, reverent faith in Nature as they see her, their knowledge that the ideal is neither to be invented nor abstracted, but found and left where God has put it, and where alone it can be represented, in actual and individual phenomena,—in these lies an honest development of the true idea of Protestantism, which is paving the way to the mesothetic art of the future.'

'Glorious!' said Sabina, 'not a single word that we poor creatures can understand!'

But our hero, who always took a virtuous delight in hearing what he could not comprehend, went on to question the orator.

'What, then, is the true idea of Protestantism?' said he.

'The universal symbolism and dignity of matter, whether in man or nature.'

'But the Puritans—?'

'Were inconsistent with themselves and with Protestantism, and therefore God would not allow them to proceed. Yet their repudiation of all art was better than the Judas-kiss which Romanism bestows on it, in the meagre eulogium of the ancient religious schools, and of your modern Overbecks and Pugins. The only really wholesome designer of great power whom I have seen in Germany is Kanibach, and perhaps every one would not agree with my reasons for admiring him, in this whitewashed

age. But you, young sir, were meant for better things than art. Many young geniuses have an early hankering, as Goethe had, to turn painters. It seems the shortest and easiest method of embodying their conceptions in visible form, but they get wiser afterwards, when they find in themselves thoughts that cannot be laid upon the canvas. Come with me—I like striking while the iron is hot, walk with me towards my lodgings, and we will discuss this weighty matter.'

And with a gay farewell to the adoring little Sabina, he passed an iron arm through Lancelot's, and marched him down into the street.

Lancelot was surprised and almost nettled at the sudden influence which he found this quaint personage was exerting over him. But he had, of late, tasted the high delight of feeling himself under the guidance of a superior mind, and longed to enjoy it once more. Perhaps they were reminiscences of that kind which stirred in him the strange fancy of a connection, almost of a likeness, between his new acquaintance and Argamone. He asked, humbly enough, why Art was to be a forbidden path to him?

'Besides you are an Englishman, and a man of uncommon talent, unless your physiognomy belie you, and one, too, for whom God has strange things in store, or He would not have so suddenly and strangely overthrown you.'

Lancelot started. He remembered that Tregars had said just the same thing to him that very morning, and the (to him) strange coincidence sank deep into his heart.

'You must be a politician,' the stranger went on. 'You are bound to it as your birthright. It has been England's privilege hitherto to solve all political questions as they arise for the rest of the world, it is her duty now. Here or nowhere, must the solution be attempted of those social problems which are convulsing men and more all Christendom. She cannot afford to waste brains like yours, while in those nooks of reeking alleys, such as that one opposite us, heathens and savages are demanding the rights of citizenship. Whether they be right or wrong is what you, and such as you, have to find out at this day.'

Silent and thoughtful, Lancelot walked on by his side.

'What has become of your friend Tregars? I met him this morning after he parted from you, and had some talk with him. I was sorely pained to enlist him. Perhaps I shall, in the meantime, I shall busy myself with you.'

'In what way?' asked Lancelot, most strange sir, of whose name, much less of whose occupation, I can gain no tidings.'

'My name for the time being is Barnakill. And as for business, as it is your English fashion to call new things obstinately by old names, careless whether they apply or not, you may consider me as a recruiting-sergeant, which trade, indeed, I follow, though I am no more like the popular red-coated ones than your present "glorious constitution" is like William

the Thurd's, or Overbeck's high art like Fra Angelico's. Farewell! When I want you, which will be most likely when you want me, I shall find you again.'

The evening was passed, as Claude had promised, in a truly Horatian manner. Sabina was most inquisitive, and Claude interspersed his genial and enthusiastic effluence with various wise saws of 'the prophet.'

'But why on earth,' quoth Lancelot, at last, 'do you call him a prophet?'

'Because he is one, it's his business, his calling. He gets his living thereby, as the showman did by his elephant.'

'But what does he foretell?'

'Oh, son of the earth! And you went to Cambridge—are reported to have gone in for the thing, or phantom, called the tripos, and taken a first class.' Did you ever look out the word "prophetes" in Liddell and Scott?'

'Why, what do you know about Liddell and Scott?'

'Nothing, thank goodness, I never had time to waste over the crooked letters. But I have heard say that prophetes means, not a foreteller, but an out-teller—one who declares the will of a deity, and interprets his oracles. Is it not so?'

'Undoubtedly.'

'And that he became a foreteller among heathens at least—as I consider, among all peoples whatsoever?—because knowing the real meaning of what had happened, and what was happening, he could discern the signs of the times, and so had what the world calls a shrewd guess—what I, like a Pantheist as I am designated, should call a divine and inspired foresight—of what was going to happen.'

'A new notion, and a pleasant one, for it looks something like a law.'

'I am no scallard, as they would say in Whitford, you know, but it has often struck me that if folks would but believe that the Apostles talked not much very bad Greek, and had some slight notion of the received meaning of the words they used, and of the absurdity of using the same term to express nineteen different things, the New Testament would be found to be much simpler and more severely philosophical book than "Theologians" ("Anthroposophists" I call them) finey.

'Where on earth did you get all this wisdom, or foolishness?'

'From the prophet, a fortnight ago.'

'Who is this prophet? I will know.'

'Then you will know more than I do. Sabina—light my meerschaum, there's a darling, I will taste the sweeter after your lips.' And Claude laid his delicate woman-like limbs upon the sofa, and looked the very picture of luxurious nonchalance.

'What is he, you pitiless wretch?'

'Farrest Hebe, fill our Promethens Vinetns another glass of Burgundy, and hnd your guitar, to silence him.'

'It was the ocean nymphs who came to comfort Promethens—and unscandalled, too, if I recollect

right,' said Lancelot, smiling at Sabina. 'Come, now, if he will not tell me, perhaps you will?'

Sabina only blushed, and laughed mysteriously.

'You surely are intimate with him, Claude? When and where did you meet him first?'

'Seventeen years ago, on the barricades of the three days, in the charming little pandemonium called Paris, he picked me out of a gutter, a boy of fifteen, with a musket-ball through my body, mended me, and sent me to a painter's studio.'

The next *sojour* I had with him began in sight of the Denawind. Sabina, perhaps you might like to relate to Mr Smith that interview, and the circumstances under which you made your first sketch of that magnificent and little-known volcano.'

Sabina blushed again—this time scarlet, and, to Lancelot's astonishment, pulled off her shawl, and brandishing it daintily, uttered some unintelligible throat, in an Oriental language, at the laughing Claude.

'Why, you must have been in the East.'

'Why not? Do you think that figure and that walk were picked up in stay ridden, for pinching England? No. Al, in the East, and why not elsewhere? Do you think I got my knowledge of the human figure from the live-model in the Royal Academy?'

'I certainly have always had my doubts of it. You are the only man I know who can paint muscle in motion.'

'Because I am almost the only man in England who has ever seen it. Artists should go to the Cannibal Islands for that. *En fait le grand tour*. I should not wonder if the prophet made you talk it.'

'That would be very touch as I chose.'

'Or otherwise.'

'What do you mean?'

'That if he wille you to go, I defy you to stay. Eh, Sabina?'

'Well, you are a very mysterious pair, and a very charming one.'

'So we think ourselves, as to the charmingness, and as for the mystery—'

'*Thant en mysterium*,' says somebody somewhere, or it be don't, ought to, seeing that it is so. You will be a mystery some day, and a myth, and a thousand years hence pious old ladies will be pulling caps as to whether you were a saint or a devil, and whether you did really work miracles or not, as corroborations of your ex-super-lunar illumination on social questions.'

'Yes, you will have to submit, and see Bogy, and enter the Eleusian mysteries. Eh, Sabina?'

'My dear Claude, what between the Burgundy and your usual foolishness, you seem very much inclined to divulge the Eleusian mysteries.'

'I can't well do that, my beauty, seeing that, if you recollect, we were both turned back at the vestibule, for a pair of naughty children as we are.'

'Do be quiet! and let me enjoy, for once, my woman's right to the last word.'

And in this hopeful state of mystification, Lancelot went home and thraught of Argemone.

His uncle would, and, indeed, as it seemed, could, give him very little information on the question which had so excited his curiosity. He had met the man in India many years before, had received there from him most important kindnesses, and considered him, from experience, of oracular wisdom. He seemed to have an unlimited command of money, though most frugal in his private habits, visited England for a short time every few years, and always under a different appellation, but as for his real name, habitation, or business, here or at home, the good banker knew nothing, except that whenever questioned on them, he wandered off into Portuguese jokes, and ended in Chancery. So that Lancelot was fain to give up his questions and content himself with longing for the reappearance of this inexhaustible sage.

CHAPTER XVI

ONCE IN A WAY

A FEW mornings afterwards, Lancelot, as he glanced his eye over the columns of the *Times*, stopped short at the beloved name of Whitford. To his disgust and disappointment, it only occurred in one of those miserable cases now of weekly occurrence, of concealing the birth of a child. He was turning from it, when he saw Bracebridge's name. Another look sufficed to show him that he ought to go at once to the colonel, who had returned the day before from Norway.

A few minutes brought him to his friend's lodging, but the *Times* had arrived there before him. Bracebridge was sitting over his untasted breakfast, his face buried in his hands.

'Do not speak to me,' he said, without looking up. 'It was right of you to come—kind of you, but it is too late.'

He started, and looked wildly round him, as if listening for some sound which he expected, and then laid his head down on the table. Lancelot turned to go.

'No—do not leave me! Not alone, for God's sake, not alone!'

Lancelot sat down. There was a fearful alteration in Bracebridge. His old keen self-confident look had vanished. He was haggard, life-weary, shame-stricken, almost silent. His limbs looked quite shrunk and powerless, as he rested his head on the table before him, and murmured incoherently from time to time—

'My own child! And I never shall have another! No second chance for those who— Oh Mary! Mary! you might have waited—you might have trusted me! And why should you?—ay, why, indeed? And such a pretty baby, too!—just like his father!'

Lancelot laid his hand kindly on his shoulder.

'My dearest Bracebridge, the evidence proves that the child was born dead!'

'Thoy he!' he said hoarsely, starting up. 'It cried twice after it was born!'

Lancelot stood horror-struck.

'I heard it last night, and the night before that, and the night before that again, under my pillow, shrieking—stinging—two little squeaks, like a caught hare, and I tore the pillows off it. I did, and once I saw it, and it had beautiful black eyes—just like its father—just like a little miniature that used to lie on my mother's table, when I knelt at her knee, before they sent me out "to see life," and I don, and the army, and Cockford's, and Nowmarket, and fine gentlemen, and fine ladies, and luxury, and flattery brought me to this! Oh, father! father! was that the only way to make a gentleman of your son? There it is again! Don't you hear it? under the sofa cushions! Tell them off! Curse you! Slay it!'

And, with a fearful oath, the wretched man sent Lancelot staggering across the room, and madly tore up the cushions.

A long postman's knock at the door—He suddenly rose up quite collected.

'The letter! I knew it would come! She need not have written! I know what is in it.'

The servant's step came up the stairs. Poor Bracebridge turned to Lancelot with something of his own stately determination.

'I must be alone when I receive this letter. Stay here! And with compressed lips and fixed eyes he stalked out at the door, and shut it.'

Lancelot heard him stop, then the servant's footsteps down the stairs, then the colonel tramping slowly and heavily, went step by step up to the room above. He shut that door too. A dead silence followed. Lancelot stood in fearful suspense, and held his breath to listen. Perhaps he had failed? No, for then he would have heard a fall. Perhaps he had fallen on his head? He would go and see. No, he would wait a little longer. Perhaps he was praying? He had told Lancelot to pray once—he dared not interrupt him now. A slight stir—a noise as of an opening box. Think God, he was, at least, alive! Nonsense! Why should he not be alive? What could happen to him? And yet he knew that something was going to happen. The silence was ominous, unbreakable, the air of the room felt heavy and stifling, as if a thunderstorm were about to burst. He longed to hear the man coming and stamping. And yet he could not connect the thought of one so gay and full of gallant life, with the terrible dread that was creeping over him—with the terrible scene which he had just witnessed. It must be all a temporary excitement—a mistake—a hulems dream, which the next post would sweep away. He would go and tell him so. No, he could not stir. His limbs seemed leaden, his feet felt rooted to the ground, as in long nightmare.

And still the intolerable silence brooded overhead.

What broke it? A dull, stifled report, as if a pistol fired against the ground, a heavy fall, and again the silence of death.

He rushed upstairs. A corpse lay on its face upon the floor, and from among its hair, a crimson thread crept slowly across the carpet. It was all over. He bent over the head, but one look was sufficient. He did not try to lift it up.

On the table lay the fatal letter. Lancelot knew that he had a right to read it. It was somewhat mussed, but there were no tear blots on the paper. —

'Sir, I am in prison — and where are you? (I'm) man? Where were you all those miserable weeks, while I was coming nearer and nearer to my shame? Murdering dumb beasts in foreign lands. You have murdered more than thirty. How I loved you once! How I hate you now! But I have my revenge. Your baby cried twice after it was born!'

Lancelot tore the letter into a hundred pieces, and swallowed them, for every foot in the house was on the stairs.

So there was terror, and confusion, and rummaging in and out — but there were no wet eyes then except those of Brimbridge's groom, who threw himself on the body and would not stir. And then there was a coroner's inquest, and it came out in the evidence how 'the deceased had been for several days very much depressed, and had talked of veins and ruptures, whereas the jury — as twelve honest, good-natured Christians were bound to do — returned a verdict of temporary insanity, and in a week more the penny-a-liners grew tired, and the world, too, who never expects anything, not even French revolutions, grew tired also of repeating, 'Dear me! who would have expected it!' and having filled up the colonel's place, swaggered on as usual, arm in arm with the flesh and the devil.

Brimbridge's death had, of course, a great effect on Lancelot's spirit. Not in the way of warning, though — such events seldom act in that way, on the highest as well as on the lowest minds. After all, your Rakes Progress, and 'Atheists' Deafened,' do no more good than noble George Crinkshank's 'Bottle' will, because every one knows that they are the exception, and not the rule, that the Atheist generally dies with a conscience as comfortable as a rhinoceros-hide, and the rake, when old age strips his power of sinning, becomes generally rather more respectable than his neighbours. The New Testament does very little in appeals of terror, and it would be well if some, who fancy that they follow it, would do the same, and by abstaining from making 'hell-fire' the chief incentive to virtue, cease from tempting many a poor fellow to resist on the devil's side the only mainly feeling he has left — personal courage.

But yet Laurelot was affected. And when,

on the night of the colonel's funeral, he opened at hazard Argemone's Bible, and his eyes fell on the passage which tells how 'one shall be taken and another left,' great honest tears of gratitude dropped upon the page, and he fell on his knees, and in bitter self reproach thanked the new-found Upper Powder, who, as he began to hope, were leading him not in vain, — that he had yet a life before him wherein to ply the man.

And now he felt that the last link was broken between him and all his late involuntary companions. All had deserted him in his ruin but this one — and he was silent in the grave. And now, from the world and all its toys and rivalry, he was parted once and for ever, and he stood alone in the desert, like the last Arab of a plague-stricken tribe, looking over the wreck of ancient cities, across barren sands, where in rivers ghazals in the distance that seemed to beckon him away into other climes, other hopes, other duties. Old things had passed away — when would all things become new?

Not yet, Lancelot. There had still one selfish hope, one dream of bliss, however impossible, yet still cherished. That at a changed man — but for whose sake? For Argemone's. Is she to be thy god, then? Art thou to live for her, or for the sake of One greater than she? All thine idols are broken — swiftly the desert sands are drifting over them, and covering them in. All but one must that, too, be taken from thee.

One morning a letter was put into Lancelot's hands, bearing the Whitford postmark. Tremblingly he tore it open. It contained a few passionate words from Honora. Argemone was dying of typhus fever, and entreating to see him once again, and Honora had, with some difficulty, as she hinted obtained leave from her parents to send for him. His last bank note, carried him down to Whitford, and calm and determined, as one who feels that he has nothing more to lose on earth, and whose torment must henceforth be over his element, he entered the inn that evening.

He hardly spoke or looked at a soul. He felt that he was there on an errand which none understood, that he was moving towards Argemone through a spiritual world in which he and she were alone, that in his utter poverty and hopelessness, he stood above all the luxury even above all the sorrow around him, that she belonged to him, and to him alone, and the broken-hearted beggar followed the weeping Honora towards his lady's chamber with the step and bearing of a lord. He was wrong, there were pride and hexiness enough in his heart, mingled with that sense of nothingness of rank, money, chance, and change, yea, death itself, of all but Love, — mingled even with that intense belief that his sorrows were but his just deserts, which now possessed all his soul. And in alter years he knew that he was wrong, but so he felt at the time, and even then the

strength was not all of earth which bore him manlike through that hour.

He entered the room, the darkness, the silence, the cool scent of vinegar, struck a shudder through him. The squire was sitting, half idiotic and helpless, in his arm-chair. His face lighted up as Lancelot entered, and he tried to hold out his palsied hand. Lancelot did not see him. Mrs. Lavington moved proudly and primly back from the bed, with a face that seemed to say through its tears, 'I at least am responsible for nothing that occurs from this interview.' Lancelot did not see her either. He walked straight up towards the bed as if he were treading on his own ground. His heart was between his lips, and yet his whole soul felt as dry and hard as some burnt-out volcano-crater.

A faint voice—oh, how faint, how changed!—called him from within the closed curtains.

'He is there! I know it is he! Lancelot! my Lancelot!'

Silently still he drew aside the curtain, the light fell full upon her face. 'What a sight! Her beautiful hair cut close, a ghastly white handkerchief round her neck, those bright eyes sunk and listless, those ripe lips baked and black and drawn, her thin hand fingering un- easily the coverlid. It was too much for him. He shuddered and turned his face away. Quick as light that hour is, even to the last! sight as the gesture was, she saw it in an instant.

'You are not afraid of infection?' she said faintly. 'I was not.'

Lancelot laughed aloud, as men will at strangest moments, sprang towards her with open arms, and threw himself on his knees beside the bed. With sudden strength she rose upright and clasped him in her arms.

'Once more!' she sighed, in a whisper to herself, 'once more on earth!' And the room, and the spectators, and disease itself faded from around them like vain dreams, as she nestled closer and closer to him, and gazed into his eyes, and passed her shrunken hand over his cheeks, and toyed with his hair, and seemed to drink in magnetic life from his embrace.

No one spoke or stirred. They felt that an awful and blessed spirit overshadowed the lovers, and were hushed, as if in the sanctuary of God.

Suddenly again she raised her head from his bosom, and in a tone in which her old queenliness mingled strangely with the saddest tenderness,—

'All of you go away now, I must talk to my husband alone.'

They went, leading out the squire, who cast puzzled glances toward the pair, and murmured to himself that 'she was sure to get well now. Smith was come. Everything went right when he was in the way.'

So they were left alone.

'I do not look so very ugly, my darling, do I? Not so very ugly? Though they have cut

off all my poor hair, and I told them so often not! But I kept a lock for you,' and feebly she drew from under the pillow a long Auburn tress, and tried to wreath it round his neck, but could not, and sank back.

'Poor fellow! he could bear no more. He hid his face in his hands, and burst into a long low weeping.

'I am very thirsty, darling, reach me. No, I will drink no more, except from your dear lips.'

He lifted up his head, and breathed his whole soul upon her lips, his tears fell on her closed eyelids.

'Weeping? No!—You must not cry. See how comfortable I am. They are all so kind—soft bed, cool room, fresh air, sweet drinks, and scents. Oh, so different from that room!'

'What room?—my own!'

'Listen, and I will tell you. Sit down—put your arm under my head—so. When I am in your bosom I feel so strong. God! let me last to tell him all. It was for that I sent for him.'

And then, in broken words, she told him how she had gone up to the fever patient at Ashy, on the fatal night on which Lancelot had last seen her. Shuddering, she hinted at the horrible filth and misery she had seen, at the foul scents which had sickened her. A madness of remorse, she said, had seized her. She had gone in spite of her disgust, to several houses which she found open. There were worse entanglements there than even her father's, some tradesmen in a neighbouring town had been allowed to run up a set of rack rent hovels.—Another shudder seized her when she spoke of them, and from that point in her story all was fitful, broken, like the images of a hideous dream. 'Even instant those foul memories were leching her nostrils. A horrible longing had taken possession of her, recurring from time to time, till it ended in shrieks and tears. A scent fiend was haunting her night and day,' she said. 'And now the curse of the Lavingtons has truly come upon her. To perish by the people whom they made. Their neglect, capriciousness, oppression, are avenged on me! Why not? Have I not wanted in show and perfume while they, by whose labour my luxuries were bought, were pining among scents and sounds one day of which would have driven me mad? And then they wonder why men turn "heartists"! There are those horrible scents again! Save me from them! Lancelot—darling! Take me to the fresh air! I choke! I am fastering away! The Nun-pool! Take all the water, every drop, and wash Ashy clean again! Make a great fountain in it—beautiful marble—to bubble and gurgle, and trickle and foam, for ever and ever, and wash away the sins of the Lavingtons, that the little raw children may play round it, and the poor toll-bent woman may wash—and wash—and drink—Water! water! I am dying of thirst!'

He gave her water, and then she lay back and babbled about the Nun-pool sweetening 'all

the houses of Ashy into one beautiful palace, among great flower-gardens, where the school children will sit and sing such merry hymns, and never struggle with great pails of water up the hill of Ashy any more.'

'You will do it! darling! Stroug, wise, noble-hearted that you are! Why do you look at me? You will be rich some day! You will own land, for you are worthy to own it. Oh that I could give you Whitford! No! It was mine too long—therefore I die! because I—Lord Jesus! have I not repented of my sin?'—

Then she grew calmer once more. A soft smile crept over her face, as it grew sharper and paler every moment. Faintly she sank back on the pillows and faintly whispered to him to kneel and pray. He obeyed her mechanically. 'No—not for me, for them—for them, and for yourself—that you may save them whom I never dreamt that I was bound to save!'

And he knelt and prayed. What, he alone and those who heard his prayer, can tell

When he lifted up his head at last, he saw that Argemone lay motionless. For a moment he thought she was dead, and frantically sprang to the bell. The family rushed in with the physician. She gave some faint token of life, but none of consciousness. The doctor sighed, and said that her end was near. Lancelot had known that all along.

'I think, sir, you had better leave the room,' said Mrs. Lavington, and followed him into the passage.

What she was about to say remained unsaid, for Lancelot seized her hand in spite of her, with frantic thanks for having allowed him this one interview, and entreaties that he might see her again, if but for one moment.

Mrs. Lavington, somewhat more softly than usual, said,-- That the result of this visit had not been such as to make a second desirable, that she had no wish to disturb her daughter's mind at such a moment with fruitless regrets.

'Earthly regrets!' How little she knew what had passed there! But if she had known, would she have been one whit softened? For, indeed, Argemone's gentleness was not in her mother's language. And yet the good woman had prayed, and prayed, and wept bitter tears, by her daughter's bedside, day after day, but she had never heard her pronounce the talismanic formula of words, necessary in her eyes to ensure salvation, and so she was almost without hope for her. Oh, bigotry! Devil, who turnest God's love into man's curse! are not human hearts hard and blind enough of themselves, without thy cursed help?

For one moment a storm of mutterable pride and rage convulsed Lancelot: the next instant love conquered, and the strong proud man threw himself on his knees at the feet of the woman he despised, and with wild sob-entreaties for one moment more—one only!

At that instant a shriek from Honoria resounded from the sick chamber. Lancelot knew what it meant, and sprang up, as men do when shot through the heart.—In a moment he was himself again. A new life had begun for him—alone.

'You will not need to grant my prayer, madam,' he said calmly; 'Argemone is dead!'

CHAPTER XVII

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Let us pass over the period of dull, stupefied misery that followed, when Lancelot had returned to his lonely lodging, and the excitement of his feelings had died away. It is impossible to describe that which could not be separated into parts, in which there was no foreground, no distance, but only one dead, black, colourless present. After a time, however, he began to find that fancies, almost ridiculously trivial, arrested and absorbed his attention, even as when our eyes have become accustomed to darkness, every light coloured mote shows luminous against the void blackness of night. So we are tempted to unseemly frivolity in churches, and at funerals, and all most solemn moments, and so Lancelot found his imagination fluttering like a half-amused, to every smallest circumstance of the last few weeks as objects of mere curiosity, and found with astonishment that they had lost their power of pinning him. Just as victims on the rack have fallen, it is said, by length of torture into insensibility, and even calm repose, his brain had been wrought until all feeling was benumbed. He began to think what an interesting autobiography his life might make, and the events of the last few years began to arrange themselves in a most attractive dramatic form. He began even to work out a scene or two, and where 'motives' seemed wanting, to invent them here and there. He sat thus for hours silent over his fire, playing with his old self, as though it were a thing which did not belong to him—a suit of clothes which he had put off, and which,

'For that it was too rich to hang by the wall,
It must be ripped,'

and then pieced and dizen'd out afresh as a toy. And then again he started away from his own thoughts, at finding himself on the edge of that very guilt which, as Melmot had lately told him, Barnakill denounced as the true hell of genius, where Art is regarded as an end and not a means, and objects are interesting, not in as far as they form our spirits, but in proportion as they can be shaped into effective parts of some beautiful whole. But whether it was a temptation or none, the desire recurred to him again and again. He even attempted to write, but sickened at the sight of the first words. He turned to his pencil, and tried to represent with it one scene

at least, and with the horrible calmness of some self-torturing ascetic, he sat down to sketch a drawing of himself and Argemone on her dying day, with her head upon his bosom for the last time, and then tossed it angrily into the fire, partly because he felt, just as he had in his attempts to write, that there was something more in all these events than he could utter by pen or pencil, than he could even understand, principally because he could not arrange the attitude gracefully enough. And now, in front of the stern realities of sorrow and death, he began to see a meaning in another mysterious saying of Barnakill's, which Mellot was continually quoting, that 'Art was never Art till it was more than Art, that the Finite only existed as a body of the Infinite, and that the man of genius must first know the Infinite, unless he wished to become not a poet but a maker of idols.' Still he felt in himself a spontaneity, nay, an impulse, longing to speak, though what he should utter or how, whether as poet, social theorist, preacher, he could not yet decide. Barnakill had forbidden him painting, and though he hardly knew why, he dared not disobey him. But Argemone's dying words lay on him as a divine command to labour. All his doubts, his social observations, his dreams of the beautiful and the blessed, his intense perception of social evils, his new-born hope, hitherto could not yet be called in a ruler and divider of the world, all urged him on to labour, but at what? He felt as if he were the demon in the legend, condemned to twine endless ropes of sand. The world, outside which he now stood for good and evil, seemed to him like some frantic whirling waltz, some seemed struggling crowd, which rushed past him in useless confusion, without allowing him time or opening to take his place among their ranks, and as for wings to rise above, and to look down upon the upstart, where were they? His melancholy paralysed him more and more. He was too listless even to enter his daily toil by writing his notes for the magazines. Why should he? He had nothing to say. Why should he pour out words and empty sound, and add one more nothing to the herd of 'products' that had become wind, and had no truth in them? Those who could write without a conscience, without an object except that of seeing their own fine words, and filling their own pockets—let them do it, but his part he would have none of it. But his purse was empty, and so was his stomach, and as for asking assistance of his uncle, it was returning like the dog to his vomit. So one day he settled all bills with his last shilling, tied up his remaining clothes in a bundle, and stoutly stopped forth into the street to find a job—to hold a horse, if nothing better offered, when, behold! on the threshold he met Barnakill himself.

'Whither away?' said that strange personage.

'I was just going to call on you.'

'To earn my bread by the labour of my hands. So our fathers all began.'

'And so their sons must all end. Do you want work?'

'Yes, if you have any.'

'Follow me, and carry a trunk home from a shop to my lodgings.'

He strode off, with Lancelot after him, entered a mathematical instrument maker's shop in the neighbouring street, and pointed out a heavy corded case to Lancelot, who, with the assistance of the shopman, got it on his shoulders, and trudging forth through the streets after his employer, who walked before him silent and unregarding, felt himself for the first time in his life in the same situation as nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of Adam's descendants, and discovered somewhat to his satisfaction that when he could once rid his mind of its old superstition that every one was looking at him, it mattered very little whether the London crowd were a deal trunk or a Downing Street despatch box.

His employer's lodgings were in St. Paul's Churchyard, and Lancelot set the trunk down inside the door.

'What do you charge?'

'Sixpence.'

Barnakill looked him steadily in the face, gave him the sixpence, went in, and shut the door.

Lancelot wandered down the street, half amused at the simple test which had just been applied to him, and yet sickened with disappointment, for he had cherished a mysterious fancy that with this strange being all his hopes of future activity were bound up. Tiggavis month was nearly over, and yet no tidings of him had come. Mellot had left London on some mysterious errand of the prophets, and for the first time in his life he seemed to stand utterly alone. He was at one pole, and the whole universe at the other. It was in vain he told himself that his own yet had placed him there, that he had friends to whom he might appeal. He would not, he dare not accept of world help, even on terms of friendship, however hearty and sincere, at that crisis of his existence. It seemed a desertion of its awfulness to find comfort in anything but the highest and the deepest. And the glimpse of that which he had attained seemed to have passed away from him again, seemed to be something which, as it had arisen with Argemone, was lost with her also, one speck of the far blue sky which the softening clouds had covered in again. As he passed under the shadow of the huge soot-blackened cathedral, and looked at its green spire, tracings and closed doors, it seemed to him a symbol of the spiritual world, clouded and buried from him. He stopped and looked up, and tried to think. The rays of the setting sun lighted up in clear radiance the huge cross on the summit. Was it an omen? Lancelot thought so, but at that instant he felt a hand on his shoulder, and looked round. It was that strange man again.

'So far well,' said he, 'You are making a

better day's work than you fanny, and earning more wages. For instance, here is a packet for you.

Lancelot seized it, trembling, and tore it open. It was directed in Honoria's handwriting.

'Whence had you this?' said he.

'Through Melot, through whom I can return your answer, if one be needed.'

The letter was significant of Honoria's character. It hinted itself entirely dark facts, and showed the depth of her sorrow by making no allusion to it. 'Argemone, as Lancelot was probably aware, had bequeathed to him the whole of her own fortune at Mrs. Lexington's death, and had directed that various precious things should be delivered over to him immediately. Her mother, however, kept her counsel under lock and key, and refused to allow an article to be removed from its accustomed place. It was natural in the last burst of her sorrow and Lancelot would pardon. All his drawings and letters had been, by Argemone's desire, placed with her in her coffin. Honoria had been only able to place her in sending a favourite ring of hers, and with it the last stanza which she had composed before her death—

'Twin stars, aloft in ether clear,
Around each other roll away,
Within one common atmosphere
Of their own mutual light and day.

'And myriad happy eyes in love
Upon their changeless love away,
As strengthened by their own intent,
They pour the flood of life and day.

'So we, through this orbit even as night,
Shift, hand in hand, pursue our way,
Shed round us order, love, and light,
And slum into the perfect day.'

The poem's title, with all its shattered hopes, came at the right moment to cheer his heart-voiced heart. The sight, the touch of it, shot like an electric spark through the black stifling thunder-cloud of his soul, and dissolved it in refreshing showers of tears.

Barnwell led him gently within the net of the railings, where he might conceal his emotion, and it was but a few seconds before Lancelot had recovered his self-possession and followed him up the steps through the wicket door.

They entered. The afternoon service was proceeding. The organ droned sadly in its roomage to a few musical snuff-boxes. Some misery, much, and foreign sailors stared about within the spoked wheel of a clock which shone off the body of the cathedral, and tried in vain to hear what was going on inside the choir. As a wise author—a Protestant, too—has lately said, 'the security service rattled in the vast building, like a dead kernel too small for its shell.' The place breathed uncertainty, and uncertainty and sleep lie in death, while the whole nineteenth century went roaring on its way outside. And as Lancelot thought, though only as a *dilettante*, of old St. Paul's, the morning star and focal

beacon of England through centuries and dynasties, from old Augustine and Mellitus up to those Paul's Cross sermons whose thunder shook thrones, and to noble Wren's masterpiece of art, he asked, 'Whither all this? Coleridge's dictum, that a cathedral is a petrified religion, may be taken to bear more meanings than one. When will life return to this cathedral system?'

'When was it ever a living system?' answered the other. 'When was it ever anything but a transitional makeshift since the dissolution of the monasteries?'

'Why, then, not away with it at once?'

'You English have not done with it yet. At all events, it is keeping your cathedralism proof for you, till you can put them to some better use than now.'

'And in the meantime?'

'In the meantime there is enough in them to bite that will wake the dead some day. They can hear what those choir-lads are chanting now.'

'Not I,' said Lancelot, 'nor any one round us, I should think.'

'That is our own fault, after all. For we were not good churchmen enough to come in time for vespers.'

'Are you a churchman then?'

'Yes, thank God. There may be other churches than those of Europe or Syria and right Catholic ones too. But shall I tell you what they are singing? He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away. Is there no life, thank you, in those words, spoken here every afternoon in the name of God?'

'By hundreds, who neither are nor under stand.'

'Hush! Be not hasty with imputations of evil within walls dedicated to and preserved by the All-good. Even should the speakers forget the meaning of their own words to my sense, perhaps, that may just be the gods more entirely gods. At all events confess that whatever accidental husks may have clattered round it, here is a germ of Eternal Truth. No, I do not despair of your English as long as I see your priesthood forced by Providence, even in spite of themselves, thus to speak God's words about an age in which the condition of the poor, and the rights and duties of men, are becoming the rallying point for all thought and all organisation.'

'But does it not make the case more hopeless that such words have been spoken to gentiles, and no man regards them?'

'You have to blame for that the people, rather than the priest. As they are so will he be in every age and country. He is but the index which the changes of their spiritual state move up and down the scale, and as they will become in England in the next half century, so will he become also.'

'And can these dry bones live?' asked Lancelot scornfully.

'Who are you to ask? What were you three months ago?' for I know well your story. But do you remember what the prophet saw in the Valley of Vision? How first that those same dry bones shook and clashed together, as if uneasy because they were disorganised, and how they then found flesh and stood upright and yet there was no life in them, till at last the Spirit came down and entered into them? Surely there is shaking enough among the bones now! It is happening to the body of your England as it did to Adam's after he was made. It lay on earth, the rabbis say, forty days before the breath of life was put into it, and the devil came and kicked it, and it sounded hollow, as England is doing now, but that did not prevent the breath of life coming in good time, nor will it in England's case.'

Lancelot looked at him with a puzzled face.

'You must not speak in such deep parables to so young a learner.'

'Is my parable so hard, then? Look around you and see what is the characteristic of your country and of your generation at this moment. What a yearning, what an excitation, and minute falsehoods and confusions, of some nobler, more civilised, more godlike state! Your very costermonger trolls out his belief that "there's a good time coming," and the hearts of *gamins*, as well as millionaires, answer, "True!" Is not that clashing among the dry bones? And as for flesh, what new materials are springing up among you every month, spiritual and physical, for a state such as "eye hath not seen nor ear heard"—railroads, electric telegraphs, separate lodging-houses, club-houses, sanitary reforms, experimental schools, chemical agriculture, a matchless school of inductive science, an equally matchless school of naturalist painters,—and all this in the very workshop of the world! Look, again, at the healthy craving after religious art and ceremonial,—the strong desire to preserve that which has stood the test of time, and on the other hand, at the manifold resolution of your middle classes to stand or fall by the Bible alone,—to admit no innovations in worship which are empty of instinctive meaning. Look at the enormous amount of practical benevolence which now struggles in vain against evil, only because it is as yet private, dilettante, divided. How dare you, young man, despair of your own nation, while its uncles can produce a Carlisle, an Ellesmere, an Ashley, a Robert Grosvenor, — while its middle classes can buy a Faraday, a Stephenson, a Brooke, an Elizabeth Fry? See, I say, what a chaos of noble materials is here, — all confused, it is true, — polarised, jarring, and chaotic, — here bigotry, there self-will, superstition, sheer Atheism often, but only waiting for the one inspiring Spirit to organise, and unite, and consecrate this chaos into the noblest polity the world ever saw realised! What a destiny may be that of your land, if you have but the faith to see your own honour! Were I

not of my own country, I would be an Englishman this day.'

'And what is your country?' asked Lancelot. 'It should be a noble one which breeds such men as you.'

The stranger smiled.

'Will you go thither with me?'

'Why not? I long for travel, and truly I am sick of my own country. When the Spirit of which you speak, he went on latterly, "shall descend, I may return, till then England is no place for the penniless."

'How know you that the Spirit is not even now poured out? Must your English Pharisees and Sadducees, too, have signs and wonders ere they believe? Will man never know that "the kingdom of God comes not by observation"? that now, as ever, His promise stands true, —

"Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"? How many injured hearts even now may be cherishing in secret the idea which shall reform the age, and fulfil at once the longings of every sect and rank?'

'Name it to me, then!'

'Who can name it? Who can even see it, but those who are like Him from whom it comes? Them a long and stern discipline awaits. Would you be of them, you must, like the Highest who ever trod this earth, go fasting into the wilderness, and, among the wild beasts, stand alone face to face with the powers of nature.'

I will go where you shall bid me. I will turn shepherd among the Scottish mountains, live as an anchorite in the solitudes of Dartmoor. But to what purpose? I have listened long to Nature's voice, but even the whispers of a spiritual presence which haunted my childhood have died away, and I hear nothing in her but the grunting of the iron wheels of mechanical necessity.

'Which is the will of God? Henceforth you shall study not nature but Him. Yet is my place—I do not like your English primitive formations, where earth, worn out with struggling, has fallen wearily asleep. No, you shall rather come to Asia, the oldest and yet the youngest continent,—to our volcanic mountain ranges, where her bosom still heaves with the creative energy of youth around the primeval cradle of the most ancient race of men. Then, when you have learnt the wondrous harmony between man and his dwelling place, I will lead you to a land where you shall see the highest spiritual cultivation in triumphant contact with the fiercest energies of matter, where men have learnt to tame and use alike the volcano and the human heart, where the body and the spirit, the beautiful and the useful, the human and the divine, are no longer separate, and men have imbedded to themselves on earth an image of the "city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

'Where is this land?' said Lancelot eagerly.

'Poor human nature must have its name for everything. You have heard of the country of

Prester John, that mysterious Christian empire, rarely visited by European eye?

'There are legends of two such,' said Laurelot, 'an Ethiopian and an Asiatic one, and the Ethiopian, if we are to believe Colonel Harrie's journey to Shoa, is a sufficiently miserable failure.'

'True, the day of the Channitic race is past, you will not say the saine of our Caucasian empire. To our race the present belongs,—to England, France, Germany, America,—to us. Will you see what we have done, and perhaps bring home, after long wanderings, a message for your country which may help to unravel the tangled web of this strange time?'

'I will,' said Lancelot, 'now, this moment. And yet, no. There is one with whom I have promised to share all future weal and woe. Without him I can take no step.'

'Tregava?'

'Yes,—he. What made you guess that I spoke of him?'

'Mellot told me of him, and of you, too, six weeks ago. He is now gone to fetch him from Manchester. I cannot trust him here in England yet. The country needs him, and London has made him mad. Manchester may make him bad. It is too fearful a trial even for his faith. I must take him with us.'

'What interest in him—not to say what authority over him—have you?'

'The same which I have over you. You will come with me, so will he. It is my business, as my name signifies, to save the children alive whom European society leaves carelessly and ignorantly to die. And as for my power, I come,' said he, with a smile, 'from a country which sends no one on its errands without first thoroughly satisfying itself as to his power of fulfilling them.'

'If he goes, I go with you.'

'And he will go. And yet think what you do. It is a fearful journey. They who travel it even as they come naked out of their mother's womb—Even as they return thither, and carry nothing with them of all which they have gotten in this life, so must those who travel to my land.'

'What? Tregava? Is he, too, to give up all? I had thought that I saw in him a precious possession, one for which I would barter all my scholarship, my talents,—ay,—my life itself.'

'A possession worth your life? What then?'

'Faith in an unseen God.'

'Ask him whether he would call that a possession—his own in any sense?'

'He would call it a revelation to him.'

'That is, a taking of the veil from something which was behind the veil already.'

'Yes.'

'And which may therefore just as really be behind the veil in other cases without its presence being suspected.'

'Certainly.'

'In what sense, now, is that a possession?'

Do you possess the man because you see it? Did Heraklel create Uranus by discovering it, or even increase, by an atom, its attraction on one particle of his own body?'

'Whither is all this tending?'

'Hither. Tregava does not possess his Father and his Lord; he is possessed by them.'

'But he would say—and I should believe him—that he has seen and known them, not with his bodily eyes, but with his soul, heart, imagination—call it what you will. All I know is, that between him and me there is a great gulf fixed.'

'What? seen and known them utterly? comprehended them? Are they not infinite, incomprehensible? Can the less comprehend the greater?'

'He knows, at least, enough of them to make him what I am not.'

'That is, he knows something of them. And may not you know something of them also—enough to make you what he is not?'

Lancelot shook his head in silence.

'Suppose that you had met and spoken with your father, and loved him when you saw him, and yet were not aware of the relation in which you stood to him, still you would know him.'

'Not the most important thing of all—that he was my father.'

'Is that the most important thing? Is it not more important that he should know that you were his son? That he should support, guide, educate you, even though unseen? Do you not know that some one has been doing that?'

'That I have been supported, guided, educated, I know full well, but by whom I know not. And I know, too, that I have been punished. And therefore—therefore I cannot live the thought of a Him—not a Person—only of a Destiny, of Laws and Powers, which have no faces wherewith to frown awful wrath upon me. If it be a Person who has been leading me, I must go mad, or know that He has forgiven.'

'I conceive that it is He, and not punishment which you fear.'

Lancelot was silent for a moment.

'Yes, He, and not hell at all, is what I fear. He can inflict no punishment on me worse than the inner hell which I have felt already many and many a time.'

'*Domine Deus!* That is an awful thing to say—but better this extreme than the other.'

'And you would—what?'

'Be pardoned.'

'If He loves you, He has pardoned you already.'

'How do I know that He loves me?'

'How does Tregava?'

'He is a righteous man, and I—'

'Am a sinner. He would, and rightly, call himself the sinner.'

'But he knows that God loves him—that he is God's child.'

'So, then, God did not love him till he

caused God to love him, by knowing that He loved him? He was not God's child till he made himself one, by believing that he was one when as yet he was not? I appeal to common sense and logic. It was revealed to Tregarva that God had been loving him while he was yet a bad man. If He loved him, in spite of his sin, why should He not have loved you?

'If He had loved me, would He have left me in ignorance of Himself? For if He be, to know Him is the highest good.'

'Had he left Tregarva in ignorance of Himself?'

'No. Certainly Tregarva spoke of his conversion as of a turning to One of whom he had known all along, and disregarded.'

'Then do you turn like him to Him whom you have known all along, and disregarded.'

'I?'

'Yes - you! It half I have heard and seen of you he true, He has been telling you more, and not less, of Himself than He does to most men. You, for aught I know, may know more of Him than Tregarva does. The gulf between you and him is this - he has obeyed what he knew - and you have not.'

Lancelot paused a moment, then -

'No! - do not cheat me! You said once that you were a churchman.'

'So I am. A Catholic of the Catholics. What then?'

'Who is He to whom you ask me to turn? You talk to me of Him as my Father. But you talk of Him to men of your own creed as the Father. You have mysterious dogmas of a Three in One. I know them. I have admired them. In all their forms in the Vedas, in the Neo-Platonists, in Jacob Boehmen, in your Catholic creeds, in Coleridge, and the Germans from whom he borrowed, I have looked at them, and found in them beautiful phantasms of philosophy, all but scientific necessities, but -'

'But what?'

'I do not want cold abstract necessities of logic, I want living practical facts. If those mysterious dogmas speak of real and necessary properties of His being, they must be necessarily interwoven in justice with His revelation of Himself?'

'Most true. But how would you have Him unveil Himself?'

'By unveiling Himself.'

'What? To your simple intuition? That was Seneca's ambition. You recollect the end of that myth. You recollect, too, as you have read the Neo-Platonists, the result of their similar attempt.'

'Idolatrie and magic.'

'True, and yet, such is the ambition of man, you, who were just now envying Tregarva, are already longing to climb even higher than Saint Theresa.'

'I do not often indulge in such an ambition. But I have read in your Schoolmen tales of a

Beatific Vision, how that the highest good for man was to see God.'

'And did you believe that?'

'One cannot believe the impossible - only regret its impossibility.'

'Impossibility? You can only see the Uncreate in the Create - the Infinite in the Finite - the absolute good in that which is like the good. Does Tregarva pretend to more? He sees God in His own thoughts and consciousness, and in the events of the world around him, mirrored in the mirror of his own mind. Is your mirror, then, so much narrower than his?'

'I have none. I see but myself, and the world, and far above them a dim awful Unity which is but a notion.'

'Fool! - and slow of heart to believe! Who else would you see Him but in yourself and in the world? They are all things cognisable to you. Where else, but everywhere, would you see Him whom no man hath seen, or can see?'

'When He shows Himself to me in them, then I may see Him. But now -'

'You have seen Him, and because you do not know the name of what you see - or rather will not acknowledge it - you fancy that it is not there.'

'How, in His name? What have I seen?'

'Ask yourself. Have you not seen, in your fancy, at least, an ideal of man, for which you pined (for Mellet has told me all the merly negative angels - the merly receptive and indulgent feminine ideals of humanity, and longed to be a man, like that ideal and perfect man?'

'I have.'

'And what was your misery all along? Was it not that you felt you ought to be a person with a one inner unity, a one practical will, purpose, and business given to you - not invented by yourself - in the great order and harmony of the universe, - and that you were not one? - That your self-willed fancies and self-pleasing passions, had torn you in pieces, and left you inconsistent, discomfited, helpless, purposeless? That, in short, you were below your ideal, just in proportion as you were not a person?'

'God knows you speak truth!'

'Then must not that ideal of humanity be a person himself? - Else how can he be the ideal man? Where is your logic? An impersonal ideal of a personal species? And what is the most special peculiarity of man? Is it not that he alone of creation is a son, with a Father to love and to obey? Then must not the ideal man be a son also? And last, but not least, is it not the very property of man that he is a spirit invested with flesh and blood? Then must not the ideal man have, once, at least, taken on himself flesh and blood also? Else how could he fulfil his own ideal?'

'Yes. Yes. That thought, too, has glanced through my mind at moments, like a lightning-flash; till I have envied the old Greeks their faith in a human Zeus, son of

Kronos—a human Phobos, son of Zens. But I could not rest in them. They are noble. But are they—are any—perfect ideals? The one thing I did, and do, and will believe, is the one which they do not fulfil—that man is meant to be the conqueror of the earth, matter, nature, decay, death itself, and to conquer them, as Bacon says, by *imbecy*; that

‘Hold it fast,—but follow it out, and say boldly, the ideal of humanity must be one who has conquered nature—one who rules the universe—one who has vanquished death itself, and conquered them, as Bacon says, not by violating, but by submitting to them. Have you never heard of one who is said to have done this? How do you know that in this ideal which you have seen, you have not seen the Son—the perfect Man, who died and rose again, and sits for ever Healer, and Lord, and Ruler of the universe? Stay—do not answer me. Have you not, besides, had dreams of an all-Father—from whom, in some mysterious way, all things and beings must derive their source, and that Son—if my theory be true—among the rest, and above all the rest?’

‘Who has not? But what more dim or distant, more dreamily, hopelessly nebulous, than that thought?’

‘Only the thought that there is none. But the dreaminess was only in your own inconsistency. If He be the Father of all, He must be the Father of persons—If Himself therefore a Person. He must be the Father of all in whom dwell personal qualities, power, wisdom, creative energy, love, justice, pity. Can He be then Father, unless all these very qualities are infinitely His? Does He now look so terrible to you?’

‘I have had this dream, too, but I turned away from it in dread.’

‘Doubtless you did. Some day you will know why. Does that human dream of a human Son relieve this dream of none of its awfulness? May not the type be beloved for the sake of its Antitype, even if the very name of All-Father is nugatory for His paternal pity? But you have had this dream. How know you that in it you were not allowed a glimpse, however dim and distant, of Him whom the Catholics call the Father?’

‘It may be, but—’

‘Stay, again. Had you never the sense of a Spirit in you—a will, an energy, an inspiration, deeper than the region of consciousness and reflection, which, like the wind, blew where it listed, and you heard the sound of it ringing through your whole consciousness, and yet knew not whence it came, or whither it went, or why it drove you on to dare and suffer, to love and hate, to be a fighter, a sportsman, an artist—’

‘And a drunkard!’ added Lancelot sadly.

‘And a drunkard! But did it never seem to you that this strange wayward spirit, if anything, was the very root and core of your own personality? And had you never a craving for the help of some higher, mightier spirit, to

guide and strengthen yours, to regulate and civilise its savage and spasmodic self-will, to teach you your rightful place in the great order of the universe around, to fill you with a continuous purpose and with a continuous will to do it? Have you never had a dream of an Inspiration?—a spirit of all-joints?’

Lancelot turned away with a shudder.

‘Talk of anything but that! Little you know—and yet you seem to know everything—the agony of craving with which I have longed for guidance, the rage and disgust which possessed me when I tried one pretended teacher after another, and found in myself depths which their spirits could not, or rather would not, touch. I have been inured to the false, from very longing to worship the true, I have been a rebel to sham leaders, for very desire to be loyal to a real one, I have envied my poor Roman his hosts, I have envied my own pointers their slavery to my whip and whistle, I have fled, as a last resource, to brandy and opium, for the inspiration which neither man nor demon would bestow. Then I found

you know my story. And when I looked to her to guide and inspire me, behold! I found myself, by the very laws of humanity, compelled to guide and inspire her,—blind, to lead the blind!—‘I thank God, for her sake, that she is taken from me!’

‘Did you ever mistake these substitutes even the noblest of them, for the reality? Did not your very dissatisfaction with them show you that the true inspire ought to be, if he were to satisfy your cravings, a person truly—else how could he inspire and teach you, a person yourself? But an utterly infinite omniscient, eternal person? How know you that in that dream He was not unveiling Himself to you—He, the Spirit, who is the Lord and Giver of Life, the Spirit, who riches men their duty and relation to those above and round, beneath them the Spirit of order, obedience, loyalty, brotherhood, mercy, condescension?’

‘But I never could distinguish these dreams from each other. The moment that I essayed to separate them, I seemed to break up the thought of an absolute one ground of all things, without which the universe would have seemed a practical chaos, and they receded to infinite distance, and became transparent, barren, notional shadows of my own brain even as your words are now.’

‘How know you that you were meant to distinguish them? How know you that that very impossibility was not the testimony of fact and experience to that old Catholic dogma, for the sake of which you just now shrink from my teaching? I say that this is so. How do you know that it is not?’

‘But how do I know that it is? I want proof.’

‘And you are the man who was, five minutes ago, crying out for practical facts, and disclaiming cold abstract necessities of logic? Can you prove that your body exists?’

‘No.’

Can you prove that your spirit exists ?

No.
And yet know that they both exist. And how ?

'*Solatur ambulando*.'

'Exactly. When you try to prove either of them without the other you fail. You arrive, if at anything, at some barren polar notion. By action alone you prove the mesothetic fact which unifies and unites them.'

'*Quoniam lux lux ?*'

'Hither. I am not going to demonstrate the indemonstrable—to give you intellectual notions which, after all, will be but reflexes of my own peculiar brain, and so add the green of my spectacles to the orange of yours, and make night hideous by fish monsters. I may help you to think yourself into a theoretical Tethism or a theoretical Salvethism, I cannot make you think yourself into practical and living Catholicism. As you of anthropology, so I say of theology, —*Solatur ambulando*. Don't believe Catholic doctrine unless you like, faith is free. But see if you can reclaim either society or yourself without it, see if He will let you reclaim them. Take Catholic doctrine for granted, act on it, and see if you will not reclaim them.'

'Take for granted? Am I to come, after all, to implicit faith?'

'Implicit fideliticks! Did you ever read the *Notum Organum*? Mellet told me that you were a geologist.'

'Well?'

'You took for granted what you read in geological books, and went to the mine and the quarry afterwards, to verify it in practice, and according as you found fact correspond to theory, you retained or rejected. Was that implicit faith or common sense, common humanity, and sound induction?'

'Sound induction, at least.'

'Then go now and do likewise. Believe that the learned, wise, and good, for 1800 years, may possibly have found out somewhat, or have been taught somewhat, on this matter, and test their theory by practice. If a theory on such a point is worth anything at all, it is omnipotent and all-explaining. If it will not work, of course there is no use keeping it a moment. Perhaps it will work. I say it will.'

'But I shall not work it, I still dread my own spectacles. I dare not trust myself alone to verify a theory of Murchison's or Lyell's. How dare I trust myself in this?'

'Then do not trust yourself alone, come and see what others are doing. Come, and become a member of a body which is verifying, by united action, those universal and eternal truths which are too great for the grasp of any one true-ridden individual. Not that we claim the gift of infallibility, any more than I do that of perfect utterance of the little which we do know.'

'Then what do you promise me in asking me to go with you?'

'Practical proof that these my words are true, —practical proof that they can make a nation

all that England might be and is not,—the sight of what a people might become who, knowing thus far, do what they know. We believe no more than you, but we believe it. Come and see!—and yet you will not see, facts, and the reasons of them, will be as impalpable to you there as here, unless you can again obey your *Notum Organum*.'

'How then?'

'By renouncing all your idols—the idols of the race and of the market, of the study and of the theatre. Every national prejudice, every vulgar superstition, every remnant of pedantic system, every sentimental like or dislike, must be left behind you, for the induction of the world problem. You must empty yourself before God will fill you.'

'(O! what can I strip myself more? I know nothing, I can do nothing, I hope nothing, I fear nothing, I am nothing.'

'And you would gain something. But for what purpose?—for one that depends your whole success. To be famous, great, glorious, powerful, beneficent.'

'As I live, the height of my ambition, small though it be, is only to find my place, though it were but as a sweep of chimneys. If I dare wish—if I dare choose, it would be only this—to regenerate one little parish in the whole world.'

'To do that, and die, for aught I care, without ever being recognized as the author of my own deeds. To leave them, if used by, imputed to another, and myself accused as a fool, if I can but atone for the sins of.'

He paused, but his teacher much stoled him.

'It is enough,' he said. 'Come with me. Tregavia waits for us now. Again I warn you, you will hear nothing new, you shall only see what you, and all around you, have known and not done, known and done. We have no peculiar doctrines or systems, the old creeds are enough for us. But we have obeyed the teachings which we received in each and every age, and allowed ourselves to be built up, generation by generation—as the rest of Christendom might have done—into a living temple, on the foundation which is laid already, and other than which no man can lay.'

'And what is that?'

'Jesus Christ—THE MAN.'

He took Lancelot by the hand. A joyful warmth diffused itself over his limbs, the drumming of the organ sounded munter, he more hushed, the marble monuments grew dim and distant, and, half unconsciously, he followed like a child through the cathedral door.

EPILOGUE

I CAN foresee many criticisms, and those not unreasonable ones, on this little book—let it be some excuse at least for me, that I have foreseen them. Readers will complain, I doubt not, of

the very mythical and mysterious *denouement* of a story which began by things so gross and palpable as field-sports and pauperism. But is it not true that, sooner or later, '*omnia revertuntur in pulverem*'? Out of mystery we all come at our birth, fox-hunters and paupers, sages and saints, into mystery we shall all return. . . at all events, when we die, probably, as it seems to me, some of us will return thither before we die. For if the signs of the times mean anything, they portend, I humbly submit, a somewhat mysterious and mythical *denouement* to this very age, and to those struggles of it which I have herein attempted, clumsily enough, to sketch. We are entering fast, I both hope and fear, into the region of psychology, true and false, and our great-grandchildren will look back on the latter half of this century, and ask if it were possible that such things could happen in an organised planet? The Benthames will receive this announcement, if it ever meets their eyes, with shouts of laughter. Be it so . . . *non est in dies* . . . In the year 1817, if they will recollect, they were congratulating themselves on the nations having grown too wise to go to war any more, and in 1849? So it has been from the beginning. What did philosophers expect in 1792? What did they see in 1793? Popery was to be eternal, but the Reformation came nevertheless. Rome was to be eternal but Almo came. Jerusalem was to be eternal but Titus came. Gomorrah was to be eternal, I doubt not, but the fire-floods came. . . 'As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, and the flood came and swept them all away.' Of course they did not expect it. They went on saying, 'Where is the promise of his coming?' For all things continue as they were from the beginning. Most true, but what if they were from the beginning—over a volcano's mouth? What if the method whereon things have proceeded since the creation were, as geology as well as history problems, a *colossal* method? What then? Why should not this age as all others like it have done, end in a cataclysm, and a prodigy, and a mystery? And why should not my little book do likewise?

Again—Readers will probably complain of the fragmentary and unconnected form of the book. Let them first be sure that that is not an integral feature of the subject itself, and therefore the very form the book should take. Do not young men think, speak, act, just now, in this very incoherent, fragmentary way, without methodic education or habits of thought, with the various stereotyped systems which they have received by tradition breaking up under them like ice in a thaw, with a thousand facts and notions, which they know not how to classify, piling on on them like a flood?—a very Yeasty state of mind altogether, like a mountain burn in a spring rain, carrying down with it stones, sticks, peat-water, adule grouse-eggs and drowned kingfishers, fertilising salts

and vegetable poisons—not, alas! without a large crust, here and there, of sheer froth. Yet no heterogeneous confused flood-deposit, no fertile meadows below. And no high water, no fishing. It is in the long black droughts, when the water is foul from lowness, and not from height, that Hydrias and Desmidae, and Rotifers, and all uncouth pseud organisms, bred of putridity, begin to multiply, and the fish are sick for want of a fresh, and the cunningest artificial fly is of no avail, and the shrewdest angler will do nothing—except with a gross fleshly gilt-tailed worm, or the cannibal bait of 100, whereby parent fishes, like competitive barbarisms, devour each other's flesh and blood—perhaps their own. It is when the stream is clearing after a flood, that the fish will rise. . . When will the flood clear, and the fish come on the level again?

Next, I shall be blamed for having left untold the fate of those characters who have acted throughout as *Lancelot's* satellites. But indeed their only purpose consisted in their influence on his development, and that of Tregavia, I do not see that we have any need to follow them further. The reader can surely conjecture their history for himself. He may be pretty certain that they have gone the way of the world. *Adieu ad plures*. . . for this life or for the next. They have done very much what he or I might have done in their place—nothing. Nature brings very few of her children to perfection, in these days or any other. And for Grace, which does bring its children to perfection, the quantity and quality of the perfection must depend on the quantity and quality of the grace, and that again, to an awful extent—The Giver only knows to how great an extent—on the will of the recipients, and then force, in exact proportion to their lowness in the human scale, on the circumstances which environ them. So my characters are now—very much what the reader might expect them to be. I confess them to be unsatisfactory, so are most things, but how can I solve problems which but has not yet solved for me? How am I to extricate my antitypal characters, when their living types have not yet extricated themselves? When the igo moves on, my story shall move on with it. Let it be enough that my puppets have retreated in good order, and that I am willing to give to those readers who have conceived something of human interest for them, the latest accounts of their doings.

With the exception, that is, of Mellot and Sabina. Them I confess to be an utterly mysterious, fragmentary little couple. Why not? Do you not meet with twenty such in the course of your life?—Charming people, who for aught you know may be opera folk from Paris, or emissaries from the Czar, or disguised Jesuits, or disguised Angels. . . who evidently 'have a history,' and a strange one, which you never expect or attempt to fathom, who interest you intensely for a while, and then are whirled

away again in the great world-waltz, and lost in the crowd for ever? Why should you wish my story to be more complete than theirs is, or less romantic than theirs may be? There are more things in London, as well as in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in our philosophy. If you but knew the secret history of that still gentleman opposite whom you sat at dinner yesterday!—the real thoughts of that chattering girl whom you took down?—'Oman ardent in mystery', I say again. Every human being is a romance, a miracle to himself now, and will appear as one to all the world in That Day.

But now for the rest, and Squire Lavington first. He is a very fair sample of the fate of the British public, for he is dead and buried, and readers would not have me extricate him out of that situation. If you ask news of the reason and manner of his end, I can only answer, that like many others, he went out—as candles do. I believe he expressed general repentance for all his sins—all, at least, of which he was aware. To confess and repent of the state of the Whitford Priors estate, and of the poor therein, was of course more than any minister, of any denomination whatsoever, could be required to demand of him, seeing that would have involved a recognition of those duties of property, of which the good old gentleman was to the last a staunch denier, and which are as yet seldom supposed to be included in any Christian creed, Catholic or other. Two sermons were preached in Whitford on the day of his funeral, one by Mr. O'Blareaway, on the text from Job provided for such occasions, 'When the ear heard him, they, it blessed him,' etc. etc. the other by the Baptist preacher, on two verses of the forty-ninth Psalm—

'They fancy that their houses shall endure for ever, and call their lands after their own names.'

'Yet man being in honour hath no understanding, but is compared to the beasts that perish.'

Waiving the good taste, which was probably on a par in both cases, the reader is left to decide which of the two texts was most applicable.

Mrs. Lavington is Mrs. Lavington no longer. She has married, to the astonishment of the world in general, that 'excellent man,' Mr. O'Blareaway, who has been discovered not to be quite as young as he appeared, his graces being principally owing to a Brutus wig, which he has now wisely discarded. Mrs. Lavington now sits in state under her husband's ministry, as the leader of the religious world in the fashionable watering-place of Steamingbath, and derives her notions of the past, present, and future state of the universe principally from those two meek and unbiased periodicals, the *Protestant Hue-and-Cry* and the *Christian Satirist*, to both of which O'Blareaway is a constant contributor. She has taken such an aversion to Whitford since Argemone's death that she has ceased

to have any connection with that unhealthy locality, beyond the popular and easy one of rent-receiving. O'Blareaway has never entered the parish to his knowledge since Mr. Lavington's funeral, and was much pleased, the last time I rode with him, at my informing him that a certain picturesque moorland which he had been greatly admiring was his own possession.

After all, he is 'an excellent man', and when I met a large party at his house the other day, and beheld duty and surmullet, champagne and lachrymæ Christi, and all the glory of the Whitford plate (some of it said to have belonged to the altar of the Priory Church four hundred years ago), I was deeply moved by the impressive train in which, at the end of a long grace, he prayed 'that the daily bread of our less favoured brethren might be mercifully vouchsafed to them.' My dear readers, would you have me, even if I could, extricate him from such an Elysium by any denunciation whatsoever?

Poor dear Luke, again, is said to be painting lean firesides for the something-or-other-Kirke at Munich, and the vicar, under the name of Father Stylites, of the order of St. Plummer, is preaching unperished sermons to crowded congregations at St. George's, Beekham. How can I extricate them from that? No one has come forth of it yet, to my knowledge, except by paths whereof 'I shall use Lessing's saying.' 'I may have my whole hand full of truth, and yet find good to open only my little finger.' But who cares for their coming out? They are but two more added to the five hundred, at whose head I stride, and dive into the Roman Averroës, a quasi-Protestant public looks on with a sort of savage satisfaction, crying only, 'Didn't we tell you so?'—and more than half hopes that they will not come back again, lest they should be discovered to have learnt any thing while they were there. What are two among that five hundred? much more among the five thousand who seem destined shortly to follow them.

The banker, thanks to Bannakill's assistance, is rapidly getting rich again—who would wish to stop him? However, he is wiser, on some points at least, than he was of yore. He has taken up the flax movement violently of late, perhaps owing to some hint of Bannakill's talks of nothing but Chevalier Clausen and Mr. Donellan, and is very anxious to advance capital to any landlord who will grow flax on Mr. Wanne's method, either in England or Ireland.

John Bull, however, has not yet awakened sufficiently to listen to his overtures, but sits up in bed, dolefully rubbing his eyes, and bemoaning the evanishment of his protectionist dream—altogether realising tolerably, he and his land, Dr. Watts's well-known moral song concerning the sluggard and his garden.

Lord Muchamstead again prospers. Either the nuns of Muchamstead have left no Nemesis behind them, like those of Whitford, or a certain wisdom and righteousness of his, however dim

and imperfect, averts it for a time. So, as I said, he prospers, and is hated, especially by his farmers, to whom he has just offered long leases and a sliding corn-rent. They would have hated him just the same if he had kept them at rack-rents, and he has not forgotten that, but they have. They looked sly at the leases because they bind them to farm high, which they do not know how to do, and at the corn-rent, because they think that he expects wheat to rise again—which, being a sensible man, he very probably does. But for my story

—I certainly do not see how to extricate him or any one else from farmers' singularity, greed, and ill-will. That question must have seven years' more free-trade to settle it, before I can say anything thereon. Still less can I foreshadow the fate of his eldest son, who has just been rusticated from Christ Church for riding one of Simmons's hacks through a china-shop window, especially as the youth is reported to be given to jockeys and strong liquors, and, like many noblemen's eldest sons, is considered 'not to have the talent of his father.' As for the old lord himself, I have no wish to change or develop him in any way—except to cut slices off him, as you do off a willow, and plant two or three in every county in England. Let him alone to work out his own plot—we have not seen the end of it yet, but whatever it will be, England has need of him as a transition-stage between feudalism and * * *, for many a day to come. If he be not the ideal landlord, he is nearer it than any we are like yet to see.

Except one, and that, after all, is Lord Vauxhall. Let him go on, like a gallant gentleman as he is, and prosper. And he will prosper, for he fears God, and God is with him. He has much to learn, and a little to unlearn. He has to learn that God is a living God now, as well as in the middle ages—to learn to trust not in antique precedents, but in eternal laws; to learn that his tenants, just because they are children of God, are not to be kept children, but developed and educated into sons, to learn that God's grace, like His love, is free, and that His spirit bloweth where it listeth, and vindicates its own free will against all narrow systems, by revealing, at times, even to nominal heretics and infidels, truths which the Catholic Church must humbly receive, as the message of Him who is wider, deeper, more tolerant, than even she can be. And he is in the way to learn all this. Let him go on. At what conclusions he will attain, he knows not, nor do I. But this I know, that he is on the path to great and true conclusions. And he is just about to be married, too. That surely should teach him something. The papers inform me that his bride-elect is Lord Munchingstead's youngest daughter. That should be a noble mixture, there should be stalwart offspring, spiritual as well as physical, born of that intermarriage of the old and the new. We will hope it. perhaps some of my

readers, who enter into my inner meaning, may also pray for it.

Whom have I to account for besides? Canny—though some of my readers may consider the mention of him superfluous. But to those who do not, I may impart the news, that last month, in the Union workhouse—he died, and may, for aught we know, have ere this met Squire Lavington . . . He is supposed, or at least said, to have had a soul to be saved. . . as I think, a body to be saved also. But what is one more among so many? And in an over-peopled country like this, too. One must learn to look at things—and persons—in the mass.

The poor of Whitford also? My dear readers, I trust you will not ask me just now to draw the microscope of the Whitford poor, or of any others. Really that depends principally on yourselves. But for the present, the poor of Whitford, owing, as it seems to them and me, to quite other causes than an 'overstocked labour-market,' or too rapid 'multiplication of their species,' are growing more prodigal, rickless, pauperised, year by year. O Blarney complained sadly to me the other day that the poor rates were becoming 'heavy and heavy'—had nearly reached, indeed, what they were under the old law. . .

But there is one who does not complain, but gives and gives, and stunts herself to give, and weeps in silence and unseen over the evils which she has ye only less and less power to stem.

For in a darkened chamber of the fine house at Stevington lies on a sofa Honoria Lavington—beautiful no more, the victim of some mysterious and agonising disease, about which the physicians agree on one point only—that it is hopeless. The 'curse of the Lavingtons' is on her, and she bears it. There she lies, and prays, and reads, and arranges her charities, and writes little books for children, full of the Beloved Name which is for ever on her lips. She suffers—none but herself knows how much, or how strangely—yet she is never heard to sigh. She weeps in secret she has long ceased to plead—for others not for herself—and prays for them too—perhaps some day her prayers will yet be answered. But she greets all visitors with a smile fresh from heaven, and all who enter that room leave it saddened, and yet happy, like those who have lingered a moment at the gates of paradise, and seen angels ascending and descending upon earth. There she lies—who could wish her otherwise? Even Doctor Antiochus Maresnest the celebrated mesmeriser, who, though he laughs at the Resurrection of the Lord, is confidently reported to have raised more than one corpse to life himself, was heard to say, after having attended her professionally, that her waking bliss and peace, although unfortunately unattributable even to autocatalysis, much less to somnambulist exaltation, was on the whole, however unscientific, almost as enviable.

There she lies—and will lie till she dies—the type of thousands more, 'the martyrs by the

hang without the pain, who find no mates in this life . . . and yet may find them in the life to come. Poor Paul Tregarva! Little he fancies how her days run by!.

At least there has been no news since that last scene in St. Paul's Cathedral, either of him or Lancelot. How then strange teacher has fulfilled his promise of guiding their education, whether they have yet reached the country of Prester John, whether, indeed, that Caucasian Utopia has a local and bodily existence, or was only used by Barnakill to shadow out that Ideal which is, as he said of the Garden of Eden, always near us, underlying the Actual, as the spirit does its body, exhibiting itself step by step through all the falsehoods and confusions of history and society, giving life to all in it which is not falsehood and decay, on all these questions I can give my readers no sort of answer, perhaps I may as yet have no answer to give, perhaps I may be afraid of giving one, perhaps the times themselves are giving, at once cheerfully and sadly, in strange destructions and strange births, a better answer than I can give. I have set forth, as far as in me lay, the data of my problem and surely, if the promise be given, wise men will not have to look far for the conclusion. In homely English I have given my readers Yeast, if they be what I take them for, they will be able to bake with it themselves.

And yet I have brought Lancelot, at least—perhaps Tregarva too—to a conclusion, and an all-important one, which whose reader may find fairly printed in these pages. Henceforth his life must begin anew. Were I to carry on the thread of his story continuously he would still seem to have overleaped as vast a gulf as if I had re-introduced him as a gray-haired man. Strange! that the death of one of the lovers should seem no complete termination to their history, when their marriage would have been accepted by all as the legitimate *dénouement*, beyond which no information was to be expected. As if the history of love always ended at the altar! Oftener it only begins there, and all before it is but a mere lounging to love. Why should readers complain of being refused the future history of one life, when they are in most novels cut short by the marriage funeral from the biography of two?

But if, over and above this, any reader should be wroth at my having left Lancelot's history unfinished on questions in his opinion more

important than that of love, let me entreat him to set manfully about finishing his own history—a far more important one to him than Lancelot's. If he shall complain that doubts are raised for which no solution is given, that my hero is brought into contradictory beliefs with out present means of bringing them to accord, into passive acquiescence in vast truths without seeming any possibility of practically applying them—let him consider well whether such be not his own case; let him, if he be as most are, thank God when he finds out that such is his case, when he knows at last that those are most blind who say they see, when he becomes at last conscious how little he believes, how little he acts up to that small belief. Let him try to fight somewhat of the doubt, confusion, custom worship, inconsistency, idolatry, within him—some of the greed, bigotry, recklessness, respectably superstitious atheism around him, and perhaps before his new task is finished, Lancelot and Tregarva may have returned with a message, if not for him—for that depends upon him having ears to hear it—yet possibly for strong Lord Muchamstead, probably for good Lord Vieuxbois, and surely for the sinners and the slaves of Whitford Priory. What it will be, I know not altogether, but this I know, that if my heroes go on as they have set forth, looking with single mind for some one ground of human light and love, some everlasting rock whereon to build, utterly careless what the building may be, however contrary to precedent and prejudice, and the idols of the day, provided God and nature, and the accumulated lessons of all the ages, help them in its construction—then they will find in time the thing they seek, and see how the will of God may at last be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven. But, alas! between them and it are waste raging waters, foul mud-larks, thick with dragons and snakes, and many a bitter day and blinding night in cold and hunger, spiritual and perhaps physical, await them. For it was a true vision which John Bunyan saw, and one which, as the visions of wise men are wont to do, meant far more than the seer fancied, when he beheld in his dream that there was indeed a land of Beulah, and Arcadian Shepherd's Paradise, on whose mountain tops the everlasting sunshine lay, but that the way to it, as these last three years are preaching to us, went past the mouth of Hell, and through the valley of the Shadow of Death.

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THE END

HYPATIA

OR

NEW FOES WITH AN OLD FACE

HYPATIA

OR

NEW FOES WITH AN OLD FACE

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY

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Dedication

TO MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER

MY DEAR PARENTS,

WHEN you shall have read this book, and considered the view of human relationships which is set forth in it, you will be at no loss to discover why I have dedicated it to you, as one paltry witness of an union and of a debt which, though they may seem to have begun with birth, and to have grown with your most loving education, yet cannot die with death but are spiritual, undefeasible, eternal in the heavens with that God from whom every fatherhood in heaven and earth is named.

C. K.

PREFACE

A PICTURE of life in the fifth century must needs contain much which will be painful to any reader, and which the young and innocent will do well to leave altogether unreal. It has to represent a very hideous, though a very great, age, one of those critical and cardinal eras in the history of the human race, in which virtues and vices manifest themselves side by side—even, at times, in the same person—with the most startling openness and power. One who writes of such an era labours under a troublesome disadvantage. He dare not tell how evil people were, he will not be believed if he tells how good they were. In the present case that disadvantage is doubled, for while the sins of the Church, however heinous, were still such as admit of being expressed in words, the sins of the heathen world, against which she fought, were utterly indescribable, and the Christian apologist is thus compelled, for the sake of decency, to state the Church's case far more weakly than the facts deserve.

Not, be it ever remembered, that the slightest suspicion of immorality attaches either to the heroine of this book, or to the leading philosophers of her school, for several centuries. However base and profligate their disciples, or the Manichees, may have been, the great Neo-Platonists were, as Plotinus himself was, persons of the most rigid and ascetic virtue.

For a time, had arrived, in which the teacher who did not put forth the most lofty pretensions to righteousness could expect a hearing. That Divine Word, who is 'The Light who lighteth every man which cometh into the world,' had awakened in the heart of mankind a moral craving never before felt in any strength, except by a few isolated philosophers or prophets. The Spirit had been poured out on all flesh; and from one end of the Empire to the other, from the slave in the mill to the emperor on his throne, all hearts were either hungering and thirsting after righteousness, or hating to do homage to those who did so. And He who excited the craving, was also furnishing that which would satisfy it, and was teaching mankind, by a long and painful education, to distinguish the truth from its innumerable counterfeits, and to find, for the first time in the world's life, a good news not merely for the select few, but for all mankind without respect of rank or race.

For somewhat more than four hundred years, the Roman Empire and the Christian Church, born into the world almost at the same moment, had been developing themselves side by side as two great rival powers, in deadly struggle for the possession of the human race. The weapons of the Empire had been not merely an overwhelming physical force, and a ruthless lust of aggressive conquest, but, even more powerful still, an unequalled genius for organisation, and an uniform system of external law and order. This was generally a real boon to conquered nations, because it substituted a fixed and regular spoliation for the fortuitous and arbitrary miseries of savage warfare; but it arrayed, meanwhile, on the side of the Empire the wealthier citizens of every province, by allowing them their share in the plunder of the labouring masses below them. These, in the country districts, were utterly enslaved, while in the cities, nominal freedom was of little use to masses kept from starvation by the alms of the government, and drugged into brutish good humour by a vast system of public spectacles, in which the realms of nature and of art were ransacked to glut the wonder, lust, and ferocity of a degraded populace.

Against this vast organisation the Church had been fighting for now four hundred years, armed only with its own mighty and all-embracing message, and with the manifestation of a spirit of purity and virtue, of love and self-sacrifice, which had proved itself mightier to melt and weld together the hearts of men, than all the force and terror, all the mechanical organisation, all the sensual baits with which the Empire had been contending against that Gospel in which it had recognised instinctively and at first sight, its intercome foe.

And now the Church had conquered. The weak things of this world had confounded the strong. In spite of the devilish cruelties of persecutors, in spite of the contaminating atmosphere of sin which surrounded her, in spite of having to form herself, not out of a race of pure and separate creatures, but by a most literal 'new birth' out of those very fallen masses who insulted and persecuted her; in spite of having to endure within herself continual outbursts of the evil passions in which her members had once indulged without check; in spite of a thousand counterfeits which sprang up around her and within her, claiming to be parts

of her, and alluring men to themselves by that very exclusiveness and party arrogance which disproved their claim, in spite of all, she had conquered. The very emperors had arrayed themselves on her side. Julian's last attempt to restore paganism by imperial influence had only proved that the old faith had lost all hold upon the hearts of the masses; at his death the great tide-wave of new opinion rolled on unchecked, and the rulers of earth were fain to swim with the stream, to accept, in words at least, the Church's laws as theirs, to acknowledge a King of kings to whom even they owed homage and obedience; and to call their own slaves their 'poorer brethren,' and often, too, their 'spiritual superiors.'

But if the emperors had become Christian, the Empire had not. Here and there an abuse was lopped off, or an edict was passed for the visitation of prisons and for the welfare of prisoners; or a Theodosius was recalled to justice and humanity for a while by the stern rebukes of an Ambrose. But the Empire was still the same, still a great tyranny, enslaving the masses, crushing national life, fattening itself and its officials on a system of world-wide robbery, and while it was paramount, there could be no hope for the human race. Nay, there were even those among the Christians who saw, like Dante afterwards, in the 'fatal gift of Constantine,' and the truce between the Church and the Empire, fresh and more deadly danger. Was not the Empire trying to extend over the Church itself that upas shadow with which it had withered up every other form of human existence, to make her, too, its stipendiary slave-official, to be pappered when obedient, and scourged whenever she dare assert a free will of her own, a law beyond that of her tyrants, to throw on her, by a refined hypocrisy, the care and support of the masses on whose lifeblood it was feeding? So thought many then, and, as I believe, not unwisely.

But if the social condition of the civilised world was anomalous at the beginning of the fifth century, its spiritual state was still more so. The universal fusion of races, languages, and customs, which had gone on for four centuries under the Roman rule, had produced a corresponding fusion of creeds, an universal fermentation of human thought and faith. All honest belief in the old local superstitions of paganism had been long dying out before the more palpable and material idolatry of Emperor-worship; and the gods of the nations, unable to deliver those who had trusted in them, became one by one the vassals of the 'Divus Caesar,' neglected by the philosophic rich, and only worshipped by the lower classes, whose the old rites still pandered to their grosser appetites, or observed the wealth and importance of some particular locality.

In the meanwhile, the minds of men, cut adrift from their ancient moorings, wandered wildly over pathless seas of speculative doubt, and especially in the more metaphysical and

contemplative East, attempted to solve for themselves the questions of man's relation to the unseen by those thousand schisms, heresies, and theosophies (it is a disgrace to the word philosophy to call them by it), on the records of which the student now gazes bewildered, unable alike to count or to explain their fantasies.

Yet even these, like every outburst of free human thought, had their use and their fruit. They brought before the minds of churchmen a thousand new questions which must be solved, unless the Church was to relinquish for ever her claims as the great teacher and satisfier of the human soul. To study these bubbles, as they formed and burst on every wave of human life; to feel, too often by sad experience, as Augustine felt, the charm of their allurements, to divide the truths at which they aimed from the falsehood which they offered as its substitute, to exhibit the Catholic Church as possessing, in the great facts which she proclaimed, full satisfaction, even for the most subtle metaphysical cravings of a diseased age;—that was the work of the time, and men were sent to do it, and aided in their labour by the very causes which had produced the intellectual revolution. The general intermixture of ideas, creeds, and races, even the mere physical facilities for intercourse between different parts of the Empire, helped to give the great Christian fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries a breadth of observation, a depth of thought, a large-hearted and large-minded patience and tolerance, such as, we may say boldly, the Church has since beheld but rarely, and the world never, at least, if we are to judge those great men by what they had, and not by what they had not, and to believe, as we are bound, that had they lived now, and not then, they would have towered as far above the heads of this generation as they did above the heads of their own. And thus an age, which, to the shallow insight of a sneerer like Gibbon, seems only a rotting and aimless chaos of sensuality and anarchy, fanaticism and hypocrisy, produced a Clement and an Athanasius, a Chrysostom and an Augustine, absorbed into the sphere of Christianity all which was most valuable in the philosophies of Greece and Egypt, and in the social organisation of Rome, as an heirloom for nations yet unborn, and laid in foreign lands, by unconscious agents, the foundations of all European thought and Ethics.

But the health of a Church depends, not merely on the creed which it professes, not even on the wisdom and holiness of a few great ecclesiastics, but on the faith and virtue of its individual members. The *mens sana* must have a *corpus sanum* to inhabit. And even for the Western Church, the lofty future which was its store for it would have been impossible, without some infusion of new and healthier blood into the veins of a world drained and tainted by the influence of Rome.

And the new blood, at the era of this story,

was at hand. The great tide of those Gothic nations, of which the Norwegian and the German are the purest remaining types, though every nation of Europe, from Gibraltar to St Petersburg, owes to them the most precious elements of strength, was sweeping onward, wave over wave, in a steady south-western current, across the whole Roman territory, and only stopping and receding when it reached the shores of the Mediterranean. Those wild tribes were bringing with them into the magic circle of the Western Church's influence the very materials which she required for the building up of a future Christendom, and which she could find as little in the Western Empire as in the Eastern, comparative purity of morals, sacred respect for woman, for family life, law, equal justice, individual freedom, and, above all, for honesty in word and deed, bodies untainted by hereditary effeminacy, hearts earnest though genial, and blessed with a strange willingness to learn, even from those whom they despised; a brain equal to that of the Roman in practical power, and not too far behind that of the Eastern in imaginative and speculative acuteness.

And their strength was felt at once. Their vanguard, confined with difficulty for three centuries beyond the Eastern Alps, at the expense of sanguinary wars, had been adopted wherever it was practicable, into the service of the Empire, and the heart's core of the Roman legion was composed of Gothic officers and soldiers. But now the main body had arrived. Thenceforth the war was crowding down to the Alps, and trampling upon each other on the frontiers of the Empire. The Huns, singly their inferiors, pressed them from behind with the irresistible weight of numbers; Italy, with her rich cities and fertile lowlands, beckoned them on to plunder, as auxiliaries, they had learned their own strength and Roman weakness; a *casus belli* was soon found. How iniquitous was the conduct of the sons of Theodosius, in refusing the usual bounty, by which the Goths were bribed not to attack the Empire!—The whole pent-up deluge burst over the plains of Italy, and the Western Empire became from that day forth a dying idiot, while the new invaders divided Europe among themselves. The fifteen years before the time of this tale had decided the fate of Greece, the last four that of Rome itself. The countless treasures which five centuries of rapine had accumulated round the Capitol had become the prey of men clothed in sheepskins and horsehide; and the sister of an emperor had found her beauty, virtue, and pride of race worthily matched by those of the hard-handed Northern hero who led her away from Italy as his captive and his bride, to found new kingdoms in South France and Spain, and to drive the newly-arrived Vandals across the Straits of Gibraltar into the then blooming coast-land of Northern Africa. Everywhere the mangled limbs of the Old World were seething in the Medea's caldron, to come forth whole, and young, and strong. The

Longbeards, noblest of their race, had found a temporary resting-place upon the Austrian frontier, after long southward wanderings from the Swedish mountains, soon to be dispossessed again by the advancing Huns, and, crossing the Alps, to give their name for ever to the plains of Lombardy. A few more tumultuous years, and the Franks would find themselves lords of the Lower Rhineland, and before the hairs of Hyppatius's scholars had grown gray, the mythic Hengist and Horsa would have landed on the shores of Kent, and an English nation have begun its world-wide life.

But some great Providence forbade to our race, triumphant in every other quarter, a footing beyond the Mediterranean, or even in Constantinople, which to this day preserves in Europe the faith and manners of Asia. The Eastern World seemed barred, by some stern doom, from the only influence which could have regenerated it. Every attempt of the Gothic races to establish themselves beyond the sea, whether in the form of an organised kingdom, as the Vandals attempted in Africa; or of a mere band of brigands, as did the Goths in Asia Minor, under Gaisas, or of a praetorian guard, as did the Varangens of the middle age, or as religious invaders, as did the Crusaders, ended only in the corruption and disappearance of the colonists. That extraordinary reform in morals, which, according to Selvan and his contemporaries, the Vandal conquerors worked in North Africa, availed them nothing, they lost more than they gave. Climate, bad example, and the luxury of power degraded them in one century into a race of helpless and debauched slave-holders, doomed to utter extermination before the semi-Gothic armies of Belisarius, and with them vanished the last chance that the Gothic races would exercise on the Eastern World the same stern yet wholesome discipline under which the Western had been restored to life.

The Egyptian and Syrian Churches, therefore, were destined to labour not for themselves, but for us. The signs of disease and decrepitude were already but too manifest in them. That very peculiar turn of the Græco-Eastern mind, which made them the great thinkers of the then world, had the effect of drawing them away from practice to speculation; and the races of Egypt and Syria were effeminate, over-civilised, exhausted by centuries during which no infusion of fresh blood had come to renew the stock. Morbid, self-conscious, physically indolent, incapable then, as now, of personal or political freedom, they afforded material out of which fanatics might easily be made, but not citizens of the kingdom of God. The very ideas of family and national life—those two divine roots of the Church, severed from which she is certain to wither away into that most godless and most cruel of spectres, a religious world—had perished in the East from the evil influence of the universal practice of slaveholding, as well as from the degradation of that Jewish nation which

PREFACE

had been for ages the great witness for those ideas, and all classes, like their forefather Adam—like, indeed, 'the old Adam' in every man and in every age—were shifting the blame of sin from their own consciences to human relations and duties—and therein, to the God who had appointed them, and saying as of old, *'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat'*. The passionate Eastern character, like all weak ones, found total abstinence easier than temperance, religious thought more pleasant than godly action, and a monastic world grew up all over the East, of such vastness that in Egypt it was said to rival in numbers the lay population, producing, with an enormous decrease in the actual amount of moral evil, an equally great enervation and decrease of the population. Such a people could offer no resistance to the steadily-increasing tyranny of the Eastern Empire. In vain did such men as Chrysostom and Basil oppose their personal influence to the hideous intrigues and villainies of the Byzantine court, the ever-downward career of Eastern Christianity went on unchecked for two more miserable centuries, side by side with the upward development of the Western Church, and, while the successors of the great Saint Gregory were converting and civilising a new born Europe, the Churches of the East were vanishing before Mohammedan invaders, strong by living trust in that living God, whom the Christians, while they hated and persecuted each other for arguments about Him, were denying and blaspheming in every action of their lives.

But at the period whereof this story treats, the Græco-Eastern mind was still in the middle of its great work. That wonderful metaphysic subtlety, which, in phrases and definitions too often unmeaning to our grosser intellect, saw the symbols of the most important spiritual realities, and felt that on the distinction between *homocentrics* and *homocentrics* might hang the solution of the whole problem of humanity, was set to battle in Alexandria, the ancient stronghold of Greek philosophy, with the effete remains of the very scientific thought to which it owed its extraordinary culture. Monastic isolation from family and national duties especially fitted the fathers of that period for the task, by giving them leisure, if nothing else, to face questions with a lifelong earnestness impossible to the more social and practical Northern mind. Our duty is, instead of sneering at them as pedantic

dreamers, to thank Heaven that men were found, just at the time when they were wanted, to do for us what we could never have done for ourselves, to leave to us, as a precious heirloom, bought most truly with the lifeblood of their race, a metaphysic at once Christian and scientific, every attempt to improve on which has hitherto been found a failure; and to battle victoriously with that strange brood of theoretic monsters begotten by effete Greek philosophy upon Egyptian symbolism, Chaldean astrology, Persian dualism, Brahminic spiritualism—graceful and gorgeous phantoms, whereof somewhat more will be said in the coming chapters.

I have, in my sketch of Hypatia and her fate, closely followed authentic history, especially Socrates' account of the closing scene, as given in Book vii § 15, of his *Ecclesiastical History*. I am inclined, however, for various historical reasons, to date her death two years earlier than he does. The tradition that she was the wife of Isidore, the philosopher, I reject with Gibbon, as a palpable anachronism of at least fifty years (Isidore's master, Proclus, not having been born till the year before Hypatia's death), contradicted, moreover, by the very author of it, Photius, who says distinctly, after comparing Hypatia and Isidore, that Isidore married a certain 'Domna'. No hint, moreover, of her having been married appears in any contemporary authors, and the name of Isidore nowhere occurs among those of the many mutual friends to whom Synesius sends messages in his letters to Hypatia, in which, if anywhere, we should find mention of a husband, had one existed. To Synesius's most charming letters, as well as to those of Isidore, the good Abbot of Pélusium, I beg leave to refer those readers who wish for further information about the private life of the fifth century.

I cannot hope that these pages will be altogether free from anachronisms and errors. I can only say that I have laboured honestly and industriously to discover the truth, even in its minutest details, and to sketch the age, its manners and its literature, as I found them—altogether artificial, alchemical, effete, resembling far more the times of Louis Quinze than those of Sophocles and Plato. And so I send forth this little sketch, ready to give my hearty thanks to any reviewer, who, by exposing my mistakes, shall teach me and the public somewhat more about the last struggle between the Young Church and the Old World.

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HYPATIA

OR

NEW FOES WITH AN OLD FACE

CHAPTER I

THE LAURA

In the four hundred and thirteenth year of the Christian Era, some three hundred miles above Alexandria, the young monk Philammon was sitting on the edge of a low range of inland hills, crested with drifting sand. Behind him the desert sand waste stretched, lifeless, interminable, reflecting its lurid glare on the horizon of the cloudless vault of blue. At his feet the sand slipped and trickled, in yellow rivulets, from crack to crack and ledge to ledge, or whirled past him in tiny jets of yellow smoke, before the fitful summer airs. Here and there, upon the face of the cliffs which walled in the opposite side of the narrow glen below, were cavernous ombs, huge old quarries, with obelisks and half-cut pillars, standing as the workmen had left them centuries before; the sand was slipping down and piling up around them, their heads were frosted with the arid snow, everywhere was silence, desolation—the grave of a dead nation, in a dying land. And there he sat musing above it all, full of life and youth and health and beauty—a young Apollo of the desert. His only clothing was a ragged sheepskin, bound with a leathern girdle. His long black locks, unshorn from childhood, waved and glistened in the sun, a rich dark down on cheek and chin showed the spring of healthful manhood; his hard hands and snowy sunburnt limbs told of labour and endurance, his flashing eyes and beetling brow, of daring, fancy, passion, thought, which had no sphere of action in such a place. What did his glorious young humanity alone among the tombs?

So perhaps he, too, thought, as he passed his hand across his brow, as if to sweep away some gathering dream, and sighing, rose and wandered along the cliffs, peering downward at every point and cranny, in search of fuel for the monastery from whence he came.

Simple as was the material which he sought,

consisting chiefly of the low arid desert shrubs, with now and then a fragment of wood from some deserted quarry or ruin, it was becoming scarcer and scarcer round Abbot Pambo's Laura at Scetis, and long before Philammon had collected his daily quantity, he had strayed farther from his home than he had ever been before.

Suddenly, at a turn of the glen, he came upon a sight new to him . . . a temple carved in the sandstone cliff, and in front a smooth platform, strewn with beams and mouldering tools, and here and there a skull bleaching among the sand, perhaps of some workman slaughtered at his labour in one of the thousand wars of old. The abbot, his spiritual father—indeed, the only father whom he knew, for his earliest recollections were of the Laura and the old man's cell—had strictly forbidden him to enter, even to approach any of those relics of ancient idolatry. But a broad terrace-road led down to the platform from the table-land above, the plentiful supply of fuel was too tempting to be passed by. He would go down, gather a few sticks, and then return, to tell the abbot of the treasure which he had found, and consult him as to the propriety of revisiting it.

So down he went, hardly daring to raise his eyes to the alluring images of the painted imagery which, gaily in crimson and blue, still blazed out upon the desolate solitude, uninjured by that rainless air. But he was young, and youth is curious, and the devil, at least in the fifth century, busy with young brains. Now Philammon believed most utterly in the devil, and night and day devoutly prayed to be delivered from him, so he crossed himself, and ejaculated, honestly enough, 'Lord, turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity.' . . . and looked nevertheless.

And who could have helped looking at those four colossal kings, who sat there grim and motionless, their huge hands laid upon their knees in everlasting self-assured repose, seeming to bear up the mountain on their stately heads? A sense of awe, weakness, all but fear, came

over him. He dare not stoop to take up the wood at his feet, their great stern eyes watched him so steadily.

Round their knees and round their thrones were mystic characters engraven, symbol after symbol, line below line—the ancient wisdom of the Egyptians, wherein Moses the man of God was learned of old—why should not he know it too? What awful secrets might not be hidden there about the great world, past, present, and future, of which he knew only so small a speck! Those kings who sat there, they had known it all, their sharp lips seem parting, ready to speak to him. . . . Oh that they would speak for once! . . . and yet that grim sneering smile, that seemed to look down on him from the heights of their power and wisdom, with calm contempt . . . him, the poor youth, picking up the leaving and rags of their past majesty . . . He dared look at them no more.

So he looked past them into the temple halls, into a lustrous abyss of cool green shade, deepening on and inward, pillar after pillar, vista after vista, into deepest night. And dimly through the gloom he could descry, on every wall and column, gorgeous arabesques, long lines of pictured story, triumphs and labours; rows of captives in foreign and fantastic dresses, leading strange animals, bearing the tributes of unknown lands, rows of ladies at feasts, their heads crowned with garlands, the fragrant lotus-flower in every hand, while slaves brought wine and perfumes, and children sat upon their knees, and husbands by their side, and dancing girls, in transparent robes and golden girdles, tossed their tawny limbs wildly among the throng. . . . What was the meaning of it all? Why had it all been? Why had it gone on thus, the great world, century after century, millennium after millennium, eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage, and knowing nothing better? How could they know anything better? Their forefathers had lost the light ages and ages before they were born. And Christ had not come for ages and ages after they were dead. . . . How could they know? . . . And yet they were all in hell. . . . every one of them. Every one of these ladies who sat there, with her bushy locks, and garlands, and jewelled collars, and lotus-flowers, and gauzy dress, displaying all her slender limbs—who, perhaps, when she was alive, smiled so sweetly, and went so gaily, and had children, and friends, and never once thought of what was going to happen to her—what must happen to her. . . . She was in hell. . . . Burning for ever, and ever, and ever, there below his foot. He stared down on the rocky floors. If he could but see through them. . . . and the eye of faith could see through them. . . . he should behold her writhing and twisting among the flickering flame, scorched, glowing. . . . in everlasting agony, such as the thought of enduring for a moment made him shudder. He had burnt his hands once, when a palm-leaf hut caught fire. . . . He recollected what that was like. . . . She was enduring ten

thousand times more than that for ever. . . . He should hear her shrieking in vain for a drop of water to cool her tongue. . . . He had never heard a human being shriek but once. . . . a boy bathing on the opposite Nile bank, whom a crocodile had dragged down. . . . and that scream, faint and distant as it came across the mighty tale, had rung intolerable in his ears for days. . . . and to think of all which echoed through those vaults of fire—for ever! Was the thought bearable!—was it possible! Millions upon millions burning for ever for Adam's fall.

Could God be just in that? . . .

It was the temptation of a fiend! He had entered the unhallowed precincts, where devils still lingered about their ancient shrines, he had let his eyes devour the abominations of the heathen, and given place to the devil. He would flee home to confess it all to his father. He would punish him as he deserved, pray for him, forgive him. And yet could he tell him all? Could he, dare he confess to him the whole truth—the insatiable craving to know the mysteries of learning—to see the great roaring world of men, which had been growing up in him slowly, month after month, till now it had assumed this fearful shape? He could stay no longer in the desert. This world which sent all souls to hell—was it as bad, as monks declared it was? It must be, else how could such be the fruit of it? But it was too awful a thought to be taken on trust. No, he must go and see.

Filled with such fearful questionings, half articulate and vague, like the thoughts of a child, the untutored youth went wandering on, till he reached the edge of the cliff below which lay his home.

It lay pleasantly enough, that lonely Laura, or lane of rude Cyclopean cells, under the perpetual shadow of the southern wall of crags, amid its grove of ancient date-trees. A branching cavern in the cliff supplied the purposes of a chapel, a storehouse, and a hospital, while on the sunny slope across the glen lay the common gardens of the brotherhood, green with millet, maize, and beans, among which a tiny streamlet, husbanded and guided with the most thrifty care, wandered down from the cliff foot, and spread perpetual verdure over the little plot which voluntary and fraternal labour had painfully redeemed from the mounds of the all-devouring sand. For that garden, like everything else in the Laura, except each brother's seven feet of stone sleeping hut, was the common property, and therefore the common care and joy of all. For the common good, as well as for his own, each man had toiled up the glen with his palm-leaf basket of black mud from the river Nile, over whose broad sheet of silver the glen's mouth yawned abrupt. For the common good, each man had swept the ledges clear of sand, and sown in the scanty artificial soil, the harvest of which all were to share alike. To buy clothes, books, and chapel furniture for the common necessities, education, and worship, each man sat, day after day, week after week, his mind

full of high and heavenly thoughts, weaving the leaves of their little palm-copes into baskets, which an aged monk exchanged for goods with the more prosperous and frequented monasteries of the opposite bank. Thither Philammon rowed the old man over, week by week, in a light canoe of papyrus, and fished, as he sat waiting for him, for the common meal. A simple, happy, gentle life was that of the Laura, all portioned out by rules and methods, which were held hardly less sacred than those of the Scriptures, on which they were supposed (and not so wrongly either) to have been framed. Each man had food and raiment, shelter on earth, friends and counsellors, living trust in the continual care of Almighty God, and, blazing before his eyes, by day and night, the hope of everlasting glory beyond all poets' dreams. . . . And what more would man have had in those days? Thither they had fled out of cities, compared with which Paris is earnest and Gomorrah chaste,—out of a rotten, infernal, dying world of tyrants and slaves, hypocrites and wantons,—to powder undisturbed on duty and on judgment, on death and eternity, heaven and hell, to find a common crowd, a common interest, a common hope, common duties, pleasures, and sorrows. . . . True, they had many of them fled from the post where God had placed them, when they fled from man into the Theban waste. . . . What sort of post and what sort of angels they were, from which those old monks fled, we shall see, perhaps, before this tale is told out.

'Thou art late, son,' said the abbot, steadfastly working away at his palm-basket, as Philammon approached.

'Fuel is scarce, and I was forced to go far.'

'A monk should not answer till he is questioned. I did not ask the reason. Where didst thou find that wood?'

'Before the temple, far up the glen.'

'The temple! What didst thou see there?'

No answer. Pambo looked up with his keen black eye.

'Thou hast gazed it, and lusted after its abominations.'

'I—I did not enter, but I looked—'

'And what didst thou see? Women?'

Philammon was silent.

'Have I not bidden you never to look on the face of women? Are they not the fruits of the devil, the authors of all evil, the subtlest of all Satan's snares? Are they not accursed forever, for the deceit of their first mother, by whom sin entered into the world? A woman first opened the gates of hell; and, until this day, they are the portresses thereof. Unhappy boy! What hast thou done?'

'They were but painted on the walls.'

'Ah!' said the abbot, as if suddenly relieved from a heavy burden. 'But how knewest thou them to be women, when thou hast never yet, unless thou liest—which I believe not of thee—seen the face of a daughter of Eve?'

'Perhaps—perhaps,' said Philammon, as if suddenly relieved by a new suggestion—'perhaps

they were only devils. They must have been, I think, for they were so very beautiful.'

'Ah! how knowest thou that devils are beautiful?'

'I was launching the boat, a week ago, with Father Aufugus, and on the bank, . . . not very near, . . . there were two creatures . . . with long hair, and striped all over the lower half of their bodies with black, and red, and yellow . . . and they were gathering flowers on the shore. Father Aufugus turned away, but I . . . I could not help thinking them the most beautiful things that I had ever seen . . . so I asked him why he turned away, and he said that those were the same sort of devils which tempted the blessed St Anthony. Then I recollected having heard it read aloud, how Satan tempted Anthony in the shape of a beautiful woman. . . . And so . . . and so

. . . those figures on the wall were very like

. . . and I thought they might be . . .'

And the poor boy, who considered that he was making confession of a deadly and shameful sin, blushed scarlet, and stammered, and at last stopped.

'And thou thoughtest them beautiful? Oh utter corruption of the flesh!—oh subtlety of Satan! The Lord forgive thee, as I do, my poor child, henceforth thou goest not beyond the garden walls.'

'Not beyond the walls! Impossible! I cannot! If thou wert not my father, I would say, I will not!—I must have liberty!—I must see for myself!—I must judge for myself, what this world is of which you all talk so bitterly! I long for no pomps and vanities. I will promise you this moment, if you will, never to re-enter a heathen temple—to hide my face in the dust whenever I approach a woman. But I must—I must see the world, I must see the great mother-church in Alexandria, and the patriarch, and his clergy. If they can see God in the city, why not I? I could do more for God there than here. Not that I despise this work—not that I am ungrateful to you—oh, never, never that!—but I pant for the battle! Let me go! I am not discontented with you, but with myself. I know that obedience is noble, but danger is nobler still. If you have seen the world, why should not I? If you have fled from it because you found it too evil to live in, why should not I, and return to you here of my own will, never to leave you? And yet Cyril and his clergy have not fled from it.'

Desperately and breathlessly did Philammon drive this speech out of his inmost heart, and then waited, expecting the good abbot to strike him on the spot. If he had, the young man would have submitted patiently, so would any man, however venerable, in that monastery. Why not? Duly, after long companionship, thought, and prayer, they had elected Pambo for their abbot—abba—father—the wisest, eldest-hearted and headed of them—if he was that, it was time that he should be obeyed.

And obeyed he was, with a loyal, reasonable love, and yet with an implicit, soldier-like obedience, which many a king and conqueror might envy. Were they cowards and slaves? The Roman legionaries should be good judges on that point. They used to say that no armed barbarian, Goth or Vandal, Moor or Spaniard, was so terrible as the unarmed monk of the Thobaid.

Twice the old man lifted his staff to strike; twice he laid it down again, and then, slowly rising, left Philammon kneeling there, and moved away deliberately, and with eyes fixed on the ground, to the house of the brother Aufugus.

Every one in the Laura honoured Aufugus. There was a mystery about him which heightened the charm of his surpassing sanctity, his childlike sweetness and humility. It was whispered—when the monks seldom and cautiously did whisper together in their lonely walks—that he had been once a great man, that he had come from a great city—perhaps from Rome itself. And the simple monks were proud to think that they had among them a man who had seen Rome. At least, Abbot Pambo respected him. He was never beaten, never even reproved—perhaps he never required it; but still it was the meek of all, and was not the abbot a little partial? Yet, certainly, when Theophilus sent up a messenger from Alexandria, rousing every Laura with the news of the sack of Rome by Alaric, did not Pambo take him first to the cell of Aufugus, and sit with him there three whole hours in secret consultation, before he told the awful story to the rest of the brotherhood? And did not Aufugus himself give letters to the messenger, written with his own hand, containing, as was said, deep secrets of worldly policy, known only to himself? So, when the little lane of holy men, each peering stealthily over his plating work from the doorway of his sandstone cell, saw the abbot, after his unwonted passion, leave the culprit kneeling, and take his way toward the sage's dwelling, they judged that something strange and delicate had befallen the common weal, and each wished, without envy, that he were as wise as the man whose counsel was to solve the difficulty.

For an hour or more the abbot remained there, talking earnestly and low; and then a solemn sound as of the two old men prying with sobes and tears, and every brother bowed his head, and whispered a hope that He whom they served might guide them for the good of the Laura, and of His Church, and of the great heathen world beyond; and still Philammon knelt motionless, awaiting his sentence, his heart filled—who can tell how? 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy.' So thought he as he knelt, and so think I, too, knowing that in the pettiest character there are unfathomable depths, which the poet, all-seeing though he may pretend to be, can never analyse, but must only dimly guess at, and still more dimly sketch them by the actions which they beget.

At last Pambo returned, deliberate, still, and

slow, as he had gone, and seating himself within his cell, spoke—

'And the youngest said, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to my share. . . And he took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. Thou shalt go, my son. But first come after me, and speak with Aufugus.'

Philammon, like every one else, loved Aufugus, and when the abbot retired and left the two alone together, he felt no dread or shame about unburdening his whole heart to him. Long and passionately he spoke, in answer to the gentle questions of the old man, who, without the rigidity or pedantic solemnity of the monk, interrupted the youth, and let himself be interrupted in return, gracefully, genially, almost playfully. And yet there was a melancholy about his tone as he answered to the youth's appeal—

'Terullian, Origen, Clement, Cyprian—all these moved in the world, all these and many more beside, whose names we honour, whose prayers we invoke, were learned in the wisdom of the heathen, and sought and laboured, unspotted, in the world, and why not I? Cyril the patriarch himself, was he not called from the caves of Nitria to sit on the throne of Alexandria?'

Slowly the old man lifted his hand, and putting back the thick locks of the kneeling youth, gazed, with soft pitying eyes, long and earnestly into his face.

'And thou wouldst see the world, poor fool? And thou wouldst see the world?'

'I would convert the world!'

'Thou must know it first. And shall I tell thee what that world is like, which seems to thee so easy to convert? Here I sit, the poor unknown old monk, until I die, fasting and praying, if perhaps God will have mercy on my soul, but little thou knowest how I have seen it. Little thou knowest, or thou wouldst be well content to rest here till the end. I was Arsenius. Ah! vain old man that I am! Thou hast never heard that name, at which once queens would whisper and grow pale. *Vanitas vanitatum! omnia vanitas!* And yet he, at whose frown half the world trembles, has trembled himself at mine. I was the tutor of Arcadius.'

'The Emperor of Byzantium?'

'Even so, my son, even so. There I saw the world which thou wouldst see. And what saw I? Even what thou wilt see. Eunuchs the tyrants of their own sovereigns. Bishops kissing the feet of parricides and traitors. Saints tearing saints in pieces for a word, while sinners cheer them on to the unnatural fight. Lairs thickened for lying, hypocrites taking pride in their hypocrisy. The many sold and butchered for the malice, the caprice, the vanity of the few. The plunderers of the poor plundered in their turn by worse devourers than themselves. Every attempt at reform the parent of worse scandals; every mercy begetting fresh cruelties; every persecutor silenced, only to enable others to persecute him in their turn: every devil who is exorcised, returning with seven others worse

than himself, falsehood and selfishness, spite and lust, confusion seven times confounded, Satan casting out Satan everywhere—from the emperor who wintons on his throne, to the slave who blasphemous beneath his fetters’

‘If Satan cast out Satan, his kingdom shall not stand.’

‘In the world to come.’ But in this world it shall stand and conquer, even worse and worse, until the end. These are the last days spoken of by the prophets, the beginning of woes such as never have been on the earth before—“On earth distress of nations with perplexity, men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for the dread of those things which are coming on the earth.” I have seen it long. Year after year I have watched them coming nearer and ever nearer in their course like the whirling sand storms of the desert, which sweep past the caravan, and past again, and yet overwhelm it after all—that black flood of the northern barbarians. I foretold it, I prayed against it, but, like Cassandra’s of old, my prophecy and my prayers were alike unheard. My pupil spurned my warnings. The lusts of youth, the intrigues of courtiers, were stronger than the warning voice of God, then I ceased to hope, I ceased to pray for the glorious city, for I knew that her sentence was gone forth, I saw her in the spirit, even as St John saw her in the Revelations, her, and her sins, and her ruin. And I fled secretly at night, and buried myself here in the desert, to await the end of the world. Night and day I pray the Lord to accomplish His elect, and to hasten His kingdom. Morning by morning I look up trembling, and yet in hope, for the sign of the Son of man in heaven, when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the skies pass away like a scroll, and the fountains of the nether be burst up around our feet, and the end of all shall come. And thou wouldst go into the world from which I fled?’

‘If the harvest be at hand, the Lord needs labourers. If the times be a fulfil, I should be doing awful things in them. Send me, and let that day find me, where I long to be, in the forefront of the battle of the Lord.’

‘The Lord’s voice be obeyed.’ Thou shalt go. Here are letters to Cyril the patriarch. He will love thee for my sake and for thine own sake, too, I trust. Thou guest of our free will as well as thine own. The abbot and I have watched thee long, knowing that the Lord had need of such as thee elsewhere. We did but prove thee, to see by thy readiness to obey, whether thou wert fit to rule. Go, and God be with thee. Covet no man’s gold or silver. Neither eat flesh nor drink wine, but live as thou hast lived—a Nazarene of the Lord. Fear not the face of man; but look not on the face of woman. In an evil hour came they into the world, the mothers of all mischiefs which I have seen under the sun. Come, the abbot waits for us at the gate.’

With tears of surprise, joy, sorrow, almost of dread, Philammon hung back.

‘Nay—come. Why shouldst thou break thy brethren’s hearts and ours by many leave-takings? Bring from the storehouse a week’s provision of dried dates and millet. The papyrus boat lies at the ferry, thou shalt descend in it. The Lord will replace it for us when we need it. Speak with no man on the river except the monks of God. When thou hast gone five days’ journey downward, ask for the mouth of the canal of Alexandria. Once in the city, any monk will guide thee to the archbishop. Send us news of thy welfare by some holy mouth. Come.’

Silently they paced together down the glen to the lonely beach of the great stream. Pambo was there already, his white hair glittering in the rising moon, as with slow and feeble arms he launched the light canoe. Philammon flung himself at the old man’s feet, and besought, with many tears, their forgiveness and their blessing.

‘We have nothing to forgive. Follow thou thine inward call. If it be of the flesh, it will avenge itself, if it be of the Spirit, who are we that we should fight against God? Farewell.’

A few minutes more, and the youth and his canoe were lessening down the rapid stream in the golden summer twilight. Again a minute, and the swift southern night had fallen, and all was dark but the cold glare of the moon on the river, and on the rock-faces, and on the two old men, as they knelt upon the beach, and with their heads upon each other’s shoulders, like two children, sobbed and prayed together for the lost darling of their age.

CHAPTER 11

THE DYING WORLD

In the upper story of a house in the Museum Street of Alexandria, built and fitted up on the old Athenian model, was a small room. It had been chosen by its occupant, not merely on account of its quiet, for though it was tolerably out of hearing of the female slaves who worked, and chattered, and quarrelled under the cloisters of the women’s court on the south side, yet it was exposed to the rattle of carriages and the voices of passengers in the fashionable street below, and to strange bursts of roaring, squealing, trumpeting from the Menagerie, a short way off, on the opposite side of the street. The attraction of the situation lay, perhaps, in the view which it commanded over the wall of the Museum gardens, of flower-beds, shrubberies, fountains, statues, walks, and alcoves, which had echoed for nearly seven hundred years to the wisdom of the Alexandrian sages and poets. School after school, they had all walked, and taught, and sung there, beneath the spreading planes and chestnuts, figs and palm-trees. The place seemed fragrant with all the riches of Greek thought and song, since the days when Ptolemy Philadelphus walked there with Euclid and Theocritus, Callimachus and Lycophron.

On the left of the garden stretched the lofty eastern front of the Museum itself, with its picture galleries, halls of statuary, dining-halls, and lecture rooms; one huge wing containing that famous library, founded by the father of Philadelphia, which held in the time of Senecca, even after the destruction of a great part of it in Caesar's siege, four hundred thousand manuscripts. There it towered up, the wonder of the world, its white roof bright against the rainless blue; and beyond it, among the ridges and pediments of noble buildings, a broad glimpse of the bright blue sea.

The room was fitted up in the purest Greek style, not without an affectation of archaism, in the severe forms and subdued half-tints of the frescoes which ornamented the walls with scenes from the old myths of Athens. Yet the general effect, even under the blazing sun which poured in through the mosquito nets of the courtyard windows, was one of exquisite coolness, and cleanliness, and repose. The room had neither carpet nor fireplace; and the only movables in it were a sofa-bed, a table, and an arm-chair, all of such delicate and graceful forms as may be seen on ancient vases of a far earlier period than that whereof we write. But, most probably, had any of us entered that room that morning, we should not have been able to spare a look either for the furniture, or the general effect, or the Museum gardens, or the sparkling Mediterranean beyond, but we should have agreed that the room was quite rich enough for human eyes, for the sake of one treasure which it possessed, and, beside which, nothing was worth a moment's glance. For in the light arm chair, reading a manuscript which lay on the table, sat a woman, of some five and twenty years, evidently the tutelary goddess of that little shrine, dressed in perfect keeping with the archaism of the chamber, in a simple old snow-white Ionic robe, falling to the feet and reaching to the throat, and of that peculiarly severe and graceful fashion in which the upper part of the dress falls downward again from the neck to the waist in a sort of cape, entirely hiding the outline of the bust, while it leaves the arms and the point of the shoulders bare. Her dress was entirely without ornament, except the two narrow purple stripes down the front, which marked her rank as a Roman citizen, the gold embroidered shoes upon her feet, and the gold net, which looped back, from her forehead to her neck, hair the colour and gloss of which were hardly distinguishable from that of the metal itself, such as Athene herself might have envied for tint, and mass, and ripple. Her features, arms, and hands were of the severest and grandest type of old Greek beauty, at once showing everywhere the high development of the bones, and covering them with that firm, round, ripe outline, and waxy morbidity of skin, which the old Greeks owed to their continual use not only of the bath and muscular exercise, but also of daily unguents. There might have seemed to us too much sadness in

that clear gray eye; too much self-conscious restraint in those sharp curved lips, too much affectation in the studied severity of her posture as she read, copied, as it seemed, from some old vase or bas-relief. But the glorious grace and beauty of every line of face and figure would have excused, even hidden those defects, and we should have only recognised the marked resemblance to the ideal portraits of Athene which adorned every panel of the walls.

She has lifted her eyes off her manuscript, she is looking out with kindling countenance over the gardens of the Museum; her ripe curling Greek lips, such as we never see now, even among her own wives and sisters, open. She is talking to herself. Listen!

'Yes. The statues there are broken. The libraries are plundered. The alcoves are silent. The oracles are dumb. And yet—who says that the old faith of heroes and sages is dead? The beautiful can never die. If the gods have deserted their oracles, they have not deserted the souls who aspire to them. If they have ceased to guide nations, they have not ceased to speak to their own elect. If they have cast off the vulgar herd, they have not cast off Hypatia.

'Ay. To believe in the old creeds, while every one else is dropping away from them. To believe in spite of disappointments. To hope against hope. . . To show oneself superior to the herd, by seeing boundless depths of living glory in myths which have become dark and dead to them. . . To struggle to the last against the new and vulgar superstitions of a rotting age, for the faith of my forefathers, for the old gods, the old heroes, the old sages who gauged the mysteries of heaven and earth—and perhaps to conquer—at least to have my reward! To be welcomed into the celestial ranks of the heroic—to rise to the immortal gods, to the ineffable powers, onward, upward ever, through ages and through centuries, till I find my home at last, and vanish in the glory of the Nameless and the Absolute One! . . .

And her whole face flashed out into wild glow, and then sank again suddenly into a shudder of something like fear and disgust, as she saw, watching her from under the wall of the garden's opposite, a crooked, withered Jewish crone, dressed out in the most gorgeous and fantastic style of barbaric finery.

'Why does that old hag haunt me? I see her everywhere—till the last month at least—and here she is again! I will ask the prefect to find out who she is, and get rid of her, before she fascinates me with that evil eye. Thank the gods, there she moves away! Foolish!—foolish of me, a philosopher! I, to believe, against the authority of Porphyry himself, too, in evil eyes and magic! But there is my father, pacing up and down in the library.'

As she spoke, the old man entered from the next room. He was a Greek, also, but of a more common, and, perhaps, lower type; dark and fiery, thin and graceful; his delicate figure

and cheeks, wasted by meditation, harmonised well with the staid and simple philosophic cloak which he wore as a sign of his profession. He paced impatiently up and down the chamber, while his keen, glittering eyes and restless gestures betokened intense inward thought. . .

... 'I have it. . . No, again it escapes—it contradicts itself. Miserable man that I am! If there is faith in Pythagoras, the symbol should be an expanding series of the powers of three, and yet that accursed binary factor will introduce itself. Did not you work the sum out once, Hypatia?'

'Sit down, my dear father, and eat. You have tasted no food yet this day.'

'What do I care for food! The inexpressible must be expressed, the work must be done if it cost me the squaring of the circle. How can he, whose sphere lies above the stars, stoop every moment to earth?'

'Ay,' she answered, half bitterly, 'and would that we could live without food, and imitate perfectly the immortal gods. But while we are in this prison-house of matter, we must wear our chain, even wear it gracefully, if we have the good taste, and make the base necessities of this body of shame symbolic of the divine food of the reason. There is fruit, with lentils and rice, waiting for you in the next room, and bread, unless you despise it too much.'

'The food of slaves!' he answered. 'Well, I will eat, and be ashamed of eating. Stay, did I tell you? Six new pupils in the mathematical school this morning. It grows! It spreads! We shall conquer yet!'

She sighed. 'How do you know that they have not come to you, as Curius and Alcibiades did to Socrates, to learn a merely political and ungodly virtue? Strange! that men should be content to grovel, and be men, when they might rise to the rank of gods! Ah, my father! That is my bitterest grief! to see those who have been pretending in the morning lecture-room to generalship every word of mine as an oracle, lounging in the afternoon, round Pelagia's litter, and then at night—for I know that they do it—the dice, and the wine, and worse. That Pallas herself should be conquered every day by Venus Pandemos! That Pelagia should have more power than I! Not that such a creature as that disturbs me. No created thing, I hope, can move my equanimity, but if I could stoop to hate—I should hate her—hate her.'

And her voice took a tone which made it somewhat uncertain whether, in spite of all the lofty impassibility which she felt bound to possess, she did not hate Pelagia with a most human and mundane hatred.

But at that moment the conversation was cut short by the hasty entrance of a slave girl, who, with fluttering voice, announced—

'His excellency, madam, the prefect! His chariot has been at the gate for these five minutes, and he is now coming upstairs.'

'Foolish child!' answered Hypatia, with

some affectation of indifference. 'And why should that disturb me? Let him enter.'

The door opened, and in came, preceded by the scent of half a dozen different perfumes, a florid, delicate-featured man, gorgeously dressed out in senatorial costume, his fingers and neck covered with jewels.

'The representative of the Cæsars honours himself by offering at the shrine of Athene Polias, and rejoices to see in her priestess as lovely a likeness as ever of the goddess whom she serves. Don't betray me, but I really cannot help talking sheer Paganism whenever I find myself within the influence of your eyes.'

'Truth is mighty,' said Hypatia, as she rose to greet him with a smile and a reverence.

'Ah, so they say—Your excellent father has vanished. He is really too modest—honest, though—about his incapacity for state secrets. After all, you know, it was your Minervaship which I came to consult. How has this turbulent Alexandrian rascaldom been behaving itself in my absence?'

'The herd has been eating, and drinking, and marrying, as usual, I believe,' answered Hypatia, in a languid tone.

'And multiplying, I don't doubt. Well, there will be less loss to the empire if I have to crucify a dozen or two, as I positively will, the next riot. It is really a great comfort to a statesman that the masses are so well aware that they deserve hanging, and therefore so careful to prevent any danger of public justice depopulating the province. But how go on the schools?'

Hypatia shook her head sadly.

'Ah, boys will be boys. . . I plead guilty myself. Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor. You must not be hard on us. . . Whether we obey you or not in private life, we do in public, and if we enthroned you queen of Alexandria, you must allow your courtiers and bodyguards a few Court leueces. Now don't sigh or I shall be inconsolable. At all events, your worst rival has betaken herself to the wilderness, and gone to look for the city of the gods above the cataracts.'

'Whom do you mean?' asked Hypatia, in a tone most unphilosophically eager.

'Pelagia, of course. I met that prettiest and naughtiest of humanities half-way between here and Thebes, transformed into a perfect Andromache of chaste affection.'

'And to whom, pray?'

'To a certain Gothic giant. What rages those barbarians do breed! I was afraid of being crushed under the elephant's foot at every step I took with him!'

'What!' asked Hypatia, 'did your excellency condescend to converse with such savages?'

'To tell you the truth, he had some forty stout countrymen of his with him, who might have been troublesome to a perplexed prefect; not to mention that it is always as well to keep on good terms with these Goths. Really, after the sack of Rome, and Athens cleaned out like a beehive by wasps, things begin to look serious.

And as for the great binte himself, he has rank enough in his way,—boasts of his descent from some cannibal god or other,—really hardly deigned to speak to a paltry Roman governor, till his faithful and adoring bride interceded for me. Still, the fellow understood good living, and we celebrated our new treaty of friendship with noble libations—but I must not talk about that to you. However, I got rid of them; quoted all the geographical lies I had ever heard, and a great many more, quickened their appetite for their fool's errand notably, and started them off again. So now the star of Venus is set, and that of Pallas in the ascendant. Wherefore tell me—what am I to do with Saint Firebrand?

'Cyril?'

'Cyril.'

'Justice.'

'Ah, Fairest Wisdom, don't mention that horrid word out of the lecture-room. In theory it is all very well; but in poor imperfect earthly practice, a governor must be content with doing very much what comes to hand. In abstract justice, now, I ought to nail up Cyril, the district visitors, and all, in a row, on the sandhills outside. That is simple enough; but, like a great many simple and excellent things, impossible.'

'You fear the people?'

'Well, my dear lady, and has not the villainous demagogue got the whole mob on his side? Am I to have the Constantinople riots re-enacted here? I really cannot face it, I have not nerve for it, perhaps I am too lazy. Be it so.'

Hypatia sighed, 'Ah, that your excellency but saw the great duel which depends on you alone! Do not fancy that the battle is merely between Paganism and Christianity—'

'Why, if it were, you know, I, as a Christian, under a Christian and sainted emperor, not to mention his august sister—'

'We understand,' interrupted she, with an impatient wave of her beautiful hand. 'Not even between them, not even between philosophy and barbarism. The struggle is simply one between the aristocracy and the mob, between wealth, refinement, art, learning, all that makes a nation great, and the savage herd of child-breeders below, the many ignoble, who were meant to labour for the noble few. Shall the Roman empire command or obey her own slaves? is the question which you and Cyril have to battle out, and the fight must be inter-necine.'

'I should not wonder if it became so, really,' answered the prefect, with a shrug of his shoulders. 'I expect every time I ride, to have my brains knocked out by some mad monk.'

'Why not? In an age when, as has been well and often said, emperors and consuls crawl to the tombs of a tent-maker and a fisherman, and kiss the mouldy bones of the vilest slaves? Why not, among a people whose God is the crucified son of a carpenter? Why should learning, authority, antiquity, birth, rank, the system of empire which has been growing up, fed by the accumulated wisdom of ages,—why, I

say, should any of these things protect your life a moment from the fury of any beggar who believes that the Son of God died for him as much as for you, and that he is your equal if not your superior in the sight of his low-born and illiterate deity!'

'My most eloquent philosopher, this may be—and perhaps is—all very true. I quite agree that there are very great practical inconveniences of this kind in the new—I mean the Catholic faith, but the world is full of inconveniences. The wise man does not quarrel with his creed for being disagreeable, any more than he does with his finger for aching: he cannot help it, and must make the best of a bad matter. Only tell me how to keep the peace.'

'And let philosophy be destroyed!'

'That it never will be, as long as Hypatia lives to illuminate the earth, and, as far as I am concerned, I promise you a clear stage and—a great deal of favour, as is proved by my visiting you publicly at this moment, before I have given audience to one of the four hundred botes, great and small, who are waiting in the tribunal to torment me. Do help me and advise me. What am I to do?'

'I have told you.'

'Ah, yes, as to general principles. But out of the lecture-room I prefer a practical expedient: for instance, Cyril writes to me here—plague on him! he would not let me even have a week's hunting in peace—that there is a plot on the part of the Jews to murder all the Christians. Here is the precious document—do look at it, in pity. For aught I know or care, the plot may be an exactly opposite one, and the Christians intend to murder all the Jews. But I must take some notice of the letter.'

'I do not see that, your excellency.'

'Why, if anything did happen, after all, conceive the masses which would be sent flying off to Constantinople against me!'

'Let them go. If you are secure in the consciousness of innocence, what matter?'

'Consciousness of innocence? I shall lose my prefecture!'

'Your danger would just be as great if you took notice of it. Whatever happened, you would be accused of favouring the Jews.'

'And really there might be some truth in the accusation. How the finances of the provinces would go on without their kind assistance, I dare not think. If those Christians would but lend me their money, instead of bulking almshouses and hospitals with it, they might burn the Jews' quarter to-morrow, for aught I care. But now. . . .'

'But now, you must absolutely take no notice of this letter. The very tone of it forbids you, for your own honour, and the honour of the empire. Are you to treat with a man who talks of the masses at Alexandria as "the flock whom the King of kings has committed to his rule and

¹ These are the arguments and the language which were commonly employed by Porphyry, Julian, and the other opponents of Christianity.

care"! Does your excellency, or this proud bishop, govern Alexandria?"

"Really, my dear lady, I have given up inquiring."

"But he has not. He comes to you as a person possessing an absolute authority over two-thirds of the population, which he does not scruple to hint to you is derived from a higher source than your own. The consequence is clear. If it be from a higher source than yours, of course it ought to control yours, and you will confess that it ought to control it—you will acknowledge the root and ground of every extravagant claim which he makes, if you deign to reply."

"But I must say something, or I shall be pelted in the streets. You philosophers, however raised above your own bodies you may be, must really not forget that we poor worldlings have bones to be broken."

"Then tell him, and by word of mouth merely, that as the information which he sends you comes from his private knowledge and concerns not him as bishop, but you as magistrate, you can only take it into consideration when he addresses you as a private person, laying a regular information at your tribunal."

"Charming! queen of diplomatists as well as philosophers! I go to obey you. Ah! why were you not Pulcheria? No, for then Alexandria had been dark, and Orestes missed the supreme happiness of kissing a hand which Phillis, when she made you, must have borrowed from the workshop of Aphrodite."

"Recollect that you are a Christian," answered Hypatia, half smiling.

So the prefect departed, and passing through the outer hall, which was already crowded with Hypatia's aristocratic pupils and visitors, bowed his way out past them and regained his chariot, chuckling over the rebuff which he intended to administer to Cyril, and comforting himself with the only text of Scripture of the inspiration of which he was thoroughly convinced—"Sufferer for the day is the guilt thereof."

At the door was a crowd of chariot-slaves with their masters' parasols, and the rabble of outlooking boys and market-folk, as usual in Alexandria then, as in all great cities since, who were staring at the prefect, and having their heads rapped by his guards, and wondering what sort of glorious personage Hypatia might be, and what sort of glorious house she must live in, to be fit company for the great governor of Alexandria. Not that there was not many a sulky and lowering face among the mob, for the great majority of them were Christians, and very seditious and turbulent politicians, as Alexandrians, 'men of Macrodome,' were bound to be, and there was many a grumble among them, all but audible, at the prefect's going in state to the heathen woman's house—heathen sorceress, some pious old woman called her—before he heard any poor soul's petition in the tribunal, or even said his prayers in church.

Just as he was stepping into his curriole, a tall young man, as gorgeously bedizened as

himself, lounged down the steps after him, and beckoned lazily to the black boy who carried his parasol.

"Ah, Raphael Allen Ezra! my excellent friend, what propitious deity—ahem! martyr—brings you to Alexandria just as I want you? Got up by my sole, and let us have a chat on our way to the tribunal."

The man addressed came slowly forward with an ostentatiously low salutation, which could not hide, and indeed was not intended to hide, the contemptuous and lazy expression of his face, and asked in a drawing tone—

"And for what kind purpose does the representative of the Caesars bestow such an honour on the humblest of his, etc. etc.—your penetration will supply the rest."

"Don't be frightened, I am not going to borrow money of you," answered Orestes, laughingly, as the Jew got into the curriole.

"I am glad to hear it. Really one usurer in a family is enough. My father made the gold, and if I spend it, I consider that I do all that is required of a philosopher."

"A charming team of white Niseans, is not this? And only one gray foot among all the four."

"Yes. . . horses are a bore, I begin to find, like everything else. Always falling sick, or running away, or breaking one's peace of mind in some way or other. Besides, I have been pestered out of my life there in Cyrene, by commissions for dogs and horses and bows from that old Episcopal Nimrod, Synesius."

"What, is the worthy man as lively as ever?"

"Lively? He nearly drove me into a nervous fever in three days. Up at four in the morning, always in the most disgustingly good health and spirits, farming, coursing, shooting, riding over a hedge and ditch after rascally black robbers, preaching, intriguing, borrowing money, baptizing and excommunicating, bullying that bully, Andronius, comforting old women, and giving pretty girls dowries—scribbling one half-hour on philosophy, and the next on firriery, sitting up all night writing hymns and drinking strong liquors, off again on horseback at four the next morning, and talking by the hour all the while about philosophic abstraction from the mundane tempest. Heaven defend me from all two-legged whirlwinds! By the bye, there was a fair daughter of my nation came back to Alexandria in the same ship with me, with a cargo that may suit your highness."

"There are a great many fair daughters of your nation who might suit me, without any cargo at all."

"Ah, they have had good practice, the little fools, ever since the days of Jerolam the son of Nebat. But I mean old Miriam—you know. She has been lending Synesius money to fight the black fellows with, and really it was high time. They had burnt every homestead for miles through the province. But the daring old girl must do a little business for herself, so she went off, in the teeth of the bar-

barians, right away to the Atlas, bought all their lady prisoners, and some of their own sons and daughters, too, of them, for beads and old iron, and has come back with as pretty a cargo of Libyan beauties as a prefect of good taste could wish to have the first choice of. You may thank me for that privilege.'

'After, of course, you had suited yourself, my cunning Raphael!'

'Not I. Women are bores, as Solomon found out long ago. Did I never tell you? I began, as he did, with the most select harem in Alexandria. But they quarrelled so, that one day I went out, and sold them all but one, who was a Jewess—so there were objections on the part of the Rabbis. Then I tried one, as Solomon did, but my "garden shut up," and my "sealed fountain" wanted me to be always in love with her, so I went to the lawyers, allowed her a comfortable maintenance, and now I am as free as a monk, and shall be happy to give your excellency the benefit of any good taste or experience which I may possess.'

'Thanks, worthy Jew. We are not yet as exalted as yourself, and will send for the old Erutho this very afternoon. Now listen a moment to base, earthly, and political business. Cyril has written to me, to say that you Jews have plotted to murder all the Christians.'

'Well—why not? I most heartily wish it were true, and think, on the whole, that it very probably is so.'

'By the immortal—saints, man! you are not serious!'

'The four archangels forbid! It is no concern of mine. All I say is, that my people are great fools, like the rest of the world, and have, for aught I know or care, some such intention. They won't succeed, of course; and that is all you have to care for. But if you think it worth the trouble—which I do not—I shall have to go to the synagogue on business in a week or so, and then I would ask some of the Rabbis.'

'Laziest of men!—and I must answer Cyril this very day.'

'An additional reason for asking no questions of our people. Now you can honestly say that you know nothing about the matter.'

'Well, after all, ignorance is a stronghold for poor statesmen. So you need not hurry yourself.'

'I assure your excellency I will not.'

'Ten days hence, or so, you know.'

'Exactly, after it is all over.'

'And can't be helped. What a comfort it is, now and then, that Can't be helped!'

'It is the root and marrow of all philosophy. Your practical man, poor wretch, will try to help this and that, and torment his soul with ways and means, and preventives and fero-stallings; your philosopher quietly says—It can't be helped. If it ought to be, it will be; if it is, it ought to be. We did not make the world, and we are not responsible for it—There is the sum and substance of all true wisdom, and the epitome of all that has been said and written

thereon from Philo the Jew to Hypatia the Gentile. By the way, here's Cyril coming down the steps of the Casereum. A very handsome fellow, after all, though he is looking as sulky as a bear.'

'With his cnbs at his heels. What a scoundrelly visage that tall fellow—deacon, or reader, or whatever he is by his dress—has!'

'There they are—whispering together. Heaven give them pleasant thoughts and pleasant faces!'

'Amen!' quoth Orestes, with a sneer. and he would have said Amen in good earnest, had he been able to take the liberty—which we shall—and listen to Cyril's answer to Peter, the tall reader.

'From Hypatia's, you say? Why, he only returned to the city this morning.'

'I saw his four-in-hand standing at her door, as I came down the Museum Street hither, half an hour ago.'

'And twenty carriages besides, I don't doubt!'

'The street was blocked up with them. There! Look round the corner now—Chariots, litters, slaves, and fops—When shall we see such a concourse as that where it ought to be?'

Cyril made no answer, and Peter went on—'Where it ought to be, my father—in front of your door at the Serapeum!'

'The world, the flesh, and the devil know their own, Peter, and as long as they have their own to go to, we cannot expect them to come to us.'

'But what if their own were taken out of the way?'

'They might come to us for want of better amusement. . . . devil and all. Well—if I could get a fair hold of the two first, I would take the third into the bargain, and see what could be done with him. But never, while these lecture-rooms last—these Egyptian chambers of imagery—these theatres of Satan, where the devil transforms himself into an angel of light, and apes Christian virtue, and beherits his ministers like ministers of righteousness, as long as that lecture-room stands and the great and the powerful flock to it, to learn excuses for their own tyrannies and atheisms, so long will the kingdom of God be trampled under foot in Alexandria, so long will the princes of this world, with their gladiators, and parasites, and money-lenders, be masters here, and not the bishops and priests of the living God.'

It was now Peter's turn to be silent, and as the two, with their little knot of distinct visitors behind them, walk moodily along the great esplanade which overlooked the harbour, and then vanished suddenly up some dingy alley into the crowded misery of the sailors' quarter, we will leave them to go about their errand of merry, and, like fashionable people, keep to the grand parade, and listen again to our two fashionable friends in the carved and gilded curricles with four white blood-horses.

'A fine sparkling breeze outside the Pharos, Raphael—fair for the wheat-ships too.'

'Are they gone yet?'

'Yes—why? I sent the first fleet off three days ago, and the rest are clearing outwards to-day.'

'Oh!—ah!—so!—Then you have not heard from Herachian?'

'Herachian? What the—blessed saints has the Count of Africa to do with my wheat-ships?'

'Oh, nothing. It's no business of mine. Only he is going to rebel. But here we are at your door.'

'To what?' asked Orestes, in a horrified tone.

'To rebel, and attack Rome.'

'Good gods—God, I mean. A fresh horse! Come in, and tell a poor miserable slave of a governor—speak low, for Heaven's sake!—I hope these rascally grooms haven't overheard you.'

'Easy to throw them into the canal, if they have,' quoth Raphael, as he walked coolly through hall and corridor after the perturbed governor.

Poor Orestes never stopped till he reached a little chamber of the inner court, beckoned the Jew in after him, locked the door, threw himself into an arm-chair, put his hands on his knees, and sat, bending forward, staring into Raphael's face with a ludicrous terror and perplexity.

'Tell me all about it. Tell me this instant.'

'I have told you all I know,' quoth Raphael, quietly seating himself on a sofa, and playing with a jewelled dagger. 'I thought, of course, that you were in the secret, or I should have said nothing. It's no business of mine, you know.'

Orestes, like most weak and luxurious men, Romans especially, had a wild beast vein in him—and it burst forth.

'Hell and the furies! You insolent provincial slave—you will carry the liberties of yours too far! Do you know who I am, you accursed Jew? Tell me the whole truth, or, by the head of the emperor, I'll twist it out of you with red-hot tongs!'

Raphael's countenance assumed a dogged expression, which showed that the old Jewish blood still beat true, under all its affected shell of Neo-Platonist nonchalance, and there was a quiet unpleasant earnest in his smile, as he answered—

'Then, my dear governor, you will be the first man on earth who ever yet forced a Jew to say or do what he did not choose.'

'We'll see!' yelled Orestes. 'Here, slaves! And he clapped his hands loudly.

'Calm yourself, your excellency,' quoth Raphael, rising. 'The door is locked, the mosquito net is across the window, and this dagger is poisoned. If anything happens to me, you will offend all the Jew money-lenders, and die in about three days in a great deal of pain, having missed our assignation with old Miriam, lost your pleasantest companion, and left your own finances and those of the prefecture in a considerable state of embarrassment. How much better to sit down, hear all I have to say

philosophically, like a true pupil of Hypatia, and not expect a man to tell you what he really does not know.'

Orestes, after looking vainly round the room for a place to escape, had quietly subsided into his chair again, and by the time that the slaves knocked at the door he had so far recovered his philosophy as to ask, not for the torturers, but for a page and wine.

'Oh, you Jews!' quoth he, trying to laugh off matters. 'The same incarnate fiends that Titus found you!'

'The very same, my dear prefect. Now for this matter, which is really important—at least to Gentiles. Herachian will certainly rebel. Synosius let out as much to me. He has fitted out an armament for Ostia, stopped his own wheat-ships, and is going to write to you to stop yours, and to starve out the Eternal City, Gothic senate, empire, and all. Whether you will comply with his reasonable little request depends of course on yourself.'

'And that again very much on his plans.'

'Of course. You cannot be expected to— we will euphemise—unless it be made worth your while.'

Orestes sat buried in deep thought.

'Of course not,' said he at last, half unconsciously. And then, in sudden dread of having committed himself, he looked up fiercely at the Jew.

'And how do I know that this is not some infernal trap of yours? Tell me how you found out all this, or by Hercules (he had quite forgotten his Christianity by this time)—by Hercules and the Twelve Gods, I'll—'

'Don't pre-empt me unworthily of a philosopher. My source of information was very simple and very good. He has been negotiating a loan from the Rabbis at Carthage. They were either frightened, or loyal, or both, and hung back. He knew—as all wise governors know when they allow themselves time—that it is no use to bully a Jew, and applied to me. I never lend money—it is unphilosophical—but I introduced him to old Miriam, who dare do business with the devil himself, and by that move, whether he has the money or not, I cannot tell, but this I can tell, that we have his secret—and so have you now, and if you want more information, the old woman, who enjoys an intrigue as much as she does Falerman, will get it for you.'

'Well, you are a true friend, after all.'

'Of course I am. Now, is not this method of getting at the truth much easier and pleasanter than setting a couple of dirty negroes to pinch and pull me, and so making it a point of honour with me to tell you nothing but lies? Here comes Ganymede with the wine, just in time to calm your nerves, and fill you with the spirit of divination. To the goddess of good counsels, my lord. What wine this is!'

'True Syrian—fire and honey, fourteen years old next vintage, my Raphael. Out, Hypocorisma! See that he is not listening. The impudent rascal! I was humbugged into giving

two thousand gold pieces for him two years ago, he was so pretty—they said he was only just rising thirteen—and he has been the plague of my life ever since, and is beginning to want the barber already. Now, what is the count dreaming of?’

‘His wages for killing Stilicho.’

‘What, is it not enough to be Count of Africa?’

‘I suppose he sets off against that his services during the last three years.’

‘Well, he saved Africa.’

‘And thereby Egypt also. And you too, as well as the emperor, may be considered as owing him somewhat.’

‘My good friend, my debts are far too numerous for me to think of paying any of them. But what wages does he want?’

‘The purple.’

Orestes started, and then fell into thought. Raphael sat watching him a while.

‘Now, most noble lord, may I depart? I have said all I have to say, and unless I get home to luncheon at once, I shall hardly have time to find old Miriam for you, and get through our little affair with her before sunset.’

‘Stay. What force has he?’

‘Forty thousand already, they say. And those Donatist ruffians are with him to a man, if he can but scrape together wherewith to change their bludgeons into good steel.’

‘Well, go. So. A hundred thousand might do it,’ said he, meditating, as Raphael bowed himself out. ‘He won’t get them. I don’t know, though, the man has the head of a Julius. Well—that fool Attalus talked of joining Egypt to the Western Empire. . . Not such a bad thought either. Anything is better than being governed by an idiot child and three ranting nuns. I expect to be excommunicated every day for some offence against Pileheria’s prudery. . . Heracleian emperor at Rome. . . And I lord and master on this side the sea the Donatists pitted again furly against the orthodox, to cut each other’s throats in peace. . . no more of Cyril’s spying and tale-bearing to Constantinople. . . Not such a bad dish of fare. . . But then—it would take so much trouble!’

With which words, Orestes went into his third warm bath for that day.

CHAPTER III

THE GOths

FOR two days the young monk held on, paddling and floating rapidly down the Nile-stream, leaving city after city to right and left with longing eyes, and looking back to one villa after another, till the reaches of the banks hid them from his sight, with many a yearning to know what sort of places those gay buildings and gardens would look like on a nearer view, and what sort of life the thousands led who crowded

the busy quays, and walked and drove, in an endless stream, along the great highroads which ran along either bank. He carefully avoided every boat that passed him, from the gilded barge of the wealthy landlord or merchant, to the tiny raft buoyed up with empty jars, which was floating down to be sold at some market in the Delta. Here and there he met and hailed a crew of monks, drawing their nets in a quiet bay, or passing along the great watery highway from monastery to monastery; but all the news he received from them was, that the canal of Alexandria was still several days’ journey below him. It seemed endless, that monotonous vista of the two high clay banks, with their sluices and water-wheels, their knots of palms and date trees, endless seemed that wearisome succession of bars of sand and banks of mud, every one like the one before it, every one dotted with the same line of logs and stones strewn along the water’s edge, which turned out as he approached them to be basking crocodiles and sleeping pelicans. His eye, wearied with the continual confinement and want of distance, longed for the boundless expanse of the desert, for the jagged outlines of those far-off hills, which he had watched from boyhood rising mysteriously at morn out of the eastern sky, and melting mysteriously into it again at even, beyond which dwelt a whole world of wonders, elephants and dragons, satyrs and anthropophagi,—ay, and the phoenix itself. Tired and melancholy, his mind returned inward to prey on itself, and the last words of Arsenius rose again and again to his thoughts. ‘Was his call of the spirit or of the flesh?’ How should he test that problem? He wished to see the world that might be carnal. True, but, he wished to convert the world. . . was not that spiritual? Was he not going on a noble errand? . . . thirsting for toil, for saintship, for martyrdom itself, if it would but come and cut the Gordian knot of all temptations, and save him for he dimly felt that it would save him—a whole sea of trouble in getting safe and triumphant out of that world into which he had not yet entered—and his heart shrank back from the untrodden homeless wilderness before him. But no! the die was cast, and he must down and onward, whether in obedience to the spirit or the flesh. Oh, for one hour of the quiet of that dear Laura and the old familiar faces!

At last, a sudden turn of the bank brought him in sight of a gaudily-painted barge, on board of which armed men, in unclean and foreign dresses, were chasing with barbaric shouts some large object in the water. In the bows stood a man of gigantic stature, brandishing a harpoon in his right hand, and in his left holding the line of a second, the head of which was fixed in the huge purple sides of a hippopotamus, who foamed and wallowed a few yards down the stream. An old grizzled warrior at the stern, with a rudder in either hand, kept the boat’s head continually towards the monster, in spite

of its sudden and frantic wheelings; and when it dashed madly across the stream, some twenty oars flashed through the water in pursuit. All was activity and excitement, and it was no wonder if Philammon's curiosity had tempted him to drift down almost abreast of the barge ere he descended, peeping from under a decorated awning in the afterpart, some dozen pairs of languishing black eyes, turned alternately to the game and to himself. The serpents—chattering and smiling, with pretty little shrieks and shaking of glossy curls and gold necklaces, and fluttering of muslin dresses, within a dozen yards of him! Blushing scarlet, he knew not why, he seized his paddle, and tried to back out of the snare. But somehow, his very efforts to escape those sparkling eyes devoted his attention from everything else. The hippopotamus had caught sight of him, and furious with pain, rushed straight at the unoffending canoe, the harpoon line became entangled round his body, and in a moment he and his frail bark were overturned, and the monster, with his huge white tusks gashing wide, close on him as he struggled in the stream.

Jackily Philammon, contrary to the wont of monks, was a bather, and swam like a water-fowl. Fear he had never known. Death from childhood had been to him, as to the other inmates of the *Lania*, a contemplation too perpetual to have any paralyzing terror in it, even then, when life seemed just about to open on him anew. But the monk was a man, and a young one, and had no intention of dying tamely or unavenged. In an instant he had freed himself from the line, drawn the short knife which was his only weapon, and diving suddenly, avoided the monster's rush, and attacked him from behind with stabs, which, though not deep, still dyed the waters with gore at every stroke. The barbarians shouted with delight. The hippopotamus turned furiously against his new assailant, crushing, alas! the empty canoe to fragments with a single snap of his enormous jaws, but the turn was fatal to him, the barge was closs upon him, and as he presented his broad side to the blow, the snevy arm of the giant drove a harpoon through his heart, and with one convulsive shudder the huge blue mass turned over on its side and floated dead.

Poor Philammon! He alone was silent, and the yells of triumph, sorrowfully he swam round and round his little paper wreck. . . it would not have floated a mouse. Wistfully he eyed the distant banks, half minded to strike out for them and escape, . . . and thought of the crocodiles, . . . and paddled round again, . . . and thought of the basilisk eyes, . . . he might escape the crocodiles, but who could escape women? . . . and he struck out valiantly for shore. . . when he was brought to a sudden stop by finding the stern of the barge close on him, a noose thrown over him by some friendly barbarian, and himself hauled on board, amid the laughter, praise, astonishment, and grumbling of the good-natured crew, who had expected

him, as a matter of course, to avail himself at once of their help, and could not conceive the cause of his reluctance.

Philammon gazed with wonder on his strange hosts, their pale complexions, globular heads and faces, high cheek-bones, tall and sturdy figures, their red beards, and yellow hair knotted fantastically above the head, their awkward dresses, half Roman or Egyptian, and half of foreign fur, soiled and stained in many a storm and fight, but tastelessly bedizened with classic jewels, brooches, and Roman coins, strung like necklaces. Only the steersman, who had come forward to wonder at the hippopotamus, and to help in dragging the unwieldy binto on board, seemed to keep genuine and unornamented the costume of his race, the white linen leggings, strapped with thongs of deerskin, the quilted leather cuirass, the bear'-fur cloak, the only ornaments of which were the fangs and claws of the beast itself, and a fringe of grizzled tufts, which looked but too like human hair. The language which they spoke was utterly unintelligible to Philammon, though it need not be so to us.

'A well grown lad and a brave one, Wulf the son of Ovida,' said the giant to the old hero of the bearskin cloak, 'and understands wearing skins, in this furnace mouth of a climate, rather better than you do.'

'I keep to the dress of my forefathers, Analar, the Analar. What did to sack Rome in, may do to find Asgard in.'

The giant, who was decked out with helmet, cuirass, and senatorial boots, in a sort of mongrel mixture of the Roman military and civil dress, his neck wreathed with a dozen gold chains, and every finger sparkling with jewels, turned away with an impatient snort.

'Asgard!—Asgard! If you are in such a hurry to get to Asgard up this ditch in the sand, you had better ask the fellow how far it is thither.'

Wulf took him quietly at his word, and addressed a question to the young monk, which he could only answer by a shake of the head.

'Ask him in Greek, man.'

'Greek is a slave's tongue. Make a slave talk to him in it, not me.'

'Here—some of you girls! Pelagia! you understand this fellow's talk. Ask him how far it is to Asgard.'

'You must ask me more civilly, my rough hero,' replied a soft voice from underneath the awning. 'Beauty must be sued, and not commanded.'

'Come, then, my olive-tree, my gazelle, my lotus-flower, my—what was the last nonsense you taught me?—and ask this wild man of the sands how far it is from these accursed endless rabbit-burrows to Asgard.'

The awning was raised, and lying luxuriously on a soft mattress, fanned with peacock's feathers, and glittering with rubies and topazes, appeared such a vision as Philammon had never seen before.

A woman of some two-and-twenty summers, formed in the most voluptuous mould of Grecian beauty, whose complexion showed every violet veer through its veil of luscious brown. Her little bare feet, as they dimpled the cushions, were more perfect than Aphrodite's, softer than a swan's bosom. Every swell of her bust and arms showed through the thin gauze robe, while her lower limbs were wrapped in a shawl of orange silk, embroidered with wreaths of shells and roses. Her dark hair lay carefully spread out upon the pillow, in a thousand ringlets entwined with gold and jewels, her languishing eyes blazed like diamonds from a cavern, under eyelids darkened and deepened with black antimony, her lips pouted of themselves, by habit or by nature, into a perpetual kiss, slowly she raised one little lazy hand, slowly the ripe lips opened; and in most pure and melodious Attic, she layed her huge lover's question to the monk, and repeated it before the boy could shake off the spell, and answer.

'Asgard? What is Asgard?'

The beauty looked at the giant for further instructions.

'The City of the immortal Gods,' interposed the old warrior, hastily and sternly, to the lady.

'The city of God is in heaven,' said Philammon to the interpreter, turning his head away from those gleaming, luscious, searching glances.

His answer was received with a genial laugh by all except the leader, who shrugged his shoulders.

'It may as well be up in the skies as up the Nile. We shall be just as likely, I believe, to reach it by flying, as by rowing up this big ditch. Ask him where the river comes from,' Pelagia.

Pelagia obeyed . . . and thereon followed a confusion worse confounded, composed of all the impossible wonders of that mythic fairyland with which Philammon had gorged himself from boyhood in his walks with the old monks, and of the equally trustworthy traditions which the Goths had picked up at Alexandria. There was nothing which that river did not do. It rose in the Caucasus. Where was the Caucasus? He did not know. In Paradise—in Indian Æthiopia—in Æthiopian India. Where were they? He did not know. Nobody knew. It ran for a hundred and fifty days' journey through deserts where nothing but flying serpents and satyrs lived, and the very lions' manes were burnt off by the heat.

'Good sporting there, at all events, among those dragons,' quoth Simd the son of Troll, armourer to the party.

'As good as Thor's when he caught Snake Midgard with the bullock's head,' said Wulf.

It turned to the east for a hundred days' journey more, all round Arabia and India, among forests full of elephants and dog-headed women.

'Better and better, Simd!' growled Wulf, approvingly.

'Fresh beef cheap there, Prince Wulf, eh?' quoth Simd, 'I must look over the arrow-heads.'

—To the mountains of the Hyperboreans, where there was eternal night, and the air was full of feathers. . . . That is, one-third of it came from thence, and another third came from the Southern ocean, over the Moon mountains, where no one had ever been, and the remaining third from the country where the phoenix lived, and nobody knew where that was. And then there were the cataracts, and the inundations—and—and—and above the cataracts, nothing but sand hills and ruins, as full of devils as they could hold. . . . and as for Asgard, no one had ever heard of it till every face grew longer and longer, as Pelagia went on interpreting and misinterpreting, and at last the giant smote his hand upon his knee, and swore a great oath that Asgard might rot till the twilight of the gods before he went a step farther up the Nile.

'Curse the monk!' growled Wulf. 'How should such a poor beast know anything about the matter?'

'Why should not he know as well as that ape of a Roman governor?' asked Simd.

'Oh, the monks knew everything,' said Pelagia. 'They go hundreds and thousands of miles up the river, and cross the deserts among hells and monsters, where any one else would be eaten up, or go mad at once.'

'Ah, the dear holy men! It's all by the sign of the blessed cross!' exclaimed all the girls together, devoutly crossing themselves, while two or three of the most enthusiastic were half-minded to go forward and kneel to Pelagion for his blessing, but hesitated, their Gothic lovers being heathenishly stupid and prudish on such points.

'Why should he not know as well as the prefect? Well said, Simd! I believe that prefect's quill-driver was hummingbugging us when he said Asgard was only ten days' sail up.'

'Why?' asked Wulf.

'I never give any reasons. What's the use of being an Anjal, and a son of Odin, if one has always to be giving reasons like a rascally Roman lawyer? I say the governor looked like a liar, and I say this monk looks like an honest fellow, and I choose to believe him, and there is an end of it.'

'Don't look so cross at me, Prince Wulf, I'm sure it's not my fault; I could only say what the monk told me,' whispered poor Pelagia.

'Who looks cross at you, my queen?' roared the Anjal. 'Let me have him out here, and by Thor's hammer, I'll—'

'Who spoke to you, you stupid darling?' answered Pelagia, who lived in hourly fear of thunderstorms. 'Who is going to be cross with any one, except I with you, for mishearing and misunderstanding, and meddling, as you are always doing? I shall do as I threatened, and run away with Prince Wulf, if you are not good.'

Don't you see that the whole crew are expecting you to make them an oration?'

Whereupon the Amal rose.

'See you here, Wulf the son of Ovida, and warriors all! If we want wealth, we shan't find it among the sand-hills. If we want women, we shall find nothing prettier than these among dragons and devils. Don't look angry, Wulf. You have no mind to marry one of those dog-headed girls the monk talked of, have you? Well, then, we have money and women, and if we want sport, it's better sport killing men than killing beasts; so we had better go where we shall find most of that game, which we certainly shall not up this road. As for fame and all that, though I've had enough, there's plenty to be got anywhere along the shores of that Mediterranean. Let's burn and plunder Alexandria forty of us Goths might kill down all these donkey riders in two days, and hang up that lying prefect who sent us here on this fool's errand. Don't answer, Wulf. I knew he was humbugging us all along, but you were so open-mouthed to all he said, that I was bound to let my elders choose for me. Let's go back, send over for any of the tribes, send to Spain for those Vandals—they have had enough of Adolf by now, curse him!—I'll warrant them, get together an army, and take Constantinople. I'll be Augustus, and Pelagia, Augusta, you and Smid head the two Caesars, and we'll make the monk the chief of the eunuchs, eh?—anything you like for a quiet life; but up this accursed kennel of hot water I go no farther. Ask your girls, my heroes, and I'll ask mine. Women are all prophetesses, every one of them.'

'When they are not harlots,' growled Wulf to himself.

'I will go to the world's end with you, my king!' sighed Pelagia, 'but Alexandria is certainly pleasanter than this.'

Old Wulf sprang up fiercely enough.

'Hear me, Amalric the Amal, son of Odín, and heroes all! When my fathers swore to be Odín's men, and gave up the kingdom to the holy Amals, the sons of the Æsir, what was the bond between your fathers and mine? Was it not that we should move and move, southward and southward ever, till we came back to Asgard, the city where Odín dwells for ever, and gave into his hands the kingdom of all the earth? And did we not keep our oath? Have we not held to the Amals? Did we not leave Adolf, because we would not follow a Balth, while there was an Amal to lead us? Have we not been true men to you, son of the Æsir?'

'No man ever saw Wulf, the son of Ovida, fail friend or foe.'

'Then why does his friend fail him? Why does his friend fail himself? If the bison-bull he down and wallow, what will the herd do for a leader? If the king-wolf lose the scent, how will the pack hold it? If the Yngling forgets the song of Asgard, who will sing it to the heroes?'

'Sing it yourself, if you choose. Pelagia sings quite well enough for me.'

In an instant the cunning beauty caught at the lute, and poured forth a soft, low, sleepy song—

'Loose the sail, rest the oar, float away down,
Fleeting and gliding by lower and town,
Life is so short at best! snatch, while thou canst, thy rest,
Sleeping by me!'

'Can you answer that, Wulf?' shouted a dozen voices.

'Hear the song of Asgard, warriors of the Goths! Did not Alaric the king love it well? Did I not sing it before him in the palace of the Cæsars, till he swore, for all the Christian that he was, to go southward in search of the holy city? And when he went to Valhalla, and the ships were wrecked off Sicily, and Adolf the Balth turned back like a lazy hound, and married the daughter of the Romans, whom Odín hates, and went northward again to Gaul, did not I sing you all the song of Asgard in Messina there, till you swore to follow the Amal through fire and water until we found the hall of Odín, and received the mead-cup from his own hand? Hear it again, warriors of the Goths!'

'Not that song!' roared the Amal, stopping his ears with both his hands. 'Will you drive us blood-mad again, just as we are settling down into our sober senses, and finding out what our lives were given us for?'

'Hear the song of Asgard! On to Asgard, wolves of the Goths!' shouted another, and a babel of voices arose.

'Haven't we been fighting and marching these seven years?'

'Haven't we drunk blood enough to satisfy Odín ten times over? If he wants us let him come himself and lend us!'

'Let us get our wounds again before we start afresh!'

'Wulf the Pinnock like his name, and in our tires; he has a wolf's-wolf's legs under him, that is no reason why we should have.'

'Haven't you heard what the monk says? we can never get over those cataracts.'

'We'll stop his old wives' tales for him, and then settle for ourselves,' said Smid; and springing from the thwart where he had been sitting, he caught up a bill with one hand, and seized Philannion's throat with the other. In a moment more, it would have been all over with him.

For the first time in his life Philannion felt a hostile gripe upon him, and a new sensation rushed through every nerve, as he grappled with the warrior, clutched with his left hand the up-lifted wrist, and with his right the girdle, and commenced, without any definite aim, a fierce struggle, which, strange to say, as it went on, grew absolutely pleasant.

The women shrieked to their lovers to part the combatants, but in vain.

'Not for worlds! A very fair match and a very fair fight! Take your long legs back, Itho, or they will be over you! That's right, my

Smid, don't use the knife! They will be overboard in a moment! By all the Valkyrs, they are down, and Smid undermost!

There was no doubt of it, and in another moment Philammon would have wrenched the bull out of his opponent's hand, when, to the utter astonishment of the onlookers, he suddenly loosed his hold, shook himself free by one powerful wrench, and quietly retreated to his seat, conscience-stricken at the fearful thirst for blood which had suddenly boiled up within him as he felt his enemy under him.

The onlookers were struck dumb with astonishment, they had taken for granted that he would, as a matter of course, have used his right of splitting his vanquished opponent's skull—an event which they would of course have deeply deplored, but with which, as men of honour, they could not on any account interfere, but merely console themselves for the loss of their comrade by flaying his conqueror alive, 'carving him into the blood-eagle,' or any other delicate ceremony which might serve as a vent for their sorrow and a comfort to the soul of the deceased.

Smid rose, with a bill in his hand, and looked round him—perhaps to see what was expected of him. He half lifted his weapon to strike . . . Philammon, seated, looked him calmly in the face . . . The old warrior's eye caught the bank, which was now receding rapidly past them, and when he saw that they were really floating downwards again, without an effort to stem the stream, he put away his bill, and sat himself down deliberately in his place, astonishing the onlookers quite as much as Philammon had done.

'Five minutes' good fighting, and no one killed! This is a shame!' quoth another. 'Blood we must see, and it had better be yours, master monk, than your betters',—and therewith he rushed on poor Philammon.

He spoke the heart of the crew, the sleeping wolf in them had been awakened by the struggle, and blood they would have, and not frantically, like Celts or Egyptians, but with the cool humorous cruelty of the Teuton, they rose altogether, and turning Philammon over on his back, deliberated by what death he should die.

Philammon quietly submitted if submission have anything to do with that state of mind in which sheer astonishment and novelty have broken up all the custom of man's nature, till the strangest deeds and sufferings are taken as matters of course. His sudden escape from the Laura, the new world of thought and action into which he had been plunged, the new companions with whom he had fallen in, had driven him utterly from his moorings, and now anything and everything might happen to him. He who had promised never to look upon woman found himself, by circumstances over which he had no control, amid a boatful of the most objectionable species of that most objectionable genus—and the utterly worst having happened, everything else which happened must be better than the worst. For the rest, he had gone

forth to see the world—and this was one of the ways of it. So he made up his mind to see it, and be filled with the fruit of his own devices.

And he would have been certainly filled with the same in five minutes more, in some shape too ugly to be mentioned but, as even sinful women have hearts in them, Pelagia shrieked out—

'Analyze! Analyze! do not let them! I cannot bear it!'

'The warriors are free men, my darling, and know what is proper. And what can the life of such a brute be to you?'

Before he could stop her, Pelagia had sprung from her cushions, and thrown herself into the midst of the laughing ring of wild beasts.

'Spare him! spare him for my sake!' shrieked she.

'Oh, my pretty lady! you mustn't interrupt warriors' sport!'

In an instant she had torn off her shawl, and thrown it over Philammon, and as she stood, with all the outlines of her beautiful limbs revealed through the thin robe of spangled gauze—

'Let the man who dares, touch him beneath that shawl!—though it be a saffron one!'

The Goths drew back. For Pelagia herself they had as little respect as the rest of the world had. But for a moment she was not the Messiah of Alexandria, but a woman, and true to the old woman-worshipping instinct, they looked one and all at her flashing eyes, full of noble pity and indignation, as well as of more woman's terror—and drew back, and whispered together.

Whether the good spirit or the evil one would conquer, seemed for a moment doubtful, when Pelagia felt a heavy hand on her shoulder, and turning, saw Wulf the son of Ovida.

'Go back, pretty woman! Men, I claim the boy Smid, give him to me. He is your man. You could have killed him if you had chosen, and did not; and no one else shall.'

'Give him us, Prince Wulf! We have not seen blood for many a day!'

'You might have seen rivers of it, if you had had the hearts to go onward. The boy is mine, and a brave boy. He has upset a warrior fairly this day, and spared him, and we will make a warrior of him in return.'

And he lifted up the prostrate monk.

'You are my man now. Do you like fighting?'

Philammon, not understanding the language in which he was addressed, could only shake his head—though if he had known what its import was, he could hardly in honesty have said, No.

'He shakes his head! He does not like it! He is craven! Let us have him!'

'I had killed kings when you wore shooting frogs,' cried Smid. 'Listen to me, my sons! A coward grips sharply at first, and loosens his hand after a while, because his blood is soon hot and soon cold. A brave man's grips grows the firmer the longer he holds, because the

spirit of Odin comes upon him. I watched the boy's hands on my throat, and he will make a man, and I will make him one. However, we may as well make him useful at once, so give him an oar.

'Well,' answered his new protector, 'he can as well row us as be rowed by us, and if we are to go back to a cow's death and the pool of Hela, the quicker we go the better.'

And as the men settled themselves again to their oars, one was put into Phalanmon's hand, which he managed with such strength and skill that his late tormentors, who, in spite of an occasional inclination to robbery and murder, were thoroughly good-natured, honest fellows, clapped him on the back, and praised him as hearty, as they had just now heartily intended to torture him to death, and then went forward, as many of them as were not rowing, to examine the strange beast which they had just slaughtered, pawing him over from tusks to tail, putting their heads into his mouth, trying their knives on his hide, comparing him to all beasts, like and unlike, which they had ever seen, and laughing and showing each other about with the fun and childish wonder of a party of schoolboys; till Smid, who was the wit of the party, settled the comparative anatomy of the subject for them—

'Valhalla! I've found out what he's most like!—One of those big blue plums, which give us all the stomach-ache when we were encamped in the orchards above Ravenna.'

CHAPTER IV

ONE morning in the same week, Hypatia's favourite maid entered her chamber with a somewhat terrified face.

'The old Jewess, madam—the hag who has been watching so often lately under the wall opposite. She frightened us all out of our wits last evening by peeping in. We all said she had the evil eye, if any one ever had—'

'Well, what of her?'

'She is below, madam, and will speak with you. Not that I care for her, I have my amulet on. I hope you have?'

'Silly girl! Those who have been initiated as I have in the mysteries of the gods, can defy spirits and command them. Do you suppose that the favourites of Pallas Athene will condescend to charms and magic? Send her up.'

The girl retreated, with a look half of awe, half of doubt, at the lofty pretensions of her mistress, and returned with old Miriam, keeping, however, prudently behind her, in order to test as little as possible the power of her own amulet by avoiding the baneful eye which had terrified her.

Miriam came in, and advancing to the proud beauty, who remained seated, made an obeisance.

ance down to the very floor, without, however, taking her eyes for an instant off Hypatia's face.

Her countenance was haggard and bony, with broad sharp cut lips, stamped with a strangely mingled expression of strength and sensuality. But the feature about her which instantly fixed Hypatia's attention, and from which she could not in spite of herself withdraw it, was the dry, glittering, coal-black eye which glared out from underneath the gray fringe of her scowling brows, between black locks covered with gold coins. Hypatia could look at nothing but those eyes; and she reddened, and grew all but unphilosophically angry, as she saw that the old woman intended her to look at them, and feel the strange power which she evidently wished them to exercise.

After a moment's silence, Miriam drew a letter from her bosom, and with a second low obeisance presented it.

'From whom is this?'

'Perhaps the letter itself will tell the beautiful lady, the fortunate lady, the discerning lady,' answered she, in a fawning, wheedling tone. 'How should a poor old Jewess know great folks' secrets?'

'Great folks?—'

Hypatia looked at the seal which fixed a silk cord round the letter. It was Orestes', and so was the handwriting. Strange that he should have chosen such a messenger! What message could it be which required such secrecy?

She clapped her hands for the maid. 'Let this woman wait in the ante-room.' Miriam glided out backwards, bowing as she went. As Hypatia looked up over the letter to see whether she was alone, she caught a last glance of that eye still fixed upon her, and an expression in Miriam's face which made her, she knew not why, shudder and turn chill.

'Foolish that I am! What can that witch do to me? But now for the letter.'

'To the most noble and most beautiful, the mistress of philosophy, beloved of Athene, her pupil and slave sends greeting.'

'My slave! and no name mentioned!'

'There are those who consider that the favourite hen of Honorius, which bears the name of the Imperial City, would thrive better under a new feeder, and the Count of Africa has been despatched by himself and by the immortal gods to superintend for the present the poultry-yard of the Cæsars—at least during the absence of Adolf and Placidia. There are those also who consider that in his absence the Numidian lion might be prevailed on to become the yoke-fellow of the Egyptian crocodile, and a farm which, ploughed by such a pair, should extend from the upper cataract to the Pillars of Hercules, might have charms even for a philosopher. But while the ploughman is without a nymph, Arcadia is imperfect. What were Dionysos without his Ariadne, Ares without Aphrodite, Zeus without Hera? Even Artemis has her

Endymion, Athens alone remains unwedded, but only because Hephestus was too rough a wooer. Such is not he who now offers to the representative of Athens the opportunity of sharing that which may be with the help of her wisdom, which without her is impossible *φωσφύρα συνέροισιν*. Shall Eros, invincible for ages, be balked at last of the noblest game against which he ever drew his bow? . . .

If Hypatia's colour had faded a moment before under the withering glance of the old Jewess, it rose again swiftly enough, as she read him after him of this strange epistle, till at last, crushing it together in her hand, she rose and hurried into the adjoining library, where Theon sat over his books.

'Father, do you know anything of this? Look what Orestes has dared to send me by the hands of some base Jewish witch!'—And she spread the letter before him, and stood impatient, her whole figure dilated with pride and anger, as the old man read it slowly and carefully, and then looked up, apparently not ill pleased with the contents.

'What, father?' asked she, half reproachfully. 'Do not you, too, feel the insult which has been put upon your daughter?'

'My dear child,' with a puzzled look, 'do you not see that he offers you —'

'I know what he offers me, father. The Empire of Africa. . . I am to descend from the mountain heights of science, from the contemplation of the unchangeable and ineffable glories, into the foul fields and faringards of earthly practical life, and become a chudge among political chicanery, and the petty ambitions, and sins, and falsehoods of the earthly herd. . . And the price which he offers me — me, the stainless — me, the virgin — me, the untamed, — is — his hand! Pallas Athene! dost thou not blush with thy child?'

'But, my child — my child, — an empire —'

'Would the empire of the world restore my lost self respect — my just pride? Would it save my cheek from blushes every time I recollected that I bore the hateful and degrading name of wife? — The property, the puppet of a man — submitting to his pleasure — bearing his children — wearing myself out with all the nanseous cares of wifehood — no longer able to glory in myself, pure and self-sustained, but forced by day and night to recollect that my very beauty is no longer the sacrament of Athens's love for me, but the plaything of a man, — and such a man as that! Luxurious, frivolous, heartless — courting my society, as he has done for years, only to pick up and turn to his own base earthly uses the scraps which fall from the festal table of the gods! I have encouraged him too much — vain fool that I have been! No, I wrong myself! It was only — I thought — I thought that by his being seen at our doors, the cause of the immortal gods would gain honour and strength in the eyes of the multitude. . . I have tried to feed the altars of heaven with earthly fuel. . . And this is my just reward!'

I will write to him this moment, — return by the fitting messenger which he has sent, insult for insult!'

'In the name of Heaven, my daughter! — for your father's sake! — for my sake! Hypatia! my pride, my joy, my only hope! — have pity on my gray hairs!'

And the poor old man flung himself at her feet, and clasped her knees imploringly.

Tenderly she lifted him up, and wound her long arms round him, and laid his head on her white shoulder, and her tears fell fast upon his gray hair, but her lip was firm and determined.

'Think of my pride — my glory in your glory, think of me. . . Not for myself! You know I never cared for myself!' sobbed out the old man. 'But to die seeing you empress!'

'Unless I died first in childhood, father, as many a woman dies who is weak enough to become a slave, and submit to tortures only fit for slaves.'

'But — but —' said the old man, racking his bewildered brains for some argument far enough removed from nature and common sense to have an effect on the beautiful fanatic — 'but the cause of the gods! What you might do for it! Remember Julian!'

Hypatia's arms dropped suddenly. Yes, it was true! The thought flashed across her mind with mingled delight and terror. . . Visions of her childhood rose swift and thick — temples — sacrifices — priesthoods — colleges — museums! What might she not do? What might she not make Africa? Give her ten years of power, and the hated name of Christian might be forgotten, and Athens Pallas, colossal in ivory and gold, watching in calm triumph over the harbours of a heathen Alexandria. . . But the price!

And she hid her face in her hands, and bursting into bitter tears, walked slowly away into her own chamber, her whole body convulsed with the internal struggle.

The old man looked after her, anxiously and perplexed, and then followed, hesitating. She was sitting at the table, her face buried in her hands. He did not dare to disturb her. In addition to all the affection, the wisdom, the glorious beauty, on which his whole heart fed day by day, he believed her to be the possessor of those supernatural powers and favours to which she so boldly laid claim. And he stood watching her in the doorway, praying in his heart to all gods and demigods, principalities and powers, from Athens down to his daughter's guardian spirit, to move a determination which he was too weak to gainway, and yet too rational to approve.

At last the struggle was over, and she looked up, clear, calm, and glorious again.

'It shall be. For the sake of the immortal gods — for the sake of art, and science, and learning, and philosophy. . . It shall be. If the gods demand a victim, here am I. If a second time in the history of the ages the Grecian fleet cannot sail forth, conquering and civilising, without the sacrifice of a virgin, I give my

throat to the knife. Father, call me no more Hypatia. call me Iphigenia!

'And me Agamemnon!' asked the old man, attempting a faint jest through his tears of joy. 'I daresay you think me a very cruel father, but—'

'Spare me, father—I have spared you.'

And she began to wreathe her answer

'I have accepted his offer—conditionally, that
19 And on whether he have courage or not to fulfil that condition depends—Do not ask me what it is. While Cyril is leader of the Christian mob, it may be safer for you, my father, that you should be able to deny all knowledge of my answer. Be content. I have said this—that if he will do as I would have him do, I will do as you would have me do.'

'Have you not been too rash? Have you not demanded of him something which, for the sake of public opinion, he dare not grant openly, and yet which he may allow you to do for yourself when once—'

'I have. If I am to be a victim, the sacrificing priest shall at least be a man, and not a coward and a time-server. If he believes this Christian faith, let him defend it against me, for either it or I shall perish. If he does not—as he does not—let him give up living in a lie, and taking on his lips blasphemies against the immortals, from which his heart and reason revolt!'

And she clapped her hands again for the maid-servant, gave her the letter silently, shut the doors of her chamber, and tried to resume her Commentary on Plotinus. Alas! what were all the wire drawn dreams of metaphysics to her in that real and human struggle of the heart? What availed it to define the process by which individual souls emanated from the universal one, while her own soul had, singly and on its own responsibility, to decide so terrible an act of will? or to write fine words with pen and ink about the immutability of the supreme Reason, while her own reason was left there to struggle for its life amid a roaring shoreless waste of doubts and darkness? Oh, how grand, and clear, and logical it had all looked half an hour ago! And how irrefragably she had been deducing from it all, syllogism after syllogism, the non-existence of evil!—how it was but a lower form of good, one of the countless products of the one great all-pervading mind which could not err or change, only so strange and recondite in its form as to excite antipathy in all minds but that of the philosopher, who learnt to see the stem which connected the apparently bitter fruit with the perfect root from whence it sprang. Could she see the stem there!—the connection between the pure and supreme Reason, and the hideous carcases of the debauched and cowardly Orestes? was not that evil pure, unadulterate with any vein of good, past, present, or future? . . .

True,—she might keep her spirit pure amid it all; she might sacrifice the base body, and ennoble the soul by the self-sacrifice. . . . And

yet, would not that increase the horror, the agony, the evil of it—to her, at least, most real evil, not to be explained away—and yet the gods required it? Were they just, merciful in that? Was it like them, to torture her, their last unshaken votary? Did they require it? Was it not required of them by some higher power, of whom they were only the emanations, the tools, the puppets?—and required of that higher power by some still higher one—some nameless, absolute destiny of which Orestes and she, and all heaven and earth, were but the victims, dragged along in an inevitable vortex, helpless, hopeless, toward that for which each was meant?—And she was meant for this! The thought was unbearable, it turned her giddy. No! she would not! She would rebel! Like Prometheus, she would dare destiny, and brave its worst! And she sprang up to recall the letter. . . . Miriam was gone, and she threw herself on the floor, and wept bitterly.

And her peace of mind would certainly not have been improved, could she have seen old Miriam hurry home with her letter to a dingy house in the Jews' quarter, where it was unscaled, read, and sealed up again with such marvellous skill, that no eye could have detected the change, and finally, still less would she have been comforted could she have heard the conversation which was going on in a summer room of Orestes' palace, between that illustrious statesman and Raphael Aben Ezra, who were lying on two divans opposite each other, whiling away, by a throw or two of dice, the anxious moments which delayed her answer.

'Trays again! The devil is in you, Raphael!'

'I always thought she was,' answered Raphael, sweeping up the gold pieces.

'When will that old witch be back?'

'When she has read through your letter and Hypatia's answer.'

'Read them?'

'Of course. You don't fancy she is going to be fool enough to carry a message without knowing what it is? Don't be angry, she won't tell. She would give one of those two grave-lights there, which she calls her eyes, to see the thing prosper.'

'Why?'

'Your excellency will know when the letter comes. Here she is, I hear steps in the cloister. Now, one bet before they enter. I give you two to one she asks you to turn pagan.'

'What in? Negro-boys?'

'Anything you like.'

'Taken. Come in, slaves!'

And Hypatia entered, pointing.

'That Jewish fury is outside with a letter, and has the impudence to say she won't let me bring it in!'

'Bring her in then. Quick!'

'I wonder what I am here for, if people have secrets that I am not to know,' grumbled the spoilt youth.

'Do you want a blue ribbon round those white sides of yours, you monkey!' answered

Orestes. 'Because, if you do, the hippopotamus hide hangs ready outside.'

'Let us make him kneel down here for a couple of hours, and use him as a dice-board,' said Raphael, 'as you used to do to the girls in Armenia.'

'Ah, you recollect that?—and how the barbarian papas used to grumble, till I had to crucify one or two, oh! That was something like life! I love those out-of-the-way stations, where nobody asks questions, but here one might as well live among the monks in Nitria. Here comes Candida! Ah, the answer! Hail it here, my queen of go-betweens!'

Orestes read it—and his countenance fell.

'I have won!'

'Out of the room, slaves! and no listening!'

'I have won then?'

Orestes tossed the letter across to him, and Raphael read—

'The immortal gods accept no divided worship; and he who would command the counsels of their prophetesses must remember that they will vouchsafe to her no illumination till their lost honours be restored. If he who aspires to be the lord of Africa dare example on the hateful cross, and restore the Cæsareum to those for whose worship it was built—if he dare proclaim aloud with his lips, and in his deeds, that contempt for novel and barbarous superstitions, which his taste and reason have already taught him, then he would prove himself one with whom it were a glory to labour, to dare, to die in a great cause. But till then—'

And so the letter ended.

'What am I to do?'

'Take her at her word!'

'Good heavens! I shall be excommunicated! And—and—what is to become of my soul?'

'What will become of it in any case, my most excellent lord!' answered Raphael blandly.

'You mean—I know what you cursed Jews think will happen to every one but ourselves. But what would the world say? I an apostate! And in the face of Cyril and the populace! I daren't, I tell you!'

'No one asked your excellency to apostatise.'

'Why, what? What did you say just now?'

'I asked you to promise. It will not be the first time that promises before marriage have not exactly comended with performance afterwards.'

'I daren't—that is, I won't promise. I believe, now, this is some trap of your Jewish intrigue, just to make me commit myself against those Christians, whom you hate.'

'I assure you, I despise all mankind far too profoundly to hate them. How disinterested my advice was when I proposed this match to you, you never will know, indeed, it would be boastful in me to tell you. But really you must make a little sacrifice to win this foolish girl. With all the depth and daring of her intellect to help you, you might be a match for Romans, Byzantines, and Goths at once. And

as for beauty—why, there is one dimple inside that wrist, just at the setting on of the sweet little hand, worth all the other flesh and blood in Alexandria.'

'By Jove! you admire her so much, I suspect you must be in love with her yourself. Why don't you marry her? I'll make you my prime minister, and then we shall have the use of her wits without the trouble of her fauca. By the twelve Gods! If you marry her and help me, I'll make you what you like!'

Raphael rose and bowed to the earth.

'Your serene high-mightiness overwhelms me. But I assure you, that never having as yet cared for any one's interest but my own, I could not be expected, at my time of life, to devote myself to that of another, even though it were to yours.'

'Candid!'

'Exactly so; and moreover, whosoever I may marry, will be practically, as well as theoretically, my private and peculiar property. . . . You comprehend?'

'Candid again!'

'Exactly so, and waiving the third argument, that she probably might not choose to marry me, I beg to remark that it would not be proper to allow the world to say, that I, the subject, had a wiser and fairer wife than you, the ruler, especially a wife who had already refused that ruler's complimentary offer.'

'By Jove! and she has refused me in good earnest! I'll make her repent it! I was a fool to ask her at all! What's the use of having guards, if one can't compel what one wants? If fair means can't do it, foul shall! I'll send for her this moment!'

'Most illustrious majesty—it will not succeed. You do not know that woman's determination. Scourges and red-hot pincers will not shake her, alive, and dead, who will be of no use whatsoever to you, while she will be of great use to Cyril.'

'How!'

'He will be most happy to make the whole story a handle against you, give out that she died a virgin-martyr, in defence of the most holy catholic and apostolic faith, got miracles worked at her tomb, and pull your palace about your ears on the strength thereof.'

'Cyril will hear of it anyhow—that's another dilemma into which you have brought me, you intriguing rascal! Why, this girl will be boast in all over Alexandria that I have offered her marriage, and that she has done herself the honour to refuse me!'

'She will be much too wise to do anything of the kind; she has sense enough to know that if she did so, you would inform a Christian populace what conditions she offered you, and, with all her contempt for the burden of the flesh, she has no mind to be lightened of that pretty load by being torn in pieces by Christian monks, a very probable ending for her in any case, as she herself, in her melancholy moods, confesses!'

'What will you have me do then?'

'Simply nothing. Let the prophetic spirit go out of her, as it will, in a day or two, and then—I know nothing of human nature, if she does not bate a little of her own price. Depend on it, for all her ineffabilities, and impossibilities, and all the rest of the seventh-heaven moonshine at which we play here in Alexandria, a throne is far too pretty a bait for even Hypatia the Pythoness to refuse. Leave well alone is a good rule, but leave ill alone is a better. So now another bet before we part, and this time three to one. Do nothing either way, and she sends to you of her own accord before a month is out. In Caucasian mules? Done? Be it so.'

'Well, you are the most charming counsellor for a ; our perplexed devil of a prefect! If I had but a private fortune like you, I could just take the money, and let the work do itself.'

'Which is the true method of successful government. Your slave bids you farewell. Do not forget our bet. You dine with me to-morrow!'

And Raphael bowed himself out.

As he left the prefect's door, he saw Miriam on the opposite side of the street, evidently watching for him. As soon as she saw him, she held on her own side, without appearing to notice him, till he turned a corner, and then crossing, caught him eagerly by the arm.

'Does the fool dare!'

'Who dare what?'

'You know what I mean. Do you suppose old Miriam carries letters without taking care to know what is inside them? Will he ipso-facto? Tell me. I am secret as the grave!'

'The fool has found an old worm-eaten rag of conscience somewhere in the corner of his heart, and dare not.'

'Curse the coward! And such a plot as I had laid! I would have swept every Christian dog out of Africa within the year. What is the man afraid of?'

'Hell-hire.'

'Why, he will go there in any case, the accursed Gentile!'

'So I hunted to him, as delicately as I could, but, like the rest of the world, he had a sort of partiality for getting thither by his own road.'

'Coward! And whom shall I get now? Oh, if that Pelagia had as much cunning in her whole body as Hypatia has in her little finger, I'd set her and her Goth upon the throne of the Cæsars. But—'

'But who has five senses, and just enough wit to use them, oh?'

'Don't laugh at her for that, the darling! I do delight in her, after all. It warms even my old blood to see how thoroughly she knows her business, and how she enjoys it, like a true daughter of Eve.'

'She has been your most successful pupil, certainly, mother. You may well be proud of her.'

The old hag chuckled to herself a while, and then suddenly turning to Raphael—

'See here! I have a present for you,' and she pulled out a magnificent ring.

'Why, mother, you are always giving me presents. It was but a month ago you sent me this poisoned dagger.'

'Why not, oh?—why not? Why should not Jew give to Jew? Take the old woman's ring!'

'What a glorious opal!'

'Ah, that is an opal, indeed! And the unspeakable name upon it, just like Solomon's own. Take it, I say! Whosoever wears that never need fear fire, steel, poison, or woman's eye.'

'Your own included, oh?'

'Take it, I say!' and Miriam caught his hand, and forced the ring on his finger. 'There! Now you're safe. And now call me mother again. I like it. I don't know why, but I like it. And—Raphael Aben-Ezra—don't laugh at me, and call me witch and hag, as you often do. I don't care about it from any one else, I'm accustomed to it. But when you do it, I always long to stab you. That's why I gave you the dagger. I used to wear it, and I was afraid I might be tempted to use it some day, when the thought came across me how handsome you'd look, somehow quiet, when you were dead, and your soul up there so happy in Abraham's bosom, watching all the Gentiles frying and roasting for ever down below. Don't laugh at me, I say; and don't thwart me! I may make you the emperor's prime minister some day, I can if I choose.'

'Heaven forbid!' said Raphael, laughing.

'Don't laugh. I cast your nativity last night, and I know you have no cause to laugh. A great danger hangs over you, and a deep temptation. And if you weather this storm, you may be chamberlain, prime minister, emperor, if you will. And you shall be—by the four archangels, you shall!'

And the old woman vanished down a by-lane, leaving Raphael utterly bewildered.

'Moses and the prophets! Does the old lady intend to marry me? What can there be in this very lazy and selfish personage who bears my name, to excite so romantic an affection? Well, Raphael Aben-Ezra, thou hast one more friend in the world beside Bran the mastiff, and therefore one more trouble—seeing that friends always expect a due return of affection and good offices and what not. I wonder whether the old lady has been getting into a scrape kidnapping, and wants my patronage to help her out of it. . . . Three-quarters of a mile of roasting sun between me and home! . . . I must hire a gig, or a litter, or something, off the next stand with a driver who has been eating onions and of course there is not a stand for the next half-mile. Oh, divine ether—as Prometheus has it, and ye swift-winged breezes (I wish there were any here), when will it all be over? Three-and-thirty years have I endured already of this babel of knaves and fools, and with this abominable good health of mine, which won't even help me with gout or indigestion, I am likely

to have three-and-thirty years more of it. . . . I know nothing, and I care for nothing, and I expect nothing, and I actually can't take the trouble to prick a hole in myself, and let the very small amount of wits out, to see something really worth seeing, and try its strength at something really worth doing—if, after all, the other side the grave does not turn out to be just as stupid as this one. . . . When will it be all over, and I in Abraham's bosom—or any one else's, provided it be not a woman's?

CHAPTER V

A DAY IN ALEXANDRIA

In the meanwhile, Philammon, with his hosts, the Goths, had been slipping down the stream. Passing, one after another, world-old cities now dwindled to decaying towns, and numberless canal-mouths, now fast falling into ruin with the fields to which they ensured fertility, under the pressure of Roman extortion and usury, they had entered one evening the mouth of the great canal of Alexandria, and early all night across the star bespangled shadows of Lake Mareotis, and found themselves, when the next morning dawned, among the countless masts and noisy quays of the greatest seaport in the world. The motley crowd of foreigners, the hubbub of all dialects from the Crimea to Cadiz, the vast piles of merchandise, and heaps of wheat, lying unsheltered in that rainless air, the huge bulk of the corn-ships lading for Rome, whose tall sides rose story over story, like floating palaces, above the buildings of some inner dock—these sights, and a hundred more, made the young monk think that the world did not look at first sight a thing to be despised. In front of heaps of fruit, fresh from the market-boats, black groups of glossy negro slaves were basking and laughing on the quay, looking anxiously and coquettishly round in hopes of a purchaser, they evidently did not think the change from desert toil to city luxuries a change for the worse. Philammon turned away his eyes from beholding vanity, but only to meet fresh vanity where-soever they fell. He felt crushed by the multitude of new objects, stunned by the din around, and scarcely recollected himself enough to seize the first opportunity of escaping from his dangerous companions.

'Holloa!' roared Smid the armourer, as he scrambled on to the steps of the ship; 'you are not going to run away without bidding us goodbye!'

'Stop with me, boy!' said old Wulf. 'I saved you; and you are my man!'

Philammon turned and hesitated.

'I am a monk, and God's man.'

'You can be that anywhere. I will make you a warrior.'

'The weapons of my warfare are not of flesh and blood, but prayer and fasting,' answered

poor Philammon, who felt already that he should have ten times more need of the said weapons in Alexandria than ever he had had in the desert. . . . 'Let me go! I am not made for your life! I thank you, bless you! I will pray for you, sir! but let me go!'

'Curse the craven hound!' roared half a dozen voices. 'Why did you not let us have our will with him, Prince Wulf? You might have expected such gratitude from a monk.'

'He owes me my share of the sport,' quoth Smid. 'And here it is!' And a hatchet, thrown with practised aim, whistled right for Philammon's head—he had just time to swerve, and the weapon struck and snapped against the granite wall behind.

'Well saved!' said Wulf coolly, while the sailors and market-women above yelled murder, and the custom-house officers, and other constables and catchpools of the harbour, rushed to the place—and retired again quietly at the thunder of the Anial from the boat's stern—

'Never mind, my good fellows! we're only Goths; and on a visit to the prefect, too.'

'Only Goths, my donkey-riding friends!' echoed Smid, and at that ominous name the whole posse comitatus tried to look unconcerned, and found suddenly that their presence was absolutely required in an opposite direction.

'Let him go,' said Wulf, as he stalked up the steps. 'Let the boy go. I never set my heart on any man yet,' he growled to himself in an under voice, 'but what he disappointed me—and I must not expect more from this fellow. Come, men, ashore, and get drunk!'

Philammon, of course, now that he had leave to go, longed to stay at all events, he must go back and thank his hosts. He turned unwillingly to do so, as hastily as he could, and found Pelagia and her gigantic lover just entering a palanquin. With downcast eyes he approached the beautiful basilisk, and murmured out some commonplace, and she, full of smiles, turned to him at once.

'Tell me more about yourself before we part. You speak such beautiful Greek—true Athenian. It is quite delightful to hear one's own accent again. Were you ever at Athens?'

'When I was a child, I recollect—that is, I think.'

'What?' asked Pelagia eagerly.

'A great house in Athens—and a great battle there—and coming to Egypt in a ship.'

'Heavens!' said Pelagia, and paused.

'How strange! Girls, as he said he was like me?'

'I'm sure we meant no harm, if we did say it in a joke,' pouted one of the attendants.

'Like me!—you must come and see us. I have something to say to you. You must!'

Philammon misinterpreted the intense interest of her tone, and if he did not shrink back, gave some involuntary gesture of reluctance. Pelagia laughed aloud.

'Don't be vain enough to suspect, foolish boy, but come! Do you think that I have nothing to talk about but nonsense? Come and see me.'

It may be better for you. I live in——' and she named a fashionable street, which Philammon, though he inwardly vowed not to accept the invitation, somehow could not help remembering.

'Do leave the wild man, and come,' growled the Amal from within the palanquin. 'You are not going to turn nun, I hope!'

'Not while the first war, I ever met in the world stays in it,' answered Pelagia, as she skipped into the palanquin, taking care to show the most lovely white heel and ankle, and, like the Parthian, send a random arrow as she retreated. But the dart was lost on Philammon, who had been already huffed away by the bevy of laughing attendants, and baskets, dressing-cases, and bird-cages, and was fain to make his escape into the Babel round, and inquire his way to the patriarch's house.

'Patriarch's house?' answered the man whom he first addressed, a little lean, swarthy fellow, with merry black eyes, who, with a basket of fruit at his feet, was sunning himself on a baulk of timber, meditatively chewing the papyrus-cane, and examining the strangers with a look of absurd sagacity. 'I know it, without a doubt I know it, all Alexandria has good reason to know it. Are you a monk?'

'Yes.'

'Then ask your way of the monks, you won't go far without finding one.'

'But I do not even know the right direction what is your grudge against monks, my good man?'

'Look here, my youth, you seem too ingenious for a monk. Don't flatter yourself that it will last. If you can wear the sheepskin, and haunt the churches here for a month, without learning to lie, and slander, and clap, and hoot, and perhaps play your part in a sedition-and murder satyrical drama—why, you are a better man than I take you for. I, sir, am a Greek and a philosopher, though the whirlpool of matter may have, and indeed has, involved my ethereal spark in the body of a porter. Therefore, youth,' continued the little man, starting up upon his baulk like an excited monkey, and stretching out one oratoric paw, 'I bear a triple hatred to the monkish tribe. First, as a man and a human being, for as for the smiles of beauty, or otherwise,—such as I have, I have, and the monks, if they had their wicked will, would leave neither men nor women in the world. So, they would exterminate the human race by a single generation, by a voluntary suicide! Secondly, as a porter; for if all men turned monks, nobody would be idle, and the profession of portering would be annihilated. Thirdly, sir, as a philosopher; for as the false coin is odious to the true, so is the irrational and animal asceticism of the monk, to the logical and methodic self-restraint of one who, like your humblest of philosophers, aspires to a life according to the pure reason.'

And pray, asked Philammon, half laughing, 'who has been your tutor in philosophy?'

'The fountain of classic wisdom, Hyjatia herself. As the ancient sage—the name is unimportant to a monk—pumped water mightily that he might study by day, so I, the guardian of cloaks and parasols, at the sacred doors of her lecture-room, imbibe celestial knowledge. From my youth I felt in me a soul above the matter-entangled herd. She revealed to me the glorious fact, that I am a spark of Divinity itself. A fallen star, I am, sir,' continued he, pensively, stroking his lean stomach—'a fallen star'—fallen, if the dignity of philosophy will allow of the simile, among the hogs of the lower world—indeed, even into the hog bucket itself. Well, after all, I will show you the way to the Arch-bishop's. There is a philosophic pleasure in opening one's treasures to the modest young. Perhaps you will assist me by carrying this basket of fruit?' And the little man jumped up, put his basket on Philammon's head, and trotted off up a neighbouring street.

Philammon followed, half contemptuous, half wondering at what this philosophy might be, which could seduce the self conceit of anything so abject as his ragged little apish guide, but the novel roar and whirl of the street, the perpetual stream of busy fairs, the line of carriages, palanquins, laden asses, camels, elephants, which met and passed him, and squeezed him up steps and into doorways, as they threaded their way through the great Moon gate into the ample street beyond, drove everything from his mind but wondering curiosity, and a vague, helpless dread of that great living wilderness, more terrible than any dead wilderness of sand which he had left behind. Already he longed for the repose, the silence of the Lanra—for trees which knew him and smiled upon him, but it was too late to turn back now. His guide held on for more than a mile up the great main street, crossed in the centre of the city, at right angles by one equally magnificent, at each end of which, miles away, appeared, dim and distant over the heads of the living stream of passengers, the yellow sand-hills of the desert, while at the end of the vista in front of them glared the blue harbour, through a network of countless masts.

At last they reached the quay at the opposite end of the street, and there burst on Philammon's astonished eyes a vast semicircle of blue sea, ringed with palaces and towers. He stopped involuntarily, and his little guide stopped also, and looked askance at the young monk, to watch the effect which that grand panorama should produce on him.

'There!—Behold our works! Us Greeks!—us benighted heathens! Look at it and feel yourself what you are, a very small, concerted, ignorant young person, who fancies that your new religion gives you a right to despise every one else. Did Christians make all this? Did Christians build that Pharos there on the left horn—wonder of the world? Did Christians raise that mile long mole which runs towards the land, with its two drawbridges, connecting the two ports? Did Christians build this

esplanade, or this gate of the Sun above our heads? Or that Casareum on our right here? Look at those obelisks before it! And he pointed upwards to those two world-famous ones, one of which still lies on its ancient site, as Cleopatra's Needle. 'Look up! look up, I say, and feel small—very small indeed! Did Christians raise them, or engrave them from base to point with the wisdom of the ancients? Did Christians build that Museum next to it, or design its statues and its frescoes—now, alas! re-echoing no more to the hummings of the Attic bee? Did they pile up out of the waves that palace beyond it, or that Exchange? or fill that Temple of Neptune with breathing brass and blushing marble? Did they build that Timonium on the point, where Antony, worsted at Actium, forgot his shame in Cleopatra's arms? Did they quarry out that island of Antirrhodus into a nest of docks, or cover those waters with the sails of every nation under heaven? Speak! Thou son of bats and moles—thou six feet of sand—thou mummy out of the cliff caverns! Can monks do works like these?'

'Other men have laboured, and we have entered into their labours,' answered Philammon, trying to seem as unconcerned as he could. He was, indeed, too utterly astonished to be angry at anything. The overwhelming vastness, multiplicity, and magnificence of the whole scene, the range of buildings, such as mother earth never, perhaps, carried on her lap before or since, the extraordinary variety of form—the pure Doric and Ionic of the earlier Ptolemies, the barbaric and confused gorgeousness of the later Roman, and here and there an imitation of the grand elephantine style of old Egypt, its gaudy colours relieving, while they deepened, the effect of its massive and simple outlines, the eternal repose of that great belt of stone contrasting with the restless ripple of the glittering harbour, and the busy sails which crowded out into the sea beyond, like white doves taking their flight into boundless space—all dazzled, overpowered, saddened him. This was the world. Was it not beautiful? Must not the men who made all this have been—if not great, yet he knew not what? Surely they had great souls and noble thoughts in them! Surely there was something godlike in being able to create such things! Not for themselves alone, too, but for a nation—for generations yet unborn. And there was the sea, and beyond it, nations of men innumerable. His imagination was dizzy with thinking of them. Were they all doomed—lost? . . . If God no love for them?

At last, recovering himself, he recollected his errand, and again asked his way to the archbishop's house.

'This way, O youthful nonentity!' answered the little man, leading the way round the great front of the Casareum, at the foot of the obelisks.

Philammon's eye fell on some new masonry

in the pediment, ornamented with Christian symbols.

'How! Is this a church?'

'It is the Casareum. It has become temporarily a church. The immortal gods have, for the time being, condescended to waive their rights, but it is the Casareum, nevertheless. This way, down this street to the right. There,' said he, pointing to a doorway in the side of the Museum, 'is the last haunt of the Muses—the lecture-room of Hypatia, the school of my unworthiness. . . And here,' stopping at the door of a splendid house on the opposite side of the street, 'is the residence of that best favourite of Athens—Neith, as the barbarians of Egypt would denominate the goddess—women of Macedonia retain the time-honoured Grecian nomenclature. You may put down your basket.' And he knocked at the door, and delivering the fruit to a black porter, made a polite obeisance to Philammon, and resumed on the point of taking his departure.

'But where is the archbishop's house?'

'Close to the Serapion. You cannot miss the place: four hundred columns of marble, now ruined by Christian persecutors, stand on an eminence—'

'But how far off?'

'About three miles, near the gate of the Moon.'

'Why, was not that the gate by which we entered the city on the other side?'

'Exactly so, you will know your way back, having already traversed it.'

Philammon checked a decidedly carnal inclination to seize the little fellow by the throat, and knock his head against the wall, and contented himself by saying—

'Then do you actually mean to say, you heathen villain, that you have taken me six or seven miles out of my road?'

'Good words young man. If you do me harm, I call for help, we are close to the Jews' quarter, and there are some thousands there who will swarm out like wasps on the chance of beating a monk to death. Yet that which I have done, I have done with a good purpose. First, politically, or according to practical wisdom—in order that you, not I, might carry the basket. Next, philosophically, or according to the intuitions of the pure reason—in order that you might, by beholding the magnificence of that great civilisation which your fellows wish to destroy, learn that you are an ass, and a tortoise, and a nonentity, and so beholding yourself to be nothing, may be moved to become something.'

• And he moved off.

Philammon seized him by the collar of his ragged tunic, and held him in a gripe from which the little man, though he twisted like an eel, could not escape.

'Peaceably, if you will; if not, by main force. You shall go back with me, and show me every step of the way. It is a just penalty.'

'The philosopher conquers circumstances by

submitting to them. I go peaceably. Indeed, the base necessities of the hog-bucket side of existence compel me of themselves back to the Moon-gate, for another early fruit job.

So they went back together.

Now why Philammon's thoughts should have been running on the next new specimen of womankind to whom he had been introduced, though only in name, let psychologists tell, but certainly, after he had walked some half-mile in silence, he suddenly woke up, as out of many meditations, and asked—

'But who is this Hypatia, of whom you talk so much?'

'Who is Hypatia, rustic? The queen of Alexandria! In wit, Athens; Hera in majesty, in beauty, Aphrodite!'

'And who are they?' asked Philammon.

The porter stopped, surveyed him slowly from foot to head with an expression of boundless pity and contempt, and was in the act of walking off in the ecstasy of his disdain, when he was brought to suddenly by Philammon's strong arm.

'Ah!—I recollect. There is a compact. . . Who is Athens? The goddess, giver of wisdom Hera, spouse of Zeus, queen of the Celestials Aphrodite, mother of love. . . You are not expected to understand.'

Philammon did understand, however, so much as this, that Hypatia was a very unique and wonderful person in the mind of his little guide, and therefore asked the only further question by which he could as yet test any Alexandrian phenomenon—

'And is she a friend of the patriarch?'

The porter opened his eyes very wide, put his middle finger in a careful and complicated fashion between his fore and third fingers, and extending it playfully towards Philammon, performed therewith certain mysterious signals, the effect whereof being totally lost on him, the little man stopped, took another look at Philammon's stately figure, and answered—

'Of the human race in general, my young friend. The philosopher must rise above the individual, to the contemplation of the universal. . . Aha—Here is something worth seeing, and the gates are open.' And he stopped at the portal of a vast building.

'Is this the patriarch's house?'

'The patriarch's tastes are more plebeian. He lives, they say, in two dirty little rooms—knowing what is fit for him. The patriarch's house? Its antipodes, my young friend—that is, if such beings have a cosmic existence, on which point Hypatia has her doubts. This is the temple of art and beauty; the Delphic tripod of poetic inspiration, the solace of the earthworm drudge, in a word, the theatre; which your patriarch, if he could, would convert to-morrow into a— but the philosopher must not revile. Ah! I see the prefect's apparitors at the gate. He is making the polity, as we call it here, the dispositions; setting, in short, the bill of fare for the day, in compliance with the public

palate. A facetious pantomime dances here on this day every week—admired by some, the Jews especially. To the more classic taste, many of his movements—his recoil, especially—are wanting in the true antique severity—might be called, perhaps, on the whole, indecent. Still the weary pilgrim must be amused. Let us step in and hear.'

But before Philammon could refuse, an uproar arose within, a rush outward of the mob, and inward of the prefect's apparitors.

'It is false!' shouted many voices. 'A Jewish calumny! The man is innocent!'

'There is no more sedition in him than there is in me,' roared a fat butcher, who looked as ready to fella a man as an ox. 'He was always the first and the last to clap the holy patriarch at sermon.'

'Dear tender soul,' whispered a woman, 'and I said to him only this morning, why don't you flog my boys, Master Hierax? how can you expect them to learn, if they are not flogged? And he said, he never could abide the sight of a rod, it made his back tingle so.'

'Which was plainly a prophecy.'

'And proves him innocent, for how could he prophesy if he was not one of the holy ones!'

'Monks, to the rescue! Hierax, a Christian, is taken and tortured in the theatre!' thundered a wild hermit, his beard and hair streaming about his chest and shoulders.

'Nitria! Nitria! For God and the mother of God, monks of Nitria! Down with the Jewish slanderers! Down with heathen tyrants!—And the mob, reinforced as if by magic by hundreds from without, swept down the huge vaulted passage, carrying Philammon and the porter with them.

'My friends,' quoth the little man, trying to look philosophically calm, though he was fairly off his legs, and hawking between heaven and earth on the elbows of the bystanders, 'whence this tumult?'

'The Jews got up a cry that Hierax wanted to raise a riot. Curse them and then sabbath, they are always rioting on Saturdays about this dancer of theirs, instead of working like honest Christians!'

'And rioting on Sunday instead. Ahem! sectarian differences, which the philosopher—'

The rest of the sentence disappeared with the speaker, as a sudden opening of the mob let him drop, and buried him under innumerable legs.

Philammon, furious at the notion of persecution, maddened by the cries around him, found himself bursting heresly through the crowd, till he reached the front ranks, where tall gates of open ironwork barred all further progress, but left a full view of the tragedy which was enacting within, where the poor innocent wretch, suspended from a gibbet, withied and shrieked at every stroke of the hide whips of his tormentors.

In vain Philammon and the monks around him knocked and beat at the gates, they were

only answered by laughter and taunts from the apparitors within, curses on the turbulent mob of Alexandria, with its patriarch, clergy, saints, and churches, and promises to each and all outside, that their turn would come next, while the piteous screams grew fainter and more faint, and at last, with a convulsive shudder, motion and suffering ceased for ever in the poor mangled body.

'They have killed him! Martyred him! Back to the archbishop! To the patriarch's house he will avenge us!' And as the horrible news, and the watchword which followed it, passed outwardly through the crowd, they wheeled round as one man, and poured through street after street towards Cyril's house, while Philammon, beside himself with horror, rage, and pity, hurried onward with them.

A tumultuous hour, or more, was passed in the street before he could gain entrance; and then he was swept, along with the mob in which he had been fast wedged, through a dark low passage, and landed breathless in a quadrangle of mean and new buildings, overhung by the four hundred stately columns of the ruined Serapeum. The grass was already growing on the ruined capitals and architraves. Little did even its destroyers dream then, that the day would come when one only of that four hundred would be left, as 'Pompey's Pillar,' to show what the men of old could think and do.

Philammon at last escaped from the crowd, and putting the letter which he had carried in his bosom into the hands of one of the priests who was mixing with the mob, was beckoned by him into a corridor, and up a flight of stairs, and into a large, low, mean room, and there, by virtue of the world-wide freemasonry which Christianity had, for the first time on earth, established, found himself in five minutes awaiting the summons of the most powerful man south of the Mediterranean.

A curtain hung across the door of the inner chamber, through which Philammon could hear plainly the steps of some one walking up and down hurriedly and fiercely.

'They will drive me to it!' at last burst out a deep sonorous voice. 'They will drive me to it. Their blood be on their own head! It is not enough for them to blaspheme God and His church, to have the monopoly of all the cheating, fortune-telling, usury, sorcery, and coming of the city, but they must deliver my clergy unto the hands of the tyrant?'

'It was so even in the apostles' time,' suggested a softer but far more unpleasant voice.

'Then it shall be so no longer! God has given me the power to stop them, and God do so to me, and more also, if I do not use that power. To-morrow I sweep out this Augean stable of villainy, and leave not a Jew to blaspheme and cheat in Alexandria.'

'I am afraid such a judgment, however righteous, might offend his excellency.'

'His excellency! His tyranny! Why does Orestes truckle to these circumcised, but because

they lend money to him and to his creatures? He would keep up a den of fiends in Alexandria if they would do as much for him! And then to play them off against me and mine, to bring religion into contempt by setting the mob together by the ears, and to end with outrages like this! Seditious! Have they not cause enough? The sooner I remove one of their temptations the better let the other tempter beware, lest his judgment be at hand!'

'The prefect, your holiness?' asked the other voice shyly.

'Who spoke of the prefect? Whosoever is a tyrant, and a murderer, and an oppressor of the poor, and a favourer of the philosophy which despises and enslaves the poor, should not he perish, though he be seven times a prefect?'

At this juncture Philammon, thinking perhaps that he had already heard too much, notified his presence by some slight noise, at which the secretary, as he seemed to be, hastily lifted the curtain, and somewhat sharply demanded his business. The names of Pambos and Arsennus, however, seemed to pacify him at once; and the trembling youth was ushered into the presence of him who in reality, though not in name, sat on the throne of the Pharaohs.

Not, indeed, in their outward pomp; the furniture of the chamber was but a grade above that of the artisan's, the dress of the great man was coarse and simple, if personal vanity peeped out anywhere, it was in the careful arrangement of the bushy beard, and of the few curling locks which the tonsure had spared. But the height and majesty of his figure, the stern and massive beauty of his features, the flashing eye, curling lip, and projecting brow—all marked him as one born to command. As the youth entered, Cyril stopped short in his walk, and looking him through and through, with a glance which burnt upon his cheeks like fire, and made him all but wish the kindly earth would open and hide him, took the letters, read them, and then began—

'Philammon. A Greek. You are said to have learned to obey. If so you have also learned to rule. Your father-abbot has transferred you to my tutelage. You are now to obey me.'

'And I will.'

'Well said. Go to that window, then, and leap into the court.'

Philammon walked to it, and opened it. The pavement was fully twenty feet below; but his business was to obey, and not take measurements. There was a flower in the vase upon the sill. He quietly removed it, and in an instant more would have leapt for life or death, when Cyril's voice thundered 'Stop!'

'The lad will pass, my Peter. I shall not be afraid now for the secrets which he may have overheard.'

Peter smiled assent, looking all the while as if he thought it a great pity that the young man had not been allowed to put talebearing out of his own power by breaking his neck.

'You wish to see the world. Perhaps you have seen something of it to-day.'

'I saw the murderer—'

'Then you saw what you came hither to see, what the world is, and what justice and mercy it can deal out. You would not dislike to see God's reprisals to man's tyranny! . . . Or to be a fellow worker with God therein, if I judge rightly by your looks!'

'I would avenge that man.'

'Ah! my poor simple schoolmaster! And his fate is the portent of portents to you now! Stay awhile, till you have gone with Ezekiel into the inner chambers of the devil's temple, and you will see worse things than these—women weeping for Thammuz, bemoaning the decay of an idolatry which they themselves disbelieve—That, too, is on the list of Heracles' labour, Peter mine.'

At this moment a deacon entered. 'Your holiness, the rabbi of the accursed nation are below, at your summons. We brought them in through the back gate, for fear of—'

'Right, right. An accident to them might have ruined us. I shall not forget you bring them up. Peter, take this youth, introduce him to the parabolani. Who will be the best man for him to work under?'

'The brother Theopompus is especially sober and gentle.'

Cyrl shook his head laughingly. 'Go into the next room, my son. No, Peter, put him under some fiery saint, some true Boanerges, who will talk him down, and work him to death, and show him the best and worst of everything. Cletoophon will be the man. Now then, let me see my engagements, five minutes for those Jews—Crestes did not choose to frighten them. Let us see whether Cyrl cannot; thou an hour to look over the hospital accounts, an hour for the schools; a half-hour for the reserved cases of distress, and another half-hour for myself, and then divine service. See that the boy is there. Do bring in every one in their turn, Peter mine. So much time goes in hunting for this man and that man. . . and life is too short for all that. Where are the Jews?' and Cyrl plunged into the latter half of his day's work with that untiring energy, self-reliance, and method, which commanded for him, in spite of all suspicions of his violence, ambition, and intrigue, the loving awe and implicit obedience of several hundred thousand human beings.

So Philammon went out with the parabolani, a sort of organised guild of district visitors. . . . And in their company he saw that afternoon the dark side of that world, whereof the harbour-panorama had been the bright one. In squalid misery, filth, profligacy, ignorance, ferocity, discontent, neglected in body, house, and soul, by the civil authorities, proving their existence only in aimless and sanguinary riots, there they starved and rotted, heap on heap, the masses of the old Greek population, close to the great food-exporting harbour of the world. Among these, fiercely

perhaps, and fanatically, but still among them and for them, laboured those district visitors night and day. And so Philammon toiled away with them, carrying food and clothing, helping sick to the hospital, and dead to the burial, cleaning out the infested houses—for the fever was all but perennial in those quarters—and comforting the dying with the good news of forgiveness from above, till the larger number had to return to evening service. He, however, was kept by his superior, watching at a sick bedside, and it was late at night before he got home, and was reported to Peter the Reader as having acquitted himself like 'a man of God,' as, indeed, without the least thought of doing anything noble or self-sacrificing, he had truly done, being a monk. And so he threw himself on a trundle-bed, in one of the many cells which opened off a long corridor, and fell fast asleep in a minute.

He was just wakening about in a dreary dream-jumble of Gophers dancing with district visitors, Pelagia as an angel, with peacock's wings, Hypatia with horns and cloven feet, riding three hippopotami at once round the theatre, Cyrl standing at an open window, cursing frightfully, and pelting him with flower-pots, and a similar self-sown after-crop of his day's impressions, when he was awakened by the tramp of hurried feet in the street outside, and shouts, which gradually, as he became conscious, shaped themselves into cries of 'Alexander's Church is on fire! Help, good Christians! Fire! Help!'

Whereat he sat up in his trundle-bed, tried to recollect where he was, and having with some trouble succeeded, threw on his sheepskin, and jumped up to ask the news from the deacons and monks who were hurrying along the corridor outside. 'Yes, Alexander's church is on fire,' and down the stairs they poured, across the courtyard, and out into the street, Peter's tall figure serving as a standard and a rallying point.

As they rushed out through the gateway, Philammon, dazzled by the sudden transition from the darkness within to the blaze of moon and starlight which flooded the street, and walls, and shining roofs, hung back a moment. That hesitation probably saved his life, for in an instant he saw a dark figure spring out of the shadow, a long knife flashed across his eyes, and a priest next to him sank upon the pavement with a groan, while the assassin dashed off down the street, hotly pursued by monks and parabolani.

Philammon, who ran like a desert ostrich, had soon outstripped all but Peter, when several more dark figures sprang out of doorways and corners and joined, or seem to join, the pursuit. Suddenly, however, after running a hundred yards, they drew up opposite the mouth of a side street, the assassin stopped also. Peter, suspecting something wrong, slackened his pace, and caught Philammon's arm.

'Do you see those fellows in the shadow?'

But, before Philammon could answer, some

thirty or forty men, their daggers gleaming in the moonlight, moved out into the middle of the street, and received the fugitives into their ranks. What was the meaning of it? Here was a pleasant taste of the ways of the most Christian and civilised city of the Empire!

'Well,' thought Philammon, 'I have come out to see the world, and I seem, at this rate, to be likely to see enough of it.'

Peter turned at once, and fled as quickly as he had pursued, while Philammon, considering discretion the better part of valour, followed, and they rejoined their party breathless.

'There is an armed mob at the end of the street.'

'Assassins! *Jews! 'A conspiracy!' Up rose a babel of doubtful voices. The foe appeared in sight, advancing stealthily, and the whole party took to flight, led once more by Peter, who seemed determined to make free use, in behalf of his own safety, of the long legs which nature had given him.

Philammon followed, sulkily and unwillingly, at a foot's pace, but he had not gone a dozen yards when a pitiable voice at his feet called to him—

'Help! mercy! Do not leave me here to be murdered! I am a Christian, indeed I am a Christian!'

Philammon stooped, and lifted from the ground a comely negro woman, weeping, and shivering in a few tattered remnants of clothing.

'I ran out when they said the church was on fire,' sobbed the poor creature, 'and the Jews beat and wounded me. They tore my shawl and tunic off me before I could get away from them, and then our own people run over me and trod me down. And now my husband will beat me if I ever get home. Quick! up this side street, or we shall be murdered!'

The armed men, whosoever they were, were close on them. There was no time to be lost, and Philammon, assuring her that he would not desert her, hurried her up the side street which she pointed out. But the pursuers had caught sight of them, and while the mass held on up the main street, three or four turned aside and gave chase. The poor negress could only hump along, and Philammon, unaimed, looked back, and saw the bright steel points gleaming in the moonlight, and made up his mind to die as a monk should. Nevertheless, youth is hopeful. One chance for life. He thrust the negress into a dark doorway, where her colour hid her well enough, and had just time to ensconce himself behind a pillar, when the foremost pursuer reached him. He held his breath in fearful suspense. Should he be seen? He would not die without a struggle at least. No! the fellow ran on, panting. But in a minute more, another came up, saw him suddenly, and sprang aside startled. That start saved Philammon. Quick as a cat, he leapt upon him, felled him to the earth with a single blow, tore the dagger from his hand, and sprang to his feet again just in time to strike his new weapon full into the third

pursuer's face. 'The man put his hand to his head, and recoiled against a fellow-ruffian, who was close on his heels. Philammon, flushed with victory, took advantage of the confusion, and before the worthy pair could recover, dealt them half a dozen blows which, luckily for them, came from an unpractised hand, or the young monk might have had more than one life to answer for. As it was, they turned and limped off, cursing in an unknown tongue, and Philammon found himself triumphant and alone, with the trembling negress and the prostrate ruffian, who, stunned by the blow and the fall, lay groaning on the pavement.'

It was all over in a minute. . . . The negress was kneeling under the gateway, pouring out her simple thanks to Heaven for this unexpected deliverance, and Philammon was about to kneel too, when a thought struck him; and coolly despoiling the Jew of his shawl and sash, he handed them over to the poor negress, considering them fairly enough as his own by right of conquest, but, lo and behold! as she was overwhelming him with thanks, a fresh mob poured into the street from the upper end, and were close on them before they were aware.

A flush of terror and despair, . . . and then a burst of joy, as, by mingled moonlight and torchlight, Philammon detected priestly robes, and in the forefront of the battle—there being no apparent danger—Peter the leader, who seemed to be anxious to prevent inquiry, by beginning to talk as fast as possible.

'Ah, boy! Safe? The saints be praised! We give you up for dead! Whom have you here? A prisoner? And we have another. He ran right into off arms up the street, and the Lord delivered him into our hand. He must have passed you.'

'So he did,' said Philammon, dragging up his captive, 'and here is his fellow-wounded! Whereon the two worthies were speedily tied together by the elbows, and the party marched on once more in search of Alexander's church, and the supposed conflagration.'

Philammon looked round for the negress, but she had vanished. He was far too much ashamed of being known to have been alone with a woman to say anything about her. Yet he longed to see her again; an interest even something like an affection—had already sprung up in his heart toward the poor simple creature whom he had delivered from death. Instead of thanking her ungrateful for not staying to tell what he had done for her, he was thankful to her for having saved his blushes, by disappearing so opportunely. . . . And he longed to tell her so—to know if she was hurt—to— Oh, Philammon! only four days from the Laura, and a whole regiment of women acquaintances already! True, Providence having sent into the world about as many women as men, it may be difficult to keep out of their way altogether. Perhaps, too, Providence may have intended them to be of some use to that other sex, with whom it has so mixed them up.

Don't argue, poor Philammon; Alexander's church is on fire!—forward!

And so they hurried on, a confused mass of monks and populace, with their hapless prisoners in the centre, who, hauled, cuffed, questioned, and cursed by twenty self-elected inquisitors at once, thought fit, either from Jewish obstinacy or sheer bewilderment, to give no account whatsoever of themselves.

As they turned the corner of a street, the folding-doors of a large gateway rolled open, a long line of glittering figures poured across the road, dropped their spears on the pavement with a single rattle, and remained motionless. The front rank of the mob recoiled, and an awe-struck whisper ran through them.

'The Str' our ones!' 'Who are they?' asked Philammon in a whisper.

'The soldiers—the Roman soldiers,' answered a whisperer to him.

Philammon, who was among the leaders, had realised too—he hardly knew why—at that stern apparition. His next instinct was to press forward as close as he dared.

And these were Roman soldiers!—the conquerors of the world! the men whose name had thrilled him from his childhood with vague awe and admiration, dimly heard of up there in the lonely Laura.

Roman soldiers! And here he was face to face with them at last!

His curiosity received a sudden check, however, as he found his arm seized by an officer, as he took him to be, from the gold ornaments on his belt and empress, who lifted his vine-stock threateningly over the young monk's head, and demanded—

'What's all this about? Why are you not quietly in your beds, you Alexandrian rascals?'

'Alexander's church is on fire,' answered Philammon, thinking the shortest answer the wisest.

'So much the better.'

'And the Jews are murdering the Christians.'

'Fight it out, then. Turn in, men, it's only a riot.'

And the steel-clad apparition suddenly flashed round and vanished, tramping and jangling, into the dark jaws of the guardhouse-gate, while the stream, its temporary barrier removed, rushed on wilder than ever.

Philammon, hurried on too with them, not without a strange feeling of disappointment.

'Only a riot!' Peter was chuckling to his brothers over their cleverness in 'having kept the prisoners in the middle, and stopped the rascals' mouths till they were past the guardhouse.'

'A fine thing to boast of,' thought Philammon, 'in the face of the men who make and unmake kings and Caesars.'

'Only a riot!' He, and the corps of distinct victors—whom he fancied the most august body on earth—and Alexander's church, Christians murdered by Jews, persecution of the Catholic faith, and all the rest of it, was simply, then, not worth the notice of those forty men, alone and secure in

the sense of power and discipline, among tens of thousands. He hated them, those soldiers. Was it because they were indifferent to the cause of which he was inclined to think himself a not unimportant member, on the strength of his late Samson's defeat of Jewish persecutors? At least, he obeyed the little porter's advice, and 'felt very small indeed.'

And he felt smaller still, being young and alive to ridicule, when, at some sudden ebb or flow, wave or wriggle of the Babel sea, which weltered up and down every street, a shrill female voice informed them from an upper window, that Alexander's church was not on fire at all, that she had gone to the top of the house, as they might have gone, if they had not been fools, etc. etc., and that it 'looked as safe and as ugly as ever', whereupon a brickbat or two having been sent up in answer, she shut the blinds, leaving them to halt, inquire, discover gradually and piecemeal, after the method of mobs, they had been following the nature of mobs, that no one had seen the church on fire, or seen any one else who had seen the same, or even seen any light in the sky in any quarter, or knew who raised the cry, or—in short, Alexander's church was two miles off, if it was on fire, it was either burnt down or saved by this time, if not, the night air was, to say the least, chilly and, whether it was or not, there were ambuscades of Jews—Satan only knew how strong—in every street between them and it.

Might it not be better to secure their two prisoners, and then ask for further orders from the archbishop? Whereupon, after the manner of mobs, they melted off the way they came, by twos and threes, till three of a contrary opinion began to hulk themselves left alone, and having a strong dislike to Jewish diggers, were fain to follow the stream.

With a panic or two, a cry of 'The Jews are on us!' and a general rush in every direction (in which one or two, seeking shelter from the awful nothing in neighbouring houses, were handed over to the watch as burglars, and sent to the quarries accordingly), they reached the Scrapem, and there found, of course, a counter-mob collected to inform them that they had been taken in—that Alexander's church had never been on fire at all—that the Jews had murdered a thousand Christians at least, though three dead bodies, including the poor priest who lay in the house within, were all of the thousand who had yet been seen—and that the whole Jews' quarter was marching upon them. At which news it was considered advisable to retreat into the archbishop's house as quickly as possible, barricade the doors, and prepare for a siege—a work at which Philammon performed prodigies, tearing woodwork from the rooms, and stones from the parapets, before it struck some of the more sober-minded that it was as well to wait for some more decided demonstration of attack, before incurring so heavy a carpenter's bill of repairs.

At last the heavy tramp of footsteps was

heard coming down the street, and every window was crowded in an instant with eager heads; while Peter rushed downstairs to heat the large copper, having some experience in the defensive virtues of boiling water. The bright moon glittered on a long line of helmets and cuirasses. Thank Heaven! it was the soldiery.

'Are the Jews coming?' 'Is the city quiet?' 'Why did not you prevent this villainy?' 'A thousand citizens murdered while you have been snoring'—and a volley of similar ejaculations, greeted the soldiers as they passed, and were answered by a cool—'To your perches, and sleep, you noisy chickens, or we'll set the coop on fire about your ears.'

A yell of defiance answered this polite speech, and the soldiery, who knew perfectly well that the unarmed ecclesiastics within were not to be trifled with, and had no ambition to die by coping-stones and hot pater, went quietly on their way.

All danger was now past, and the cackling rose jubilant, louder than ever, and might have continued till daylight, had not a window in the courtyard been suddenly thrown open, and the awful voice of Cyril commanded silence.

'Every man sleep where he can. I shall wait you at daybreak. The superiors of the parabolani are to come up to me with the two prisoners, and the men who took them.'

In a few minutes Philammon found himself, with some twenty others, in the great man's presence. He was sitting at his desk, writing, quietly, small notes on slips of paper.

'Here is the youth who helped me to pursue the murderer, and having outrun me, was attacked by the prisoners,' said Peter. 'My hands are clean from blood, I thank the Lord!'

'Three set on me with daggers,' said Philammon, apologetically, 'and I was forced to take this one's dagger away, and beat off the two others with it.'

Cyril smiled, and shook his head.

'Thou art a brave boy, but hast thou not read, "If a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other"?''

'I could not run away, as Master Peter and the rest did.'

'So you ran away, eh? my worthy friend?'

'Is it not written,' asked Peter, in his blandest tone, 'If they persecute you in one city, flee unto another?'

Cyril smiled again. 'And why could not you run away, boy?'

Philammon blushed scarlet, but he dared not lie. 'There was a—a poor black woman, wounded and trodden down, and I dare not leave her, for she told me she was a Christian.'

'Right, my son, right. I shall remember this. What was her name?'

'I did not hear it.—Stay, I think she said Judith.'

'Ah! the wife of the porter who stands at the lecture-room door, which God confound! A devout woman, full of good works, and sorely ill-treated by her heathen husband. Peter, thou

shalt go to her to-morrow with the physician, and see if she is in need of anything. Boy, thou hast done well. Cyril never forgets. Now bring up those Jews. Their Rabbis were with me two hours ago promising peace, and thus is the way they have kept their promise. So be it. The wicked is snared in his own wickedness.'

The Jews were brought in, but kept a stubborn silence.

'Your holiness perceives,' said some one, 'that they have each of them rings of green palm-leaf on their right hand.'

'A very dangerous sign! An evident conspiracy!' commented Peter.

'Ah! What does that mean, you rascals? Answer me, as you value your lives.'

'You have no business with us. We are Jews, and none of your people,' said one sulkily.

'None of my people? You have murdered my people! None of my people? Every soul in Alexandria is mine, if the kingdom of God means anything, and you shall find it out. I shall not argue with you, my good friends, any more than I did with your Rabbis. Take these fellows away, Peter, and lock them up in the fuel-cellar, and see that they are guarded. If any man lets them go, his life shall be for the life of them.'

And the two worthies were led out.

'Now, my brothers, here are your orders. You will divide these notes among yourselves, and distribute them to trusty and godly catholics in your districts. Wait one hour, till the city be quiet, and then start, and raise the church. I must have thirty thousand men by sunrise.'

'What for, your holiness?' asked a dozen voices.

'Read your notes. Whosoever will fight to-morrow under the banner of the Lord, shall have free plunder of the Jews' quarter, outrage and murder only forbidden. As I have said it, God do so to me, and more also, if there be a Jew left in Alexandria by to-morrow at noon. Go.'

And the staff of orderlies filed out, thanking Heaven that they had a leader so prompt and valiant, and spent the next hour over the hall fire, eating millet cakes, drinking bad beer, likening Cyril to Barak, Gideon, Samson, Jephthah, Judas Maccabeus, and all the worthies of the Old Testament, and then started on their pacific errand.

Philammon was about to follow them, when Cyril stopped him.

'Stay, my son, you are young and rash, and do not know the city. Lie down here and sleep in the anteroom. Three hours hence the sun rises, and we go forth against the enemies of the Lord.'

Philammon threw himself on the floor in a corner, and slumbered like a child, till he was awakened in the gray dawn by one of the parabolani.

'Up, boy! and see what we can do. Cyril

goes down greater than Barak the son of Abinoam, not with ten, but with thirty thousand men at his feet!

'Ay, my brothers!' said Cyril, as he passed proudly out in full pontificals, with a gorgeous retinue of priests and deacons 'the Catholic Church has her organisation, her unity, her common cause, her watchwords, such as the tyrants of the earth, in their weakness and their divisions, may envy and tremble at, but cannot mutate. Could Orestes raise, in three hours, thirty thousand men, who would die for him?'

'As we will for you!' shouted many voices.

'Say for the kingdom of God.' And he passed

it.

And so ended Philanimon's first day in Alexandria.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW DIOGENES

ABOUT five o'clock the next morning, Raphael Aben-Ezra was lying in bed, alternately yawning over a manuscript of Philo Judæus, pulling the ears of his huge British mastiff, watching the sparkle of the 'mountain in the court outside, wondering when that lazy boy would come to tell him that the bath was warmed, and meditating, half aloud

'Alas! poor me! Here I am, back again just at the point from which I started.'

How am I to get free from that heathen Suen? Plagues on her! I shall end by falling in love with her. . . I don't know that I have not

got a bail of the blind boy in me already. I felt absurdly glad the other day when that fool

told me he dare not accept her modest offer. Ha! ha! A delicious joke it would have been

to have seen Orestes howling down to stocks and stones, and Hypatia installed in the ruins of

the Scraparium, as High Priestess of the Abomin-
tion of Desolation! . . . And now. . . Well

I call all heaven and earth to witness, that I

have fought valiantly. I have faced mighty

little Eros like a man, red in hand. What

could a poor human being do more than try to

marry her to some one else, in hopes of sickening

himself of the whole matter? Well, every

moth has its candle, and every man his destiny.

But the darling of the little fool? What huge

imaginings she has! She might be another

Zenobia, now, with Orestes as Odenatus. And

Raphael Aben-Ezra to play the part of Longinus

and receive Longinus's salary of six or

poison. She don't care for me, she would smother

me, or a thousand of me, the cold blooded

fanatical archangel that she is, to water with

our blood the foundation of some new temple of

cast rags and broken dolls. . . Oh, Raphael

Aben-Ezra, what a fool you are! You know

you are going off as usual to her lecture, this

very morning!

At this crisis of his confessions the page

entered, and announced, not the bath, but Miriam.

The old woman, who, in virtue of her profession, had the private entry of all fashionable chambers in Alexandria, came in hurriedly, and instead of seating herself as usual, for a gossip, remained standing, and motioned the boy out of the room.

'Well, my sweet mother? Sit. Ah? I see! You rascal, you have brought in no wine for the lady. Don't you know her little ways yet?'

'Eros has got it at the door, of course,' answered the boy, with a saucy air of offended virtue.

'Out with you, imp of Satan!' cried Miriam. 'This is no time for wheedling. Raphael Aben-Ezra, why are you lying here? Did you not receive a note last night?'

'A note? So I did, but I was too sleepy to

read it. There it lies. Boy, bring it here. . .

What's this? A scrap out of Jeremiah? "Arise, and flee for thy life, for evil is determined

against the whole house of Israel!"—Does this

come from the chief rabbi, I always took the

venerable father for a sober man. . . Eh,

Miriam?'

'Fool! instead of laughing at the sacred words

of the prophets, get up and obey them. I sent

you the note.'

'Why can't I obey them in bed? Here I am,

reading hard at the Cabbala, or Philo—who is

stupider still—and what more would you have?'

The old woman, unable to restrain her im-

paticence, literally ran at him, gnashing her teeth,

and, before he was aware, dragged him out of

bed upon the floor, where he stood meekly

wondering what would come next.

'Many thanks, mother, for having saved me

the one daily torture of life—getting out of bed

by one's own exertion.'

'Raphael Aben-Ezra! are you so besotted

with your philosophy and your heathenry, and

your laziness, and your contempt for God and

man, that you will see your nation given up for

a prey, and your wealth plundered by heathen

dogs? I tell you, Cyril has sworn that God

shall do so to him, and more also, if there be a

Jew left in Alexandria by to-morrow about this

time.'

'So much the better for the Jews, then, if

they are half as tired of this noisy Pandemonium

as I am. But how can I help it? Am I Queen

Ethere, to go to Abasnerus there in the prefect's

palace, and get him to hold out the golden

sceptre to me?'

'Fool! if you had read that note last night,

you might have gone and saved us, and your

name would have been handed down for ever

from generation to generation as a second Mor-

decai.

'My dear mother, Abasnerus would have been

either fast asleep, or far too drunk to listen to

me. Why did you not go yourself?'

'Do you suppose that I would not have gone

if I could? Do you fancy me a sluggard like

yourself! At the risk of my life I have got
 into in time, if there be time to save you'

'Well shall I dress! What can be done
 now!'

'Nothing! The streets are blocked by
 Cyril's mob—There! do you hear the shouts
 and screams! They are attacking the father
 part of the quarter already'

'What! are they murdering them?' asked
 Raphael, throwing on his pelisse 'Because,
 if it has really come to a practical joke of that
 kind, I shall have the greatest pleasure in
 employing a counter-irritant. Heie, boy! My
 sword and dagger! Quick!'

'No, the hypocrites! No blood is to be
 shed, they say, if we make no resistance, and
 let them pass. Cyril and his monks are
 there, to prevent outrage, and so forth.
 The Angel of the Lord scatter them!'

The conversation was interrupted by the
 rushing in of the whole household, in an agony
 of terror, and Raphael, at last thoroughly
 roused, went to a window, which looked into
 the street. The thoroughfare was full of scold-
 ing women and screaming children, while men,
 old and young, looked on at the plunder of
 their property with true Jewish doggedness, too
 prudent to resist, but too manful to complain,
 while furniture came flying out of every window,
 and from door after door poured a stream of
 rascality, carrying off money, jewels, silks, and
 all the treasures which Jewish usury had
 accumulated during many a generation. But
 unmoved amid the roaring sea of plunderers
 and plundered, stood, scattered up and down,
 Cyril's spiritual police, enforcing, by a word, an
 obedience which the Roman soldiers could only
 have compelled by hard blows of the spear-butt.
 'There was to be no outrage, and no outrage
 there was and more than once some man in
 priestly robes hurried through the crowd,
 leading by the hand, tenderly enough, a lost
 child in search of its parents.

Raphael stood watching silently, while
 Miriam, who had followed him upstairs, paced
 the room in an ecstacy of rage, calling vainly to
 him to speak or act.

'Let me alone, mother,' he said, at last 'It
 will be full ten minutes more before they pay
 me a visit, and in the meantime what can one
 do better than watch the progress of this, the
 little Exodus!'

'Not like that first one! Then we went
 forth with cymbals and songs to the Red Sea
 triumph! Then we borrowed, every woman of
 her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of
 gold, and raiment.'

'And now we pay them back again, it
 is but fair, after all. We ought to have listened
 to Jeremiah a thousand years ago, and never
 gone back again, like fools, into a country to
 which we were so deeply in debt.'

'Accursed land!' cried Miriam. 'In an evil
 hour our forefathers disobeyed the prophet;
 and now we reap the harvest of our sins!—Our
 sons have forgotten the faith of their forefathers

for the philosophy of the Gentiles, and fill their
 chambers' (with a contemptuous look round)
 'with heathen imagery; and our daughters are
 —Look there!'

As she spoke, a beautiful girl rushed shriek-
 ing out of an adjoining house, followed by some
 half-drunk ruffian, who was clutching at the
 gold chains and trinkets with which she was
 profusely bedecked, after the fashion of Jewish
 women. The rascal had just seized with one
 hand her streaming black tresses, and with the
 other a heavy collar of gold, which was wound
 round her throat, when a priest, stepping up,
 laid a quiet hand upon his shoulder. The
 fellow, too maddened to obey, turned, and
 struck back the restraining arm . . . and in an
 instant was felled to the earth by a young
 monk . . .

'Toucheest thou the Lord's anointed, sacri-
 legious wretch!' cried the man of the desert,
 as the fellow dropped on the pavement, with
 his booty in his hand.

The monk tore the gold necklace from his
 grasp, looked at it for a moment with childish
 wonder, as a savage might at some incompre-
 hensible product of civilised industry, and then,
 spitting on it in contempt, dashed it on the
 ground, and trampled it into the mud.

'Follow the golden wedge of Achan, and the
 silver of Iscarot, thou root of all evil!' And
 he rushed on, yelling, 'Down with the circum-
 cision! Down with the blasphemers!'—while
 the poor girl vanished among the crowd.

Raphael watched him with a quaint thought-
 ful smile, while Miriam shrieked aloud at the
 destruction of the precious trumpery.

'The monk is right, mother. If those Chris-
 tians go on upon that method, they must beat us.
 It has been our ruin from the first, our fault
 for loading ourselves with the thick clay.'

'What will you do?' cried Miriam, clutching
 him by the arm.

'What will you do?'

'I am safe. I have a boat waiting for me on
 the canal at the garden gate, and in Alexandria
 I stay, no Christian hound shall make old
 Miriam move a foot against her will. My jewels
 are all buried—my girls are sold, save what
 you can, and come with me!'

'My sweet mother, why so peculiarly solicitous
 about my welfare, above that of all the sons of
 Judah?'

'Because—because—No, I'll tell you that
 another time. But I loved your mother, and
 she loved me. Come!'

Raphael relapsed into silence for a few minutes,
 and watched the tumult below.

'How those Christian priests keep their men
 in order! There is no use resisting destiny.
 They are the strong men of the time, after all,
 and the little Exodus must needs have its course.
 Miriam, daughter of Jonathan—'

'I am no man's daughter! I have neither
 father nor mother, husband nor—Call me
 mother again!'

'Whatsoever I am to call you, there are

jewels enough in that closet to buy half Alexandria. Take them. I am going.

'With me!'

'Out into the wide world, my dear lady. I am bored with riches. That young savage of a monk understood them better than we Jews do. I shall just make a virtue of necessity, and turn beggar.'

'Beggar?'

'Why not? Don't argue. These scoundrels will make no one, whether I like or not, so forth I go. There will be few leavetakings. This brute of a dog is the only friend I have on earth, and I love her, because she has the true old, dogged, spiteful, cunning, obstinate, Maccabee spirit in her—of which it was her a spark lit in us just now, there would be no little Exodus, eh, Bran, my beauty?'

You can escape with me to the perfects, and save the mass of your wealth.'

'Exactly what I don't want to do. I hate that prophet as I hate a dead camel, or the vulture who eats him. And to tell the truth, I am growing a great deal too fond of that heathen woman there.'

'What?' shrieked the old woman—'Hypatia?'

'If you choose. At all events, the easiest way to cut the knot is to expatriate. I shall beg my passage on board the first ship to Cyrene, and go and study life in Italy with Hierarchus's expedition. Quick—take the jewels, and loved flesh troubles her yourself with them. I am going. My liberators are battering the outer door already.'

Miriam greedily tore out of the closet diamonds and pearls, rubies and emeralds, and concealed them among her ample robes—'Go! go! Escape from her! I will hide your jewels.'

'Ay, hide them, as mother earth does all things, in that all-embracing bosom. You will have doubled them before we meet again, no doubt. Farewell, mother!'

'But not for ever, Raphael! not for ever! Promise me, in the name of the four archangels, that if you are in trouble or danger, you will write to me, at the house of Euphronion.'

'The little porter philosopher, who hangs about Hypatia's lecture-room?'

'The same, the same. He will give me your letter, and I swear to you, I will cross the mountains of Kaf, to deliver you—I will pay you all back. By Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob I swear! May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not account to you for the last penny!'

'Don't commit yourself to rash promises, my dear lady. If I am bored with poverty, I can but borrow a few gold pieces of a rabbi, and turn pedlar. I really do not trust you to pay me back, so I shall not be disappointed if you do not. Why should I?'

'Because—because—O God! No—never mind! You shall have all back. Spirit of Elias! where is the black agate? Why is it

not among these?—The broken half of the black agate talisman!'

Raphael turned pale. 'How did you know that I have a black agate?'

'How did I? How did I not?' cried she, clutching him by the arm. 'Where is it? All depends on that! Fool!' she went on, throwing him off from her at arm's length, as a sudden suspicion stung her—'you have not given it to the heathen woman?'

'By the soul of my fathers, then, you mysterious old witch, who seem to know everything, that is exactly what I have done.'

Miriam clapped her hands together wildly. 'Lost! lost! lost! No! I will have it, if I tear it out of her heart! I will be avenger of her—the strange woman who flatters with her words, to whom the simple go in, and know not that the devil is there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell! Cool do so to me, and thou also, if she and her sorceries be on earth a twelvemonth hence!'

'Silence, Jezabel! Heathen or none, she is as pure as the sunlight! I only gave it her because she launched the talisman upon it.'

'To enchant you with it, to your ruin!'

'Bingo of a slave-dealer! you fancy every one as base as the poor wretches whom you buy and sell to shame, that you may make them slaves into the children of hell, if that be possible, as yourself!'

Miriam looked at him, her large black eyes widening and kindling. For an instant she lit for her poniard—and then burst into an agony of tears, hid her face in her withered hands, and rushed from the room, as a crash and shout below announced the bursting of the door.

'There she goes with my jewels! And here come my guests, with the young monk at their head.—One rising when the other sets. A worthy pair of Discours! Come, Bran! Boys! Slaves! Where are you? Sit down, one what he can lay his hands on, and run for your lives through the back gate!'

The slaves had obeyed him already. He walked smiling downstairs through utter solitude, and in the front passage met face to face the mob of monks, costermongers and dock-workers, fishermen and beggars, who were thronging up the narrow entry, and bursting into the doors right and left, and at their head, alas! the young monk who had just trampled the weeklings into the mud. No other, in fact, than Euphronion.

'Welcome, my worthy guests! Enter, I beseech you, and fulfil, in your own peculiar way, the precepts which bid you not be over anxious for the good things of this life. . . . For eating and drinking, my kitchen and cellar are at your service. For clothing, if any illustrious personage will do me the honour to change his holy rags with me, here are an Indian shawl-pelisse and a pair of silk trousers at his service. Perhaps you will accommodate me, my handsome young captain, choragus of this new school of the prophets?'

Philammon, who was the person addressed, tried to push by him contemptuously.

'Allow me, sir, I lead the way. This dagger is poisoned, a scratch and you are dead. This dog is of the true British breed, it she bites you, red hot iron will not loose her, till she hears the bone crack. If any one will change clothes with me, all I have is at your service. If not, the first that stirs is a dead man.'

There was no mistaking the quiet, high bred determination of the speaker. Had he ragged and blustered, Philammon could have met him on his own ground. But there was an easy self-possession about him, which utterly abashed the young monk, and abashed, too, the whole crowd of rascals at his heels.

'I'll change clothes with you, you Jewish dog,' roared a dirty fellow out of the mob.

'I am your eternal debtor. Let us step into this side room. Walk Capstair, my friends. Take care there, sir!—That porcelain, whole, is worth three thousand gold pieces. Broken it is not worth three pence. I leave it to your good sense to treat it accordingly. Now then, my friend!' And in the midst of the raging vortex of plunderers, who were snatching up everything which they could carry away, and breaking everything which they could not, he quickly divested himself of his linen, and put on the ragged cotton tunic, and lattered straw hat, which the fellow handed over to him.

Philammon, who had hid from the first no mind to plunder, stood watching Raphael with dumb wonder, and a shudder of regret, he knew not why, passed through him, as he saw the mob tearing down pictures, and dashing statues to the ground. Heathen! they were, doubtless, but still, the Nymphs and Venuses looked too lovely to be so brutally destroyed. There was something almost humanly pitiful in their poor broken arms and legs, as they lay about upon the pavement. He laughed at himself for the notion, but he could not laugh it away.

Raphael seemed to think that he ought not to laugh it away, for he pointed to the fragments, and with a quaint look at the young monk—

'Our nurses used to tell us,

'If you can't make it,
You ought not to break it.'

'I had no nurse,' said Philammon.

'Ah!—that accounts for this and other things. Well,' he went on, with the most provoking good nature, 'you are in a fair road, my handsome youth, I wish you joy of your fellow workmen, and of your apprenticeship in the noble art of monkery. Riot and pillage, shrieking women and homeless children in your twentieth summer, are the sure path to a snail-shell, such as Paul of Tarsus, who, with all his eccentricities, was a gentleman, certainly never contemplated. I have heard of Phœbus Apollo under many disguises, but this is the first time I ever saw him in the wolf's ludo.'

'Or in the lion's,' said Philammon, trying in his shame to make a fine speech.

'Like the Ass in the Fable. Farewell! Stand out of the way, friends! 'Ware teeth and poison!'

And he disappeared among the crowd, who made way respectfully enough for his dagger and his bristled rampart.

CHAPTER VII

THINK BY WHOM OFFENCES COME

PHILAMMON'S heart smote him all that day, whenever he thought of his morning's work. Till then all Christians, monks above all, had been infallible in his eyes. All Jews and heathens, insane and accursed. Moreover, meekness under insult, fortitude in calamity, the contempt of worldly comfort, the worship of poverty as a noble estate, were virtues which the Church Catholic boasted as her peculiar heritage. On which side had the balance of these qualities inclined that morning? The figure of Raphael, striking out rugged and penurious into the wide world, haunted him, with its quiet self-assured smile. And there haunted him, too, another penitency in the man, which he had never before remarked in any one but Arsenius—that ease and grace, that courtesy and self-restraint, which made Raphael's monks rankle all the more keenly, because he felt that the reboiler was in some mysterious way superior to him, and saw through him, and could have won him over, or crushed him in argument, or in intrigue—or in anything, perhaps, except mere brute force. Strange—that Raphael, of all men, should in those few moments have unmasked him so much of Arsenius, and that the very same qualities which gave a peculiar charm to the latter should give a peculiar unloveliness to the former, and yet be, without a doubt, the same. What was it? Was it rank which gave it? Arsenius had been a great & in, he knew—the companion of kings. And Raphael seemed rich. He had heard the monk crying out against the priest for favouring him. Was it then familiarity with the great ones of the world which produced this manner and tone? It was a real strength, whether in Arsenius or in Raphael. He felt humbled before it—envied it. If it made Arsenius a more complete and more captivating person, why should it not do the same for him? Why should not he, too, have his share of it?

Bungling with it such thoughts as these, the day ran on till noon, and the mid-day meal, and the afternoon's work, to which Philammon looked forward joyfully, as a refuge from his own thoughts.

He was sitting on his sheepskin upon a step, basking, like a true son of the desert, in a blaze of fiery sunshine, which made the black stone-work too hot to touch with the bare hand, watching the swallows, as they threaded the columns of the Sorapeum, and thinking how

often he had delighted in their air-dance, as they turned and hawked up and down the dusty old glen at Seta. A crowd of citizens with causes, appeals, and petitions, were passing in and out from the patriarch's audience-room. Peter and the archdeacon were waiting in the shade close by, for the gutturing of the parabolani, and talking over the morning's work in an earnest whisper, in which the names of Hypatia and Orestes were now and then audible.

An old priest came up, and bowing reverently enough to the archdeacon, requested the help of one of the parabolani. He had a sailor's truly, all fever-stricken, who must be removed to the hospital at once.

The archdeacon looked at him, answered an odd hand 'Very well,' and went on with his task.

The priest, bowing lower than before, represented the immediate necessity for help.

'It is very odd,' said Peter to the swallows in the Scapennum, 'that some people cannot obtain influence enough in their own parishes to get the simplest good works performed without formulating his holiness the patriarch.'

The old priest mumbled some sort of excuse, and the archdeacon, without deigning a second look at him, said—'Find him a man, brother Peter. Anybody will do. What is that boy—Philammon doing there? Let him go with Master Hieron.'

Peter seemed not to receive the proposition favourably, and whispered something to the archdeacon.

'No. I can spare none of the rest. Important persons must take their chance of being well-served. Come—here are our brethren—we will all go together.'

The father together the better for the boy's sake,' grumbled Peter, loud enough for Philammon—perhaps for the old priest—to overhear him.

So Philammon went out with them, and as he went questioned his companions mockingly enough as to who Raphael was.

'A friend of Hypatia's! that name, too, haunted him, and he began, as stealthily and modestly as he could, to obtain information about her. There was no need for his caution for the very mention of her name roused the whole party into a fury of execration.

'My God confound her, such an enchantress, dealer in spells and sorceries! She is the strange woman of whom Solomon prophesied.'

'It is my opinion,' said another, 'that she is the forerunner of Antichrist.'

'Perhaps the virgin of whom it is prophesied that he will be born,' suggested another.

'Not that, I'll warrant her,' said Peter, with a savage sneer.

'And is Raphael Ahen-Ezra her pupil in philosophy?' asked Philammon.

'Her pupil in whatsoever she can find wherewith to delude men's souls,' said the old priest. 'The reality of philosophy has died long ago,

but the great ones find it still worth their while to worship its shadow.'

'Some of them worship more than a shadow, when they hunt her house,' said Peter. 'Do you think Orestes goes thither only for philosophy?'

'We must not judge harsh judgments,' said the old priest, 'Synesius of Cyrene is a holy man, and yet he loves Hypatia well.'

'He a holy man?—and keeps a wife! One who had the insolence to tell the blessed Theophilus himself that he would not be made bishop unless he were allowed to remain with her, and despised the gift of the Holy Ghost in comparison of the carnal joys of wedlock, not knowing the Scriptures, which say that those who are in the flesh cannot please God! Well said Synesius of Rome of such men—"Can the Holy Spirit of God dwell in other than holy bodies?" No wonder that such a one as Synesius grovels at the feet of Orestes' mistress!'

'Then she is profligate?' asked Philammon. 'She must be. Has a heathen faith and grace? And without faith and grace, are not all our righteousnesses as filthy rags! What says St. Paul—That God has given them over to a reprobate mind, full of all injustice, uncleanness, covetousness, malice, you know the catalogue—why do you ask me?'

'Alas! and is she this?'

'Alas! And why dost? How would the Gospel be glorified if heathens were holier than Christians? It ought to be so, therefore it is so. If she seems to have virtue, then, being done without the grace of Christ, are only bedazzled views, cunning shams, the devil transformed into an angel of light. And as for chastity, the flower and crown of all virtues—whosoever says that she, being yet a heathen, has that, blasphemes the Holy Spirit, whose peculiar and highest gift it is, and is anathema unmanita for ever! Amen!'

And Peter, devoutly crossing himself, turned angrily and contemptuously away from his young companion. Philammon was quite shrewd enough to see that assertion was not identical with proof. But Peter's argument of 'straight to be, therefore it is,' is one which saves a great deal of trouble—and no doubt he had very good sources of information. So Philammon walked on sad, he knew not why, at the new notion which he had formed of Hypatia, as a sort of awful sorceress Mesdina, whose den was foul with magicians and immed souls of men. And yet if that was all she had to teach, whence had her pupil Raphael learned that fortitude of his? If philosophy had, as they said, utterly died out, then what was Raphael?

Just then, Peter and the rest turned up a side street, and Philammon and Hieron were left to go on their joint errand together. They paced on for some way in silence, up one street and down another, till Philammon, for want of anything better to say, asked where they were going.

'Where I choose, at all events. No, young man! If I, a priest, am to be insulted by archdeacons and readers, I won't be insulted by you.'

'I assure you I meant no harm.'

'Of course not, you all learn the same trick, and the young ones catch it of the old ones fast enough. Words smoother than butter, yet very swart.'

'You do not mean to complain of the archdeacon and his companions?' said Philammon, who of course was boiling over with pugnacious respect for the body to which he belonged.

No answer.

'Why, sir, are they not among the most holy and devoted of men?'

'Ah—yes,' said his companion, in a tone which sounded very like 'Ah—no.'

'You do not think so?' asked Philammon humbly.

'You are young, you are young. Wait a while till you have seen as much as I have. A degenerate age this, my son; not like the good old times, when men dare suffer and die for the faith. We are too prosperous nowadays, and fine ladies walk about with Magdalens embroidered on their silks, and gospels hanging round their necks. When I was young they died for that with which they now bedizen themselves.'

'But I was speaking of the present.'

'Ah, there are a great many among them who have not much business where they are. Don't say I said so. But many a rich man puts his name on the list of the guild just to get his exemption from taxes, and leaves the work to poor men like you. Rotten, rotten my son, and you will find it out. The preachers, now, people used to say—I know Abbot Isidore did—that I had as good a gift for expounding as any man in Pelusium, but since I came here, eleven years since, if you will believe it, I have never been asked to preach in my own parish church.'

'You surely jest?'

'True, as I am a christened man. I know why—I know why they are afraid of Isidore's iron here. . . Perhaps they may have caught the holy man's trick of plain speaking—and ears are dainty in Alexandria. And there are some in these parts, too, that have never forgiven him the part he took about those three villains, Marc, Zenon, and Martinian, and a certain letter that came of it, or another letter either, which we know of, about taking alms for the church from the gains of robbers and usurers. "Cyril never forgets." So he says to every one who does him a good turn. And so he does to every one who he fancies has done him a bad one. So here am I slaving away, a subordinate priest, while such fellows as Peter the Reader look down on me as their slave. But it's always so. There never was a bishop yet, except the blessed Augustine—would to Heaven I had taken my abbot's advice, and gone to him at Ilippo—who had not his

flatterers and his tale-bearers, and generally the archdeacon at the head of them, ready to step into the bishop's place when he dies, over the heads of hard-working parish priests. But that is the way of the world. The sleekest and the oiliest, and the noisiest, the man who can bring in most money to the charities, never mind whence or how, the man who will take most of the bishop's work off his hands, and agree with him in everything he wants, and save him, by spying and eavesdropping, the trouble of using his own eyes, that is the man to succeed in Alexandria, or Constantinople, or Rome at itself. Look now, there are but seven deacons to this great city, and all its priests, and they and the archdeacon are the masters of it and us. They and that Peter manage Cyril's work for him, and when Cyril makes the archdeacon a bishop, he will make Peter archdeacon. They have their reward, they have their reward and so has Cyril, for that matter.'

'How?'

'Why, don't say I said it. But what do I care? I have nothing to lose, I'm sure. But they do say that there are two ways of promotion in Alexandria: one by deserving it, the other by paying for it. That's all.'

'Impossible!'

'Oh, of course, quite impossible. But all I know is just this, that when that fellow Amminius got back again into Pelusium, after being turned out by the late bishop for a rogue and hypocrite as he was, and got the ear of this present bishop, and was appointed his steward, and ordained priest—I'd as soon have ordained that street dog—and plundered him and brought him to disgrace, for I don't believe this bishop is a bad man, but those who use rogues must expect to be called rogues—and ground the poor to the earth, and tyrannised over the whole city so that no man's property, or reputation, scarcely then lives, wife side, and after all, but the napuddee, when he was called on by his accusers, to bring the church in as owing him money, I just know that, that he added to all his other shamelessness this, that he offered the patriarch a large sum of money to buy a bishopric of him. . . And what do you think the patriarch answered?'

'Excommunicated the sacrilegious wretch, of course!'

'Sent him a letter to say that if he dared to do such a thing again he should really be forced to expose him! So the fellow, taking courage, brought his money himself the next time—and all the world says that Cyril would have made him a bishop after all, if Abbot Isidore had not written to remonstrate.'

'He could not have known the man's character,' said poor Philammon, hunting for an excuse.

'The whole Delta was ringing with it. Isidore had written to him again and again.'

'Surely then his wish was to prevent scandal, and preserve the unity of the church in the eyes of the heathen?'

The old man laughed bitterly. 'Ah, the old story—of preventing scandals by retaining them, and fancying that sin is a less evil than a little noise, as if the worst of all scandals was not the being discovered in hushing up a scandal! And as for nunt, if you want that, you must go back to the good old times of Diocletian and Decius.'

'The persecutors?'

'Ay, hoy—to the times of persecution, when Christians died like lambs, because they had like brothers. You will see very little of that now, except in some little remote county bishopric, which no one ever hears of from year's end to year's end. But in the cities it is all one great fight for place and power. Every one is jealous of his neighbour. The priests are jealous of the deacons, and good cause they have. The county bishops are jealous of the metropolitan, and he is jealous of the North African bishops, and quite right he is. What business have they to set up for themselves, as if they were infallible? It's a schism, I say—a complete schism. Did not the Council of Nice settle that the Metropolitan of Alexandria should have authority over Libya and Pentapolis, according to the ancient custom?'

'Of course he might,' said Philammon, 'jealous for the honour of his own patriarchate.'

'And the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople are jealous of our patriarch.'

'Of Cyril?'

'Of course, because he won't be at their beck and nod, and let them be lords and masters of Africa.'

'But surely these things can be settled by councils?'

'Councils? Wait till you have been at one. The blessed Abbot Isidore used to say, that if he ever was a bishop—which he never will be—he is far too honest for that—he would never go near one of them, for he never had seen one which did not call out every evil passion in men's hearts, and have the question more confounded with words than they found it, even if the whole matter was not settled beforehand by some chamberlain, or eunuch, or cook sent from court, as if he were an appointed vessel of the Spirit, to settle the dogmas of the Holy Catholic Church.'

'Cook?'

'Why, Valens sent his chief cook to stop Basil of Caesarea from opposing the Court doctrine. I tell you, the great battle in these cases is to get votes from courts, or to get to court yourself. When I was young, the Council of Antioch had to make a law to keep bishops from running off to Constantinople to intrigue, under pretence of pleading the cause of the orphan and widow. But what's the use of that, when every noisy and ambitious man shifts and shifts, from one see to another, till he settles himself close to Rome or Byzantium, and gets the emperor's ear, and plays into the hands of his courtiers?'

'Is it not written, "Speak not evil of dignities"?' said Philammon, in his most sentimental tone.

'Well, what of that? I don't speak evil of dignities, when I complain of the men who fill them badly, do I?'

'I never heard that interpretation of the text before.'

'Very likely not. That's no reason why it should not be true and orthodox. You will soon hear a good many more things, which are true enough—though whether they are orthodox or not, the court cooks must settle. Of course, I am a disappointed, irreverent old grumbler. Of course, and of course, too, young men must needs buy their own experience, instead of taking old folks at a gift. There's use your own eyes, and judge for yourself. There you may see what sort of saints are bred by this plan of managing the Catholic Church. There comes one of them. Now I say no more.'

As he spoke, two tall negroes came up to him, and set down before the steps of a large church which they were passing an object new to Philammon—a sedan-chair, the poles of which were inlaid with ivory and silver, and the upper part enclosed in rose-coloured silk curtains.

'What is inside that cage?' asked he of the old priest, as the negroes stood wiping the perspiration from their foreheads, and a smart slave girl stepped forward, with a parasol and shippers in her hand, and reverently lifted the lower edge of the curtain.

'A saint, I tell you!'

An embroidered shoe, with a huge gold cross on the instep, was put forth delicately from beneath the curtain, and the kneeling maid put on the shipper over it.

There the whisperted the old grumbler. 'Not enough, you see, to use Christian men as beasts of burden. Abbot Isidore used to say—ay, and told from the pulpit, to his face, that he could not conceive how a man who loved Christ, and knew the grace which has made all men free, could keep a slave.'

'Not can I,' said Philammon.

'But we think otherwise, you see, in Alexandria here. We can't even walk up the steps of God's temple without an additional protection to our delicate feet.'

'I had thought it was written, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground".'

'Ah! there are a good many more things written which we do not find it convenient to recollect—look! There is one of the pillars of the church—the richest and most pious lady in Alexandria.'

And forth stepped a figure, at which Philammon's eyes opened wider than they had done even at the sight of Pelagia. Whatever thoughts the rich and careless grace of her attire might have raised in his mind, it had certainly not given his innate Greek good taste the inclination to laugh and weep at once, which he felt

at this specimen of the tasteless fashion of an artificial and decaying civilisation. Her gown was stuffed out behind in a fashion which provoked from the dirty boys who lay about the steps, grinning for pastachos on their fingers, the same comments with which St. Clement had upbraided from the pulpit the Alexandrian ladies of his day. The said gown of white silk was belted, from waist to ankle, with certain mysterious red and green figures at least a foot long, which Philammon gradually discovered to be a representation, in the very lowest and ugliest style of fallen art, of Dives and Lazarus, while down her back hung, upon a bright blue shawl, edged with embroidered red crosses, Job sitting, polished in hand, surrounded by his three friends—a memorial, the old priest whispered, of a pilgrimage which she had taken a year or two before, to Arabia, to see and kiss the identical dung-hill on which the patriarch had sat.

Round her neck hung, by one of half a dozen necklaces, a manuscript of the Gospels, gilt-edged and clasped with jewels, the lofty diadem of pearls on the head earned in front a large gold cross, while above and around it her hair, stilted with pomatums, was frizzled out half a foot from a wilderness of plaits and curls, which must have cost some hapless slave girl in hours work, and perhaps more than one scolding, that very morning.

Meekly, with sumptuous face and downcast eyes, and now and then a penitent sigh and shake of the head and pressure of her hand on her jewelled bosom, the fair penitent was proceeding up the steps, when she caught sight of the priest and the monk, and turning to them with an obeisance of the deepest humility, entreated to be allowed to kiss the hem of their garments.

'You had far better, upstart,' said Philammon, bluntly enough, 'kiss the hem of your own. You carry two lessons there which you do not seem to have learnt yet.'

In an instant her face flashed up into pride and fury. 'I asked for your blessing, and not for a sermon. I can have that when I like.'

'And such as you like,' grumbled the old priest, as she swept up the steps, tossing some small coin to the ragged boys, and murmuring to herself, loud enough for Philammon's hearing, that she should certainly inform the confessor, and that she would not be insulted in the streets by savage monks.

'Now she will confess her sins inside—all but those which she has been showing off to us here outside, and beat her breast, and weep like a very Magdalen; and then the worthy man will comfort her with—"What a beautiful chain! And what a shawl—allow me to touch it!" How soft and delicate this Indian wool! Ah! if you knew the debts which I have been compelled to incur in the service of the sanctuary!—'" And then of course the answer will be, as, indeed, he expects it should, that if it can be of the least use in the service of the Temple,

she, of course, will think it only too great an honour . . . And he will keep the chain, and perhaps the shawl too. And she will go home, believing that she has fulfilled to the very letter the command to break off her sins by thus giving, and only sorry that the good priest happened to hit on that particular gewgaw.'

'What,' asked Philammon, 'did she actually not refuse such importunity?'

'From a poor priest like me, stoutly enough, but from a popular enthusiast like him.'

As Jerome says, in a letter of his I once saw, ladies think twice in such cases before they offend the city newsmonger. Have you anything more to say?'

Philammon had nothing to say, and wisely held his peace, while the old grumbler ran on.

'Ah, boy, you have yet to learn city fashions! When you are a little older, instead of speaking unpleasant truths to a little lady with a cross on her forehead, you will be ready to run to the Pillars of Hercules at her beck and nod, for the sake of her disinterested help towards a fashionable pulpit, or perhaps a bishopric. The ladies settle that for us here.'

'The women?'

'The women, lad. Do you suppose that they heap jewels and churches with wealth for nothing? They have their reward. Do you suppose that a pious girl goes into the pulpit at that church there, without looking anxiously, at the end of each positively flowery sentence, to see whether her sanctity there is clapping or not? She, who has such a delicate sense for orthodoxy, that she can scent out Novatianism or Origenism where no other mortal nose would suspect it. She who minds at her own house weekly ad the richest and most pious women of the city, to settle our discipline for us, as the court looks down do time. She who has even, it is whispered, the ear of the Augusta Publica herself, and sends monthly letters to her at Constantinople, and might give the patriarch himself some trouble, if he crossed her holy will.'

'What! will Cyril truckle to such creatures?'

'Cyril is a wise man in his generation. Too wise, some say, for a child of the light. But at least, he knows there is no use fighting with those whom you cannot conquer, and while he can get money out of these great ladies for his almshouses, and orphan-houses, and lodging-houses, and hospitals, and workshops, and all the rest of it—and in that, I will say for him, there is no man on earth equal to him, but Ambrose of Milan and Basil of Caesarea—why, I don't quarrel with him for making the best of a bad matter, and a very bad matter it is, boy, and has been ever since emperors and courtiers have given up burning and crucifying us, and taken to patronising and bribing us instead.'

Philammon walked on in silence by the old priest's side, stunned and sickened. . . 'And this is what I have come out to see—reeds shaken in the wind, and men clothed in soft raiment,

fit only for kings' palaces!' For this he had left the dear old Anna, and the simple joys and friendships of childhood, and cast himself into a roaring whirlpool of labour and temptation! This was the unanimous strength and unity of that Church Catholic, in which, as he had been taught from boyhood, there was but one Lord, one Faith, one Spirit. This was the indivisible body, 'without spot or wrinkle, which fitly joined together and compacted by that which every member supplied, according to the effectual

and proportionate working of every part, increased the body, and enabled it to build itself up in Love.' He shuddered as the well-known words passed through his memory, and seemed to mock the base and chaotic reality around him. He felt angry with the old man for having broken his dream, he longed to believe that his complaints were only exaggerations of cynic peevishness, of selfish disappointment; and yet, had not Aesculus warned him? Had he not foretold, word for word, what the youth would find—what he had found? Then was Saint Paul's great idea an empty and an impossible dream? No! God's word could not fail, the Church could not err. The fault could not be in her, but in her enemies, not, as the old man said, in her too great prosperity, but in her slavery. And then the words which he had heard from Cyril at their last interview rose before him as the true explanation. How could the Church work badly and heathenly while she was crushed and lettered by the rulers of this world? And how could they be anything but the tyrants and autocrats they were, while they were menaced and deluded by heathen philosophy, and vain systems of human wisdom? If Oristes was the curse of the Alexandrian Church, then Hypatia was the curse of Oristes. On her had the true blame lie. She was the root of the evil. Who would extirpate it?

Why should not he? It might be dangerous, yet, successful or unsuccessful, it must be glorious. 'The course of Christ is only a path of great examples. Might he not—and his young heart beat high at the thought—might he not, by some great act of daring, self-sacrifice, divine madness of faith, like David's of old, when he went out against the giant—awaken selfish and luxurious souls to a noble emulation, and recall to their minds, perhaps to their lives, the patterns of those martyrs who were the pride, the glory, the heaven of Egypt? And, as figure after figure rose before his imagination, of simple men and weak women who had conquered temptation and shame, torture and death, to live for ever on the lips of men, and take their seats among the patriarchs of the heavenly court, with brows glittering through all eternities with the martyr's crown, his heart beat thick and fast, and he longed only for an opportunity to dare and die.

And the longing he got the opportunity. For he had hardly rejoined his brother visitors when the absorbing thought took word again, and he

began questioning them eagerly for more information about Hypatia.

On that point, indeed, he obtained nothing but fresh invective, but when his companions, after talking of the triumph which the true faith had gained that morning, went on to speak of the great overthrow of Paganism twenty years before, under the patriarch Theophilus, at Olympiodorus and his tools, who held the Serapeum for many days by force of arms against the Christians, making soldiers into the city, and torturing and murdering the prisoners whom they took, of the martyrs who, among those very pillars which overhung their heads, had died in torments rather than submit to Serapis, and of the triumphs, and the soldier who, in presence of the trembling mob, drove the great jaw of the colossal idol, and snapped for ever the spell of heathenism, Philammon's heart burned to distinguish himself like that soldier, and to wipe out his quarrels of conscience by some more unquestionable deed of Christian prowess. There were no roads now to back, but there was philosophy—'Who, not carry you into the heart of the Satan in his very den? Why do you men of God, boldly into the den, the sorceress, and testify against her to her

'Do it yourself, if you dare,' Peter.

'We have no wish to get our bones knocked out by all the profligate young gentlemen in the city.'

'I will do it,' said Philammon.

'That is, it is his holiness allows you to make such a fool of yourself.'

'Take care, sir, of your words. You revile the blessed martyrs, from St. Stephen to St. Paphnutius, when you call such a deed foolishness.'

'I shall most certainly intreat his Holiness of your madness.'

'Do so,' said Philammon, who, possessed with a new idea, wished for nothing more. And there the matter dropped for the time.

The presumption of the youth of this generation is growing insupportable,' said Peter to his master that evening.

'So much the better. They put their elders on their mettle in the race of old. Peter, who has been presuming to die.'

'That wild boy whom Pambos sent up from the deserts dared to offer himself as champion of the faith against Hypatia. He actually proposed to go into her lecture-room and argue with her to her face. What think you of that for a specimen of youthful modesty and self-distinctness?'

Cyril was silent a while.

'What answer am I to have the honour of taking back? A month's reclusion to Nitria on bread and water? You, I am sure, will not allow such things to go unpunished, indeed if they do, there is an end to all authority and discipline.'

Cyril was still silent, whilst Peter's brow clouded fast. At last he answered—

'The cause wants martyrs. Send the lay to me.'

Peter went down with a shrug, and an expression of face which looked but too like envy, and ushered up the trembling youth, who dropped on his knees as soon as he entered.

'So you wish to go into the heathen woman's lecture-room, and defy her? Have you courage for it?'

'God will give it me.'

'You will be murdered by her pupils.'

'I can defend myself,' said Philammon, with a pardonable glance downward at his sinewy limbs. 'And if not, what death more glorious than martyrdom?'

Cyril smiled genially enough. 'Promise me two things.'

'Two thousand, if you will.'

'Two are quite difficult enough to keep. Youth is rash in promises, and rash in forgetting them. Promise me this, whatever happens, you will not strike the first blow.'

'I do.'

'Promise me again, that you will not argue with her.'

'What then?'

'Contradict, denounce, defy. But give no reasons. If you do, you are lost. She is subtler than the serpent, skilled in all the tricks of logic, and you will become a laughing-stock, and run away in shame. Promise me.'

'I do.'

'Then go.'

'When?'

'The sooner the better. At what hour does the accursed woman lecture to-morrow, Peter?'

'We saw her going to the Museum at nine this morning.'

'Then go at nine to-morrow. There is money for you.'

'What is this for?' asked Philammon, fingering curiously the first coins which he ever had handled in his life.

'To pay for your entrance. To the philosopher none enters without money. Not so to the Church of God, open all day long to the beggar and the slave. If you convert her, well. And if not? And he added to himself between his teeth, 'And if not, well also—perhaps better.'

'Ay!' said Peter bitterly, as he ushered Philammon out. Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, young fool! What evil spirit sent you here to feed the noble patriarch's only weakness?'

'What do you mean?' asked Philammon, as fiercely as he dare.

'The fancy that preachings, and protestations, and martyrdoms can drive out the Cannanites, who can only be got rid of with the sword of the Lord and of Gilead. His uncle Theophilus knew that well enough. If he had not, Olympiodorus might have been master of Alexandria, and incense burning before Serapis to this day.

Ay, go, and let her convert you! Touch the accursed thing, like Achan, and see if you do not end by having it in your tent. Keep company with the daughters of Midian, and see if you do not join yourself to Balaam, and eat the offerings of the dead!'

And with this discouraging sentence, the two parted for the night.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAST WIND

As Hypatia went forth the next morning, in all her glory, with a crowd of philosophers and philosophasters, students, and fine gentlemen, following her in reverend admiration across the street to her lecture-room, a ragged, lagging man, accompanied by a huge and villainous-looking dog, planted himself right before her, and extending a dirty hand, whined for alms.

Hypatia, whose refined taste could never endure the sight, much less the contact, of any thing squalid and degraded, recoiled a little, and bade the attendant slave get rid of the man with a coin. Several of the younger gentlemen, however, considered themselves adepts in that noble art of 'upsetting' him in vogue in the African universities, to which we all have reason enough to be thankful, seeing that it drove Saint Augustine from Carthage to Rome, and they, in compliance with the usual fashion of tormenting any simple creature who came in their way by mystification and insult, commenced a series of personal wittrivings, which the bigger bore stood up enough. The man was obliged him, but he humbly put aside the hand of the giver, and keeping his place on the pavement, seemed inclined to dispute Hypatia's further passage.

'What do you want? Send the wretch and his frightful dog away, gentlemen!' said the poor philosopher in some trepidation.

'I knew that dog,' said one of them, 'it is Alien-Ezra's. Where did you find it before it was lost, you rascal?'

'Where your mother found you when she palmed you off upon her Goodman, my child, in the slave-market. Fan slyd, have you already forgotten your humblest pupil, as these young dogs have, who are already trying to upset their master and instructor in the angelic science of bullying?'

And the beggar, lifting his broad straw hat, disclosed the features of Raymond Alien-Ezra. Hypatia recoiled with a shriek of surprise.

'Ah! you are astonished. At what, I pray?'

'To see you, sir, thus!'

'Why, then? You have been preaching to us all a long time the glory of abstraction from the allurements of sense. It angers ill, surely, for you estimate either of your pupils or of your own eloquence, if you are so struck with can-

sternation because one of them has actually at last obeyed you?

'What is the meaning of this masquerade, most excellent sir?' asked Hypatia and a dozen voices beside.

'Ask Cyril. I am on my way to Italy, in the character of the New Diogenes, to look, like him, for a ~~man~~ When I have found one, I shall feel great pleasure in returning to acquaint you with the amazing news. Farewell! I wished to look once more at a certain countenance, though I have turned, as you see, Cyril, and intend henceforth to attend no teacher but my log, who will luckily charge no fees for instruction, if she did, I might go untaught, for my ancestral wealth made itself wings yesterday morning. You are aware, doubtless, of the Phœbistum against the Jews, which was carried into effect under the auspices of a certain holy tribune in the people?'

'Inlamous!'

'And dangerous, my dear lady. Success is unobtainable, and Theon's house is quite uselessly sucked as the Jews spit down.'

'Come, come, Alen-Fza,' cried the young man, 'you are far too good company for us to lose you for that scally patriarch's fancy. We will make a subscription for you, eh? And you shall live with each of us, month and month about. We shall quite lose the trick of joking without you.'

'Thank you, gentlemen. But really you have been my butts for too long for me to think of becoming yours. Madam, one word in private before I go.'

Hypatia leant forward, and speaking in Syrian, whispered hurriedly.

'Oh, stay, sir, I beseech you! You are the wisest of my pupils, perceiving my only true pupil.'

My father will find some concealment for you from these witches, and if you need money, remember he is your debtor. We have never repaid you the gold which—'

'I am not sure, that was but my cut-price fee to Parnissus. It is I who am in your debt, and I have brought my arrears, in the form of this opal ring. As for Shelter men you have went on, lowering his voice, and speaking like her, in Syrian—' Hypatia the Gentile is far too lovely for the peace of mind of Raphael the Jew. And he drew from his finger Miriam's ring and offered it.

'Impossible!' said Hypatia, blushing scarlet. 'I won't accept it.'

'I beseech you. It is the last earthly blessing I have, except this snail's prison of flesh and blood. My dagger will open a crack through that when it becomes intolerable. But as I do not intend to leave my shell, if I can help it, except just when and how I choose, and as, if I take this ring with me, some of Heinrich's Circumcellions will assuredly knock my brains out for the sake of it—I must entreat—'

'Never! Can you not sell the ring, and escape to Synesius? He will give you shelter.'

'The hospitable hurricane! Shelter, yes, but rest, none. As soon pitch my tent in the crater of Aetna. Why, he will be tying day and night to convert me to that eclectic fairrago of his, which he calls philosophic Christianity. Well, if you will not have the ring, it is soon disposed of. We Easterns know how to be magnificent, and vanish as the birds of the world ought.'

And he turned to the philosophic crowd.

'Here, gentlemen of Alexandria! Does any gay youth wish to pay his debts once and for all? Behold the Rainbow of Solomon, an opal such as Alexander never saw before, which would buy any one of you, and his Macedonian paps, and his Macedonian mamma, and his Macedonian sisters, and horses, and parrots, and peacocks, two over, in any slave market in the world. Any gentleman who wishes to pay a jewel worth ten thousand gold pieces, will only need to pick it out of the gutter into which I throw it. Scandalize for it, you young Phœbists and Pamphils! Take care! Ladies and Theons enough about who will help you to spend it.'

And raising the jewel on high, he was in the act of tossing it into the street, when his ring was seized from behind, and the ring snatched from his hand. He turned, fiercely enough, and saw behind him her eyes flashing fury and contempt, old Miriam.

In a spring at the old woman's throat in an instant, but recoiled again before the glare of her eye. Raphael called the dog out, and turning quickly to the disappointed spectators.

'It is all right, my luckless friends. You must use money for yourselves, after all, which, since the departure of my nation, will be a somewhat more difficult matter than ever. The overruling destinies, whom, as you all know so well when you are getting tipsy, not even philosophers can resist, have restored the Rainbow of Solomon to its original possession. I am well, Queen of Philosophy! When I find the ring, you shall hear of it. Mother, I am coming with you for a friendly word before we part, though,' he went on, laughing, as the two walked away together, 'it was a senny trick of you to balk one of The Nation of the exquisite pleasure of seeing those hentzen dogs scrambling in the gutter for his bonny.'

Hypatia went on to the Museum utterly bewildered by this strange meeting, and it still stronger. She took care nevertheless, to betray no sign of her deep interest till she found herself alone in her little writing-room, dismissing the lecture hall, and there throwing herself into a chair, she sat and thought, till she found, to her surprise and anger, the tears trickling down her cheeks. Not that her bosom held one spark of affection for Raphael. If there had ever been any danger of that the wily Jew had himself taken care to ward it off, by the sneering and frivolous tone with which he quashed every approach to deep feeling, either in himself or in others. As for his compliments to her beauty, she was far too much accustomed

to such, to be either pleased or displeased by them. But she felt, as she said, that she had lost perhaps her only true pupil, and more—perhaps her only true master. For she saw clearly enough, that under that Silenus' mask was hidden a nature capable of—perhaps more than she dare think of. She had always felt him her superior in practical cunning, and that morning had proved to her what she had long suspected, that he was possibly also her superior in that moral earnestness and strength of will for which she looked in vain among the enervated Greeks who surrounded her. And even in those matters in which he professed himself her pupil, she had long been alternately delighted by finding that he alone, of all her school, seemed thoroughly and instinctively to comprehend her every word, and chilled by the disagreeable suspicion that he was only playing with her, and her mathematics and geometry, and metaphysic and dialectic, like a boxer practising with foils, while he reserved his real strength for some object more worthy of him. More than once some puzzle or question of his had shaken her nearest systems into a thousand cracks, and opened up ugly depths of doubt, even on the most seemingly palpable certainties, or some half-jesting allusion to those Hebrew Scriptures, the quantity and quality of his faith in which he would never confess, made her indignant at the notion that he considered himself in possession of a reserved ground of knowledge, deeper and surer than her own, in which he did not deign to allow her to share.

And yet she was irresistibly attracted to him. That deliberate and consistent luxury of his, from which she shrink, he had always boasted that he was able to put on and take off at will, like a garment, and now he seemed to have proved his words, to be a worthy rival of the great Stons of old time. Could Zenon himself have asked more from half humanity? Moreover, Raphael had been of infinite practical use to her. He worked out, unasked, her mathematical problems, he looked out authorities, kept her pupils in order by his bitter tongue, and drew fresh students to her lectures by the attractions of his wit, his arguments, and last, but not least, his unrivalled cook and cellar. Above all he acted the part of a true and valiant watch-dog on her behalf, against the knots of clownish and often brutal sophists, the wicks of the old Cyne, Stoa, and Academic schools, who, with venom increasing, after the wont of parties, with their derisive, assailed the beautifully bespangled cart-castle of Neo-Platonism, as an empty melody of all Greek philosophies with all Eastern superstitions. All such Philistines had as yet dreaded the pen and tongue of Raphael, even more than those of the chivalrous Bishop of Cyrene, though he certainly, to judge from certain of his letters, hated them as much as he could hate any human being, which was after all not very bitterly.

But the visits of Synesius were few and far

between, the distance between Carthage and Alexandria, and the labour of his diocese, and, worse than all, the growing difference in purpose between him and his beautiful teacher, made his protection all but valueless. And now Aben-Ezra was gone too, and with him were gone a thousand plans and hopes. To have converted him at last to a philosophic faith in the old gods! To have made him her instrument for turning back the stream of human error! . . . How often had that dream crossed her! And now, who would take his place? Athanasius? Synesius in his good nature might dignify him with the name of brother, but to her he was a powerless potent, destined to die without having wrought any deliverance on the earth, as indeed the event proved. Plutarch of Athens? He was superannuated. Synesius? A mere logician, twisting Aristotle to mean what she knew, and he ought to have known, Aristotle never meant Her father? A man of triangles and conic sections. How pitiful they all looked by the side of the unfathomable Jew!—Spinners of charming cobwebs.

But would the flux condescend to be caught in them? Builders of pretty houses. If people would but enter and live in them! Preachers of supreme morality, which their almsgiving pupils never dreamt of practising. Without her, she well knew, philosophy must die in Alexandria. And was it his wisdom—or other and more earthly charms of hers—which enabled her to keep it alive? Sackening thought! Oh, that she were ugly, only to test the power of her doctrines!

No! The odds were fearful enough already, she would be glad of any help, however earthly and casual. But was not the work hopeless? What she wanted was no man who could act while she thought. And those were just the men whom she would find nowhere but—she knew it too well—in the hated Christian priesthood. And then that useful hydrogen sulphur loomed on the distance as inevitable. The only hope of philosophy was in her despair!

She dashed away the tears, and proudly entered the lecture-hall, and ascended the tribune like a goddess, amid the shouts of her audience. What did she care for them? Would they do what she told them? She was tall through her long time before she could recollect herself, and banish from her mind the thought of Raphael. And at that point we will take the lecture up.

'Truth? Where is truth but in the soul itself? Facts, objects, are but phantasma matter woven—ghosts of this earthly night, at which the soul, sleeping here in the mire and clay of matter, shudders and names its own vague tremors sense and perception. Yet, even as our nightly dreams stir in us the suspicion of mysterious and immaterial presences, unfettered by the bonds of time and space, so do these waking

hears such melodies as most preserve the divine footstep of harmony, it embraces such, and recollects from them that divine harmony, and is impelled to it, and finds its home in it, and shares of it as much as it can share."

And therewith fell on Philonemon's son, for the first time, the mighty thunder roll of Homer's verse—

So spoke the stewardess, but Hector rushed from the house, the same way back, down stately streets,

Through the broad city, to the Scaun gates, Whither he must go forth toward the plain, There running toward him came Andromache, His ample-dowered wife, Hector's child—

Behold the great-hearted he who dwelt In Thebe under Placoe, and the woods Of Placoe, ruling over kith and men

His daughter wouldst thou for bruise be lured, And met him then, and with her came a maid, Who bore in arms a playful bearded babe

An infant still, akin to woe, fair at first, Only and well-loved child of Hector's house, Whom he had named Scamandrius, but the rest

Asleep in it, because his son, among Upheld the word of Helen his enemy

He smothered in silence, looking to his child But she stood close to him, with many tears, And hung upon his hand, and spoke, and called him

"My hero, thy are it, but wilt wear thee out, Then patient not thine infant child, nor me

The hapless, soon to be thy widow, The Greeks will slay thee, falling one and all Upon thee—but to me ere suffer for,

Having lost thee, to die, no cheer to me Will come thenceforth if thou shouldst meet thy fate, Woes only, mother have I none, nor sin

For that my sire divine Achilles slew, And washed utterly the pleasant houses Of his son, in Thoe's lofty navel,

And when Hector with the spear yet spared To strip the dead, we kept his soul from that

There fore he burnt him in his grave's arms, And heaped a mound round him, and round The dais of the Gods bidding Zeus,

The nymphs who hunt the upland, planted him, And seven brothers bred with me in the halls, All in one day we at down to Hades there,

For all of them swift foot Achilles slew Beside the lazy knee and snow-white sheep And he, my mother, who of late was queen

Beneath the woods of Placoe, he brought her, Among his other spoils, yet set her free Again, receiving ransom rich and great

But Artemis, whose bow is all her joy, Smote her to death within her father's halls

Hector! so thou art father to me now, Mother, and brother, and husband fair and strong! Oh, come now, pity me, and stay thou here

Upon the tower, nor make thy child an orphan And me thy wife a widow, mingle me here by the fig tree, where the city is a

Lowest, and where the wall can well be scaled, For here thence thou the best has tried the assault

Round either Ajax and Idomeneus, And round the Atreid both, and Telemachus, Whether some cunning art taught them craft,

Or their own spirit stirred and drove them on! Then spake tall Hector, with the gleaming in his

All this I too have watched, my wife, yet much I hold in dread the women of Troy men

And Trojan women with their trailing shawls, If, like a coward, I should shrink from war

Beside, I have no lust to stay, I have least eye to be bold, and lead the van of fight,

To win my father, and myself, a name For well I know, at heart and in my thought,

The day will come when Ilion the holy Shall lie in heaps, and Priam, and the folk Of ashenspeared Priam, perish all

But yet no wise to come to Trojan men, Nor even to Ilion, nor Priam king,

Nor to my brothers, who shall roll in dust, Many and fair, beneath the strokes of foes, So moves me, as doth thine, when thou shalt go Weeping, led off by some Lacedæmonian Greek, Robbed of the daylight of thy liberty,

To weave in Argos at another's loom, Or bear the water of Mænes home, Or Hyperæa, with miserably tools,

While heavy doom constrains thee, and perchance The folk may say, when thou thy face art down, "This was the wife of Hector, best in fight"

At Ilion, of house-famous Trojan men! So will they say perchance, while unto thee New grief will come, for such a husband's loss,

Who might have wended off the day of ill that may the soul be in need about my corpse, Before I hear thy shriek and see thy shame!"

He spoke, and sternly bid his arms to take the child, But back the child upon his nurse's breast

Shrank crying, frightened at his father's looks, Bearing the breast and crest of Hector's hair Which waved above the helmet terribly

Then out that father dear and mother laughed, And glorious Hector took the helmet off, And laid it gleaming on the ground, and kissed

His darling child, and dandled him in his arm, And spoke in prayer to Zeus, and all the gods Zeus, and ye other gods, oh grant that thus

My child, like me, may grow the champion here As good in strength, and rule with might in Troy

Then men may say, "The boy is better far than was his sire," when he returns from war, Bearing a glory hence, having slain

A woman, and his mother's heart in power Thus saying, on his hands of his dear wife

He laid the child, and she received him back In fragrant bosom smiling through her tears!

"Such is the myth. Do you fancy that in it Homer meant to hand down to the admiration of ages such earthly commonplace as a mother's brute affection, and the terrors of an infant? Surely the deeper insight of the philosopher may be allowed without the reproach of superficiality, to see in it the ministration of some deeper mystery."

"The elect soul, for instance—is not it a name Asymachus, king of the city, by the fact of its ethical parentage, the leader and lord of all around it, though it knows it not? A child as yet, it lies upon the fragrant bosom of its mother Nature, the nurse and yet the enemy of man

And lo! as he, as the poet would name a hero, becomes she fights with that being, when grown to man's estate, whom as a child she nourished. Fair is she, yet unwise, pampering us, after the fashion of mothers, with weak indulgences, to bring to send us forth into the great realities of speculation, thus to forget her in the pursuit of glory, she would have us while away our prime within the harim, and play for ever round her knees. And has not the elect soul a father, too, whom it knows not? Hector, he who is without—unconquered, unconditioned by Nature, yet its husband—the all-prevailing, plastic Soul, interior."

"The above lines are not meant as a 'translation' but as an humble attempt to give the literal sense in some sort of metre. It would be an act of arrogance even to aim at such a task where Pope and Chapman failed. It is simply, I believe, impossible to render Homer into English verse, in verse, for one reason among many, it is impossible to preserve the pomp of sound, which in verse with grandeur his most common words. How can any skill represent the rhythm of Homer's Greek in a language which—to take the first verse which comes to hand—transforms 'boson megalo boson,' into 'great ex a child?'"

ing, organising, whom men call Zeus the law-giver, Æther the fire, Osiris the life-giver, whom here the poet has set forth as the defender of the mystic city, the defender of harmony, and order, and beauty throughout the universe? Apart sits his great father—Priami, the first of existences, father of many sons, the Absolute Reason, unsexed, tremendous, immovable, in distant glory, yet himself amenable to that abyssal unity which Homer calls Fate, the source of all which is, yet in itself Nothing, without predicate, unumcald.

'From It and for It the universal Soul thrills through the whole Creation, doing the behests of that Reason from which it overflowed, unwillingly, into the storm and crowd of material appearances warring with the brute forces of gross matter, crushing all which is foul and dissonant to itself, and clasping to its bosom the beautiful and all wherein it discovers its own reflex, impressing on it its signature, reproducing from it its own likeness, whether star, or dæmon, or soul of the elect—and yet, as the poet hints in anthropomorphic language, haunted all the while by a sadness—weighed down amid all its labours by the sense of a fate—by the thought of that First One from whom the Soul is originally descended, from whom it, and its father the Reason before it, parted themselves when they dared to think and act, and assert their own free will.

'And in the meanwhile, alas! Hector, the father, fights around, while his children sleep and feed, and he is away in the wars, and they know him not—know not that they the individuals are but parts of him the universal. And yet at moments—oh! those blessed times whose celestial parentage has made such moments part of their appointed destiny—at moments flashes on the human child the intuition of the immutable secret. In the spangled glory of the summer night—in the roar of the Nile-flood, sweeping down fertility in every wave—in the awful depths of the temple-shrine—in the wild melodies of old Æolian singers, or before the images of those gods of whose perfect beauty the divine theosophists of Greece caught a fleeting shadow, and with the sudden might of artistic ecstasy smote it, as by an enchantment, into an eternal sleep of snowy stone—in these thro' flashes on the inner eye a vision beautiful and terrible, of a force, in energy, a soul, an idea, one and yet million fold, rushing through all created things, like the wind across a lyre, thrilling the strings into celestial harmony—one life-blood through the million veins of the universe, from one great unseen heart, whose thunderous pulses the mind hears far away, beating for ever in the abyssal solitude, beyond the heavens and the galaxies, beyond the spaces and the times, themselves but veins and tunnels from its all-teeming sea.

'Happy, three happy! they who once have dared, even though breathless, blinded with tears of awful joy, struck down upon their knees in utter helplessness, as they feel themselves

but dead leaves in the wind which sweeps the universe—happy they who have dared to gaze, if but for an instant, on the terror of that glorious pagant, who have not, like the young Astyanax, clung shrinking to the breast of mother Nature, scared by the heaven-wide flash of Hector's arms, and the glitter of his rainbow crest! Happy, three happy! even though their eyeballs, blasted by excess of light, wither to ashes in their sockets! Were it not a noble end to have seen Zeus, and die like Scinde, burnt up by his glory? Happy, three happy! though their mind reel from the divine intoxication, and the legs of Cenci call them henceforth madmen and enthusiasts. Enthusiasts they are, for Duty is in them, and they in It. For the time, this burden of individuality vanishes, and recognising themselves as portions of the universal Soul, they rise upward, through and beyond that Reason from whence the soul proceeds, to the fount of all the ineffable and Supreme One—and seeing It, become by that act portions of Its essence. They speak no more, but It speaks in them, and their whole being, transmutated by that glorious sunlight into whose rays they have dared, like the eagle, to gaze without shrinking, becomes an harmonious vehicle for the words of Duty, and passive itself, utters the secrets of the immortal gods! What wonder if to the laute mutes they seem as dictators? Be it so. Smile if you will. But ask me not to touch on things unspeakable, above all sciences, which the word-battle of dialectic, the disemative struggles of reason, can never reach, but which must be seen only, and when seen confessed to be unspeakable. Hence, thou disputer of the Academy!—hence, thou greeting Cybele—hence, thou sense-worshipping Stoic, who findest that the soul is to derive her knowledge from those material appearances which she herself creates!—hence—, and yet no shyness and sneer if you will. It is but a little time—a few days longer in this prison-house of our degradation, and each thing shall return to its own tantum, the blood-drop to the abyssal heart, and the water to the river, and the river to the shining sea, and the dew-drop which fell from heaven shall rise to heaven again, shaking off the dust-grains which weighed it down, thawed from the earth-frost which chained it here to herb and swart upward and upward ever through stars and suns, through gods, and through the parents of the gods, purer and purer through successive lives, till it enters The Nothing, which is The All, and finds its home at last.

And the speaker stopped suddenly, her eyes glistening with tears, her whole figure trembling and dilating with rapture. She remained for a moment motionless, gazing earnestly at her audience, as if in hopes of exciting in them some kindred glow—and then recovering herself, added in a more tender tone, not quite unmixed with sadness—

'Go now, my pupils. Hypatia has no more for you to-day. Go now, and spare her at least

—woman as she is after all—the shame of finding that she has given you too much, and lifted the veil of Isis before eyes which are not enough purified to behold the glory of the goddess — Farewell !

She ended, and Philammon, the moment that the spell of her voice was taken off him, sprang up, and hurried out through the corridor into the street.

So beautiful ! So calm and merciful to him ! So enthusiastic towards all which was noble ! Had not she too spoken of the unseen world, of the hope of immortality, of the conquest of the spirit over the flesh, just as a Christian might have done ? Was the gulf between them so infinite ? If so, why had her aspirations awakened echoes in his own heart—echoes too, just such as the prayers and lessons of the *Lama* used to awaken ? If the hint was so like, must not the root be like also ? Could that be a counterfeiter ? That a minister of Satan in the robes of an angel of light ? Light, at least, it was purity, simplicity, courage, earnestness, tenderness, blushed out from eyes, *hypagoures*. A heathen, who disbelieved ? What was the meaning of it all ?

But the finishing stroke yet remained which was to complete the utter confusion of his mind. For before he had gone fifty yards up the street, his little friend of the fruit basket, whom he had not seen since he vanished under the feet of the mob in the gateway of the theatre, clutched him by the arm, and burst forth, breathless with running.

‘The—gods—help their favours—on those who—who least deserve them ! Rich and insolent rustic ! And this is the reward of thy madness !’

‘Off with you !’ said Philammon, who had no mind at the moment to renew his acquaintance with the little porter. But the guardian of parasols kept him hold on his sheepskin.

‘Fool ! Hypatia herself commands ! Yes, you will see her, have speech with her ! While I—I the illuminated—I the appreciating—I the obedient—I the adoring—who for these three years past have grovelled in the kennel, that the hem of her garment might touch the tip of my little finger—I—I—I—’

‘What do you want, madman ?’

‘She calls for thee, insensate wretch ! Throned sent me—breathless at once with running and with envy—Go ! favourite of the unjust gods !’

‘Who is Thron ?’

‘Her father, ignorant ! He commands thee to be at her house—here—opposite—to-morrow at the third hour. Hither and obey ! There they are coming out of the Museum, and all the parasols will get wrong ! Oh, miserable me !’

And the poor little fellow rushed back again, while Philammon, at his wit’s end between dread and longing, started off, and ran the whole way home to the Serapeum, regardless of carriages, elephants, and foot passengers, and having been knocked down by a silly porter, and lost a piece of his sheepskin between the

teeth of a spiteful camel—neither of which results he had time to resent—arrived at the archbishop’s house, found Peter the Reader, and tremblingly begged an audience from Cyril.

CHAPTER IX

THE SNAPPING OF THE BOW

CYRIL heard Philammon’s story and Hypatia’s message with a quiet smile, and then dismissed the youth to an afternoon of labour in the city, counselling him to mention no word of what had happened, and to come to him that evening and receive his order when he should have had time to think over the matter. So forth Philammon went with his companions, through lanes and alleys hideous with filth and poverty, compulsory idleness and native sin. Fearfully real and practical if all was, but he saw it all dimly as in a dream. Before his eyes one fair was shining, in his ears one silver voice was ringing. ‘He is a monk, and knows no better.’ True ! And how should he know better ? How could he tell how much more there was to know, in that great new universe, in such a cranny whereof his life had till now been past ? He had heard but one side already. What if there were two sides ? Had he not a right—that is, was it not proper, fair, prudent, that he should hear both, and then judge ?

Cyril had hardly, perhaps, done wisely for the youth, sending him out about the practical drudgery of benevolence, before deciding for him what was his duty with regard to Hypatia’s invitation. He had not calculated on the new thoughts which were tormenting the young monk, perhaps they would have been more intelligible to him had he known of them. Cyril had been bred up under the most stern dogmatic training, in those vast monastic establishments, which had risen amid the neighbouring salt-petre quarries of Nitria, where thousands toiled in voluntary poverty and slavery at vast bakeries, dyeries, brick-fields, tailors’ shops, carpenters’ yards, and expended the profits of their labour, not on themselves, for they had need of nothing, but on churches, hospitals, and alms. Educated in that world of practical industrial pollution as well as of religious exercise, which by its proximity to the great city accustomed monks to that world which they despised, entangled from boyhood in the images of lay heresy and amiable monk. Theophilus, Cyril had succeeded him in the patriarchate of Alexandria without having felt a doubt, and stood free to throw his life, energy and clear practical intellect into the cause of the Church without scruple, even, where necessary, without pity. How could such a man sympathise with the poor boy of twenty and idly dragged forth from the quiet cavern shadow of the *Lama* into the full blaze and roar of the world’s noonday ! He, too, was

cloister-bred. But the busy and fanatic atmosphere of Nitria, where every nerve of soul and body was kept on a life long artificial strain, without rest, without simplicity, without human affection, was utterly antipodal to the government of the remote and lonely, though no less industrious commonwealths of Canolites, who dotted the lonely mountain glens, far up into the heart of the Nubian desert. In such a one Philammon had received, from a venerable man, a mother's sympathy as well as a father's care, and now he yearned for the encouragement of a gentle voice, for the greeting of a kindly eye, and was lonely and sick at heart.

And still Hypatia's voice haunted his ears, like a strain of music, and would not die away. That lofty enthusiasm, so sweet and modest in its grandeur—that tone of pity—in one so lovely it could not be called contempt—for the many; that delicious phantom of being an elect spirit unlike the crowd.

'And am I altogether like the crowd?' said Philammon to himself, as he staggered along under the weight of a groaning fever patient. 'Can there be found no better work for me than this, which any porter from the quay might do as well? Am I not somewhat wasted on such toil as this? Have I not an intellect, a taste, a reason? I could appreciate what she said—Why should not my faculties be educated? Why am I only to be shut out from knowledge? There is a Christian Gnosis as well as a heathen one. What was permissible to Clement?—he had nearly said to Origen, but checked himself on the edge of heresy—'is surely lawful for me.' Is not my very craving for knowledge a sign that I am capable of it? Surely my sphere is the study rather than the street.'

And then his fellow labourers—he could not say it to himself—began to grow less venerable in his eyes. Let him try as he might to forget the old priest's gibblings and detractions, the feet was before him. The men were coarse, fierce, noisy.

'Different from her! Their talk seemed mere gossip—scandalous talk and hard-judging, most of it, about that man's private ambition, and that woman's proud looks, and who had stayed for the Eucharist the Sunday before, and who had gone out after the sermon, and how the majority who did not stay could possibly dare to go, and how the minority who did not go could possibly dare to stay.'

Kindless suspicions, sneers, complaints. What did they care for the eternal glories and the beatific vision? Then one fast for all men and things, from the pitriarel to the prefect, seemed to be—did he or it advise this use of the Church?—which Philammon soon perceived to mean their own ease, their influence, their self-gloration. And the poor her, as his faculty for fault-finding quickened under the influence of thurs, seemed to see under the humble stock-phrases in which they talked of their labours of love, and the future reward of their present humiliations, a deep and hardy-hidden pride, a faith in their own infallibility,

a contemptuous impatience of every man, however venerable, who differed from their party on any, the slightest, matter. They spoke with sneers of Augustine's Latinising tendencies, and with open execrations of Chrysostom, as the vilest and most impious of schematics, and, for aught Philammon knew, they were right enough. But when they talked of wars and desolation past and impending, without a word of pity for the slain and ruined, as a just judgment of Heaven upon heretics and heathens, when they argued over the awful struggle for power which, as he gathered from their words, was even then pending between the Emperor and the Count of Africa, as if it contained but one question of interest to them—would Cyril, and they as his bodyguard, gain or lose power in Alexandria? and lastly, when at some mention of Origen, and of Hypatia as his counsellor, they broke out into open imprecations of God's curse, and comforted themselves with the prospect of everlasting torment for both, he shuddered and ached himself involuntarily—were these the summers of a Gospel?—were these the fruits of Christ's Spirit? And a whisper thrilled through the inmost depths of his soul—'Is there a Gospel? Is there a Spirit of Christ? Would not their fruits be different from these?'

Faint, and low, and distant, was that whisper, like the rumble of an earthquake miles below the soil. And yet, like the earthquake roll, it had in that one moment jarred every belief, and hope, and memory of his being such a hair's-breadth from its place. Only one hair's-breadth. But that was enough, his whole inward and outward world changed shape, and shook at every point. What if it were to fall in pieces? His brain reeled with the thought. He doubted his own identity. The very light of heaven had altered its hue. Was the firm ground on which he stood after all no solid reality, but a fragile shell which covered—what?

The nightmare vanished, and he breathed once more. What a strange dream! The sun and the exertion must have made him giddy. He would forget all about it.

Wary with labour, and still warier with thought, he returned that evening, longing and yet dreading to be permitted to speak with Hypatia. He half hoped it moments that Cyril might think him too weak for it, and the next, all his pride and dreading, not to say his faith and hope, sprang him on. Might he but face the terrible enchantress, and rebuke her to her face? And yet so lovely, so noble as she looked! Could he speak to her, except in tones of gentle warning, pity, counsel, entreaty? Might he not convert her—save her? Glorious thought! to win such a soul to the true cause! To be able to show, as the firstfruits of his mission, the very champion of heathendom! It was worth while to have lived only to do that, and having done it, to die.

The archbishop's lodgings, when he entered

them, were in a state of ferment even greater than usual. Groups of monks, priests, parabolans, and citizens rich and poor, were hanging about the courtyard, talking earnestly and angrily. A large party of monks fresh from Nitria, with ragged hair and beards, and the peculiar expression of countenance which fanatics of all creeds acquire, here and yet absent, self-conscious and yet ungoverned, silly and yet sly, with features coarsened and degraded by continual fasting and self-torture, jondishly shrouded from head to heel in their long ragged gowns, were gesticulating wildly and loudly, and calling on their more peaceable companions, in no measured terms, to revenge some insult offered to the Church.

'What is the matter?' asked Philammon of a quiet portly citizen, who stood looking up, with a most perplexed visage, at the windows of the patriarch's apartment.

'Don't ask me, I have nothing to do with it. Why does not his holiness come out and speak to them? Blessed virgin, mother of God! that we were well through it all—'

'Coward!' howled a monk in his ear. 'These shopkeepers care for nothing but seeing their stalls safe. Rather than lose a day's custom, they would give the very churches to be plundered by the heathen!'

'We do not want them!' cried another. 'We managed Dioscoros and his brother, and we can manage Orestes. What matter what answer he sends? The devil shall have his own!'

'They ought to have been huck two hours ago—they are murdered by this time!'

'He would not dare to touch the anhidreton!'

'He will dare anything. Cyril should never have sent them forth as lambs among wolves. What necessity was there for letting the people know that the Jews were gone? He would have found it out for himself last enough, the next time he wanted to borrow money.'

'What is all this about, reverend sir?' asked Philammon of Peter the Reader, who made his appearance at that moment in the quadrangle, walking with great strides, like the soul of Agamemnon across the mounds of Asphodel, and apparently beset himself with rage.

'Ah! you here? You may go to-morrow, young fool! The patriarch can't talk to you. Why should he? Some people have a great deal too much notice taken of them, in my opinion. Yes, you may go. If your head is not turned already, you may go and get it turned to-morrow. We shall see whether he who exalts himself is not abased, before all is over.' And he was strolling away, when Philammon, at the risk of an explosion, stopped him.

'His holiness commanded me to see him, sir, before—'

Peter turned on him in a fury. 'Fool! will you dare to intrude your fantastical dreams on him at such a moment as this?'

'He commanded me to see him,' said Philammon, with the true soldierlike discipline of a monk; 'and see him I will in spite of any man.

I believe in my heart you wish to keep me from his counsels and his blessing.'

Peter looked at him for a moment with a right wicked expression, and then, to the youth's astonishment, struck him full in the face, and yelled for help.

If the blow had been given by Pambo in the Iann a week before, Philammon would have borne it. But from that man, and coming unexpectedly as the hushing stroke to all his disappointment and disgust, it was intolerable, and in an instant Peter's long legs were sprawling on the pavement, while he bellowed like a bull for all the monks in Nitria.

A dozen brown hands were at Philammon's throat as Peter rose.

'Save him! hold him!' half blubbered he. 'The traitor! the heretic! He holds communion with heathens!'

'Down with him!' 'Cast him out!' 'Carry him to the archbishop!' while Philammon shook himself free, and Peter returned to the charge.

'I will call all good Catholics to witness! He has beaten an ecclesiastic in the courts of the Lord's house, even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem! And he is in Hypatia's lecture-room this morning!'

A group of jeons horror rose. Philammon set his back against the wall.

'His holiness the patriarch sent me.'

'He confesses, he confesses! He divided the prey of the patriarch into letting him go, under colour of converting him; and even now he wants to intrude in the sacred presence of Cyril, humming only with the carnal desire that he may meet the sorceress in her house to-morrow!'

'Scandal!' 'Abomination in the holy place!' and a rush at the poor wretch took place.

His blood was thoroughly up. The respectable part of the crowd, as usual in such cases, promptly retreated, and left him to the mercy of the monks, with an eye to their own reputation for orthodoxy, not to mention their personal safety, and he had to help himself as he could. He looked round for a weapon. There was none. The ring of monks were baying at him like hounds round a hen, and though he might have been a match for any one of them singly, yet their snowy limbs and determined faces warned him that against such odds the struggle would be desperate.

'Let me leave this court in safety! God knows whether I am a heretic, and to Him I commit my cause! The holy patriarch shall know of my minority. I will not trouble you, I give you leave to call me heretic, or heathen, if you will, if I cross this threshold till Cyril himself sends for me back to shame you.'

And he turned, and forced his way to the gate, amid a yell of derision which brought every drop of blood in his body into his cheeks. Twice, as he went down the vaulted passage, a rush was made on him from behind, but the soberer of his persecutors checked it. Yet he could not leave them, young and hot-headed as

he was, without one last word, and on the threshold he turned.

'You! who call yourselves the disciples of the Lord, and are more like the demons who abide day and night in the tombs, crying and cutting themselves with stones—'

In an instant, they rushed upon him, and, luckily for him, rushed also into the arms of a party of ecclesiastics, who were hurrying inwards from the street, with faces of blank terror.

'He has refused!' shouted the foremost. 'He declares war against the Church of God!'

'Oh, my friends,' panted the archdeacon, 'we are escaped like the hare out of the snare of the fowler. The tyrant kept us waiting two hours at his palace-gates, and then sent hectors out upon us, with rods and axes, telling us that they were the only message which he had for robbers and rioters.'

'Back to the patriarch!' and the whole mob streamed in again, leaving Philammon alone in the street—and in the world.

Whither now?

He strode on in his wrath some hundred yards or more before he asked himself that question. And when he asked it, he found himself in no humour to answer it. He was adrift, and blown out of harbour upon a shoreless sea, in utter darkness, all heaven and earth were nothing to him. He was alone in the blindness of anger.

Gradually one fixed idea, as a light tower, began to glimmer through the storm. To see Hyzaria, and convert her. He had the patriarch's leave for that. That must be right. That would justify him—bring him back, perhaps, in a triumph more glorious than any Caesar's, leading captive, in the fetters of the Gospel, the Queen of Heathendom. Yes, there was that left, for which to live.

His passion cooled down gradually as he wandered on in the fading evening light, up one street and down another, till he had utterly lost his way. What matter? He should find that lecture-room to-morrow at least. At last he found himself in a broad avenue, which he seemed to know. Was that the Sun-gate in the distance? He sauntered carelessly down it, and found himself at last on the great Esplanade, whither the little porter had taken him three days before. He was close then to the Museum, and to her house. Destiny had led him, unconsciously, towards the scene of his enterprise. It was a good omen, he would go thither at once. He might sleep upon her doorstep as well as upon any other. Perhaps he might catch a glimpse of her going out or coming in, even at that late hour. It might be well to accustom himself to the sight of her. There would be the less chance of his being abashed to-morrow before those sorceress eyes. And moreover, to tell the truth, his self-dependence, and his self-will too, crushed, or rather laid to sleep, by the discipline of the Laura, had started into wild life, and gave him a mysterious pleasure, which he had not felt since he was a disobedient little boy, of doing what he chose,

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right or wrong, simply because he chose it. Such moments come to every free-willed creature. Happy are those who have not, like poor Philammon, been kept by a hotbed cultivation from knowing how to face them. But he had yet to learn, or rather his tutors had to learn, that the sure path towards willing obedience and manful self-restraint, lies not through slavery, but through liberty.

He was not certain which was Hyzaria's house, but the door of the Museum he could not forget. So there he sat himself down under the garden wall, soothed by the cool night, and the holy silence, and the rich perfume of the thousand foreign flowers which filled the air with enervating bloom. Then he sat and watched, and watched, and watched in vain for some glimpse of his own object. Which of the houses was hers? Which was the window of her chamber? Did it look into the street? What business had his fancy with woman's chambers? But that one open window, with the lamp burning bright inside—he could not help looking up to it—he could not help fancying—hoping. He even moved a few yards to see better the bright interior of the room. High up as it was, he could still discern shelves of books—pictures on the walls. Was that a voice? Yes! a woman's voice—reading aloud in metre—was plainly distinguishable in the dead stillness of the night, which did not even awaken a whisper in the trees above his head. He stood, spellbound by curiosity.

Suddenly the voice ceased, and a woman's figure came forward to the window, and stood motionless, gazing upward at the spangled star-world overhead, and seeming to drink in the glory, and the silence, and the rich perfume.

'Could it be she?' Every pulse in his body throbbed madly. 'Could it be?' What was she doing? He could not distinguish the features, but the full blaze of the eastern moon showed him an upturned brow, between a golden stream of glittering tresses which hid her whole figure, except the white hands clasped upon her bosom. Was she praying? were these her midnight sorceries?

And still his heart throbbed and throbbed, till he almost fancied she must hear its noisy beat—and still she stood motionless, gazing upon the sky, like some exquisite chryselephantine statue, all ivory and gold. And behind her, round the bright room within, painting, books, a whole world of unknown science and beauty. And she the priestess of it all, inviting him to learn of her and be wise! It was a temptation! He would flee from it! Fool that he was!—and it might not be she after all!

He made some sudden movement. She looked down, saw him, and shutting the blind, vanished for the night. In vain, now that the temptation had departed, he sat and waited for its reappearance, half cursing himself for having broken the spell. But the chamber was dark and silent henceforth; and Philammon, wearied

out, found himself soon wandering back to the Laura in quiet dreams, beneath the balmy, semitropic night.

CHAPTER X

THE INTERVIEW

PHILAMMON was aroused from his slumbers at sunrise the next morning by the attendants who came in to sweep out the lecture-rooms, and wandered, disconsolately enough, up and down the street, longing for, and yet dreading, the three weary hours to be over which must pass before he would be admitted to Hypatia. But he had tasted no food since noon the day before—he had but three hours' sleep the previous night, and had been working, running, and fighting for two whole days without a moment's peace of body or mind. Sick with hunger and fatigue, and aching from head to foot with his hard night's rest on the grassy flags, he felt as unable as man could well be to collect his thoughts or brace his nerves for the coming interview. How to get food he could not guess, but having two hands, he might at least earn a coin by carrying a load, so he went down to the Esplanade in search of work. Of that, there was none. So he sat down upon the parapet of the quay, and watched the shoals of saildines which played in and out over the marble steps below, and wondered at the strange crabs and sea locusts which crawled up and down the face of the masonry, a few feet below the surface, scrambling for bits of offal, and making occasional fruitless dashes at the numble little silver arrows which played round them. And at last his whole soul, too tired to think of anything else, became absorbed in a mighty struggle between two great crabs, who held on stoutly, each by a claw, to his respective bunch of seaweed, while with the others they tugged, one at the head and the other at the tail of a dead fish. Which would conquer? Ay, which? And for five minutes Philammon was alone in the world with the two struggling heroes. Might not they be emblematic? Might not the upper one typify Cyril—the lower one Hypatia?—and the dead fish between, himself? But at last the deadlock was suddenly ended—the fish parted in the middle, and the typical Hypatia and Cyril, losing hold of their respective seaweeds by the jerk, tumbled down, each with its half-fish, and vanished head over heels into the blue depths in so undignified a manner, that Philammon burst into a shout of laughter.

'What's the joke?' asked a well-known voice behind him; and a hand patted him familiarly on the back. He looked round, and saw the little porter, his head crowned with a full basket of figs, grapes, and water-melons, on which the poor youth cast a longing eye. 'Well, my young friend, and why are you not at church?

Look at all the saints pouring into the Casarsum there, behind you.'

Philammon answered sulkily enough some thing inarticulate.

'Ho, ho! Quarrelled with the success of the Apostles already? Has my prophecy come true, and the strong meat of monks riot and plunder proved too highly spiced for your young palate? Eh?'

Poor Philammon! Angry with himself for feeling that the porter was right, shrinking from the notion of exposing the failings of his fellow-Christians, shrinking still more from making such a weakness his confidant, and yet yearning in his loneliness to open his heart to some one, he dropped out, hurt by hurt, word by word, the events of the past evening, and finished by a request to be put in the way of earning his breakfast.

'Earning your breakfast! Shall the favourite of the gods—shall the guest of Hypatia—earn his breakfast, while I have an obol to share with him? Base thought! Youth! I have wronged you. Unphilosophically I allowed, yesterday morning, my to mull the ocean of my intellect. We are now friends and brothers, in hatred to the monastic tribe.'

'I do not hate them, I tell you,' said Philammon. 'But these Nitrian savages—'

'Are the perfect examples of monery, and you hate them,' and therefore, all greater continuing the less you hate all less monastic monks. I have not heard logic lectures in vain. Now, up! The sun wears our dusty limbs. Nereids and Tritons, charging no cloud come tell us to Nitria's baths. At home a mighty sheet-fish smokes upon the festive board, her crowns the horn, and ominous deck the dish, come then, my guest and brother!'

Philammon swallowed certain scruples about becoming the guest of a heathen, seeing that otherwise there seemed no chance of having anything else to swallow, and after a refreshing plunge in the sea, followed the hospitable little fellow to Hypatia's door, where he dropped his daily load of fruit, and then into a narrow by-street, to the ground-floor of a huge block of lodgings, with a common staircase, swarming with children, cats, and chickens, and was ushered by his host into a little room, where the savoury smell of broiling fish revived Philammon's heart.

'Judith! Judith! where lingerest thou! Marble of Pentelicus! foam-flake of the wine-dark main! Ily of the Mareotic lake! You accursed black Andromeda, if you don't bring the breakfast this moment, I'll cut you in two!'

The inner door opened, and in bustled, trembling, her hands full of dishes, a tall little negress, dressed in true negro fashion, in a snow-white cotton shift, a scarlet cotton petticoat, and bright yellow turban of the same, making a light in that dark place which would have served as a landmark a mile off. She put the dishes down, and the porter majestically waved Philammon

to a stool, while she retreated, and stood humbly waiting on her lord and master, who did not deign to introduce to his guest the black beauty which composed his whole seraglio. But, indeed, such an act of courtesy would have been needless, for the first morsel of fish was hardly safe in poor Philammon's mouth, when the negress rushed upon him, caught him by the head, and covered him with rapturous kisses.

Up jumped the little man with a yell, brandishing a knife in one hand and a look in the other, while Philammon, scarcely less scandalised, jumped up too, and shook himself free of the lady, who, finding it impossible to vent her feelings further on his head, instantly changed her tactics, and, wallowing on the floor, began frantically kissing his feet.

'What is this? before my face! Up, shameless baggage, or thou diest the death!' and the porter pulled her up upon her knees.

'It is the monk! the young man I told you of, who saved me from the Jews the other night! What good angel sent him here that I might thank him!' cried the poor creature, while the tears ran down her black shining face.

'I am that good angel,' said the porter, with a look of intense self-satisfaction. 'Rise, daughter of Eribus, thou art pardoned, being but a female. What says the poet?—

"Woman is passion's slave, while faithful lord
O'er her and person's rules the noble male."

Yonk! to my aims! Truly say the philosophers, that the universe is magical in itself, and by mysterious sympathies links like to like. The prophetic instinct of thy future benefits towards me drew me to thee as by an invisible warp, hawser, or chain-cable, from the moment I beheld thee. Thou wert a kindred spirit, my brother, though thou knewest it not. Therefore I do not praise thee—no, nor thank thee in the least, though thou hast preserved for me the one palm which shadows my weary steps—the single lotus-flower (in this case black, not white) which blooms for me above the mud-stained ocean wastes of the Hygie Borboros. That which thou hast done, thou hast done by instinct—by divine compulsion—thou couldst no more help it than thou canst help eating that fish, and art no more to be praised for it.

'Thank you,' said Philammon.

'Comprehend me. Our theory in the schools for such cases is this—has been so at least for the last six months, similar particles, from one original source, exist in you and me. Similar causes produce similar effects, our attractions, antipathies, impulses, are therefore, in similar circumstances, absolutely the same, and therefore you did the other night exactly what I should have done in your case.'

Philammon thought the latter part of the theory open to question, but he had by no means stopped eating when he rose, and his mouth was much too full of fish to argue.

'And therefore,' continued the little man,

'we are to consider ourselves henceforth as one soul in two bodies. You may have the best of the corporeal part of the division. . . yet it is the soul which makes the person. You may trust me, I shall not disown my brotherhood. If any one insults you henceforth, you have but to call me, and if I be within hearing, why, by this right arm—'

And he attempted a pat on Philammon's head, which, as there was a head and shoulder's distance between them, might on the whole have been considered, from a theatrical point of view, as a failure. Whereon the little man seized the calabash of beer, and filling therewith a cow's horn, his thumb on the small end, raised it high in the air.

'To the Tenth Muse, and to your interview with her!'

And removing his thumb, he sent a steady jet into his open mouth, and having drained the horn without drawing breath, licked his lips, handed it to Philammon, and flew ravenously upon the fish and onions.

Philammon, to whom the whole was supremely absurd, had no invocation to make, but one which he felt too sacred for his present temper of mind. So he attempted to imitate the little man's feat, and, of course, poured the beer into his eyes, and up his nose, and in his bosom, and finally choked himself black in the face, while his host observed smilingly—

'Aha, rustic! unacquainted with the ancient and classical customs preserved in this centre of civilisation by the descendants of Alexander's heroes! Judith! clear the table. Now to the sanctuary of the Muses.'

Philammon rose, and finished his meal by a monkish grace. A gentle and reverent 'Amen' rose from the other end of the room. It was the negress. She saw him look up at her, dropped her eyes modestly, and bustled away with the remnants, while Philammon and his host started for Hypatia's lecture room.

'Your wife is a Christian?' asked he when they were outside the door.

'Ahem—' The barbaric mind is prone to superstition. Yet she is, being but a woman and a negress, a good soul, and thrifty, though requiring, like all lower animals, occasional chastisement. I married her on philosophic grounds. A wife was necessary to me for several reasons, but mindful that the philosopher should subjugate the material appetite, and rise above the swinish desires of the flesh, even when his nature requires him to satisfy them, I purposed to make pleasure as unpleasant as possible. I had the choice of several cripples—their parents, of ancient Macedonian family like myself, were by no means adverse, but I required a housekeeper, with whose duties the want of an arm or a leg might have interfered.

'Why did you not marry a scold?' asked Philammon.

'Pertinently observed and indeed the example of Socrates rose luminous more than once before my imagination. But philosophic calm,

my dear youth, and the peaceful contemplation of the ineffable! I could not relinquish those luxuries. So having, by the bounty of Hypatia and her pupils, saved a small sum, I went out, bought me a negress, and hired six rooms in the block we have just left, where I let lodgings to young students of the Divine Philosophy.

'Have you any lodgers now?'

'Ahem! Certain rooms are occupied by a lady of rank. The philosopher will, above all things, abstain from babbling. To bridle the tongue, is to— But there is a closet at your service, and for the hall of reception, which you have just left—are you not a kindred and fraternal spark? We can combine our meals, as our souls are already united.'

Philammon thanked him heartily for the offer, though he shrunk from accepting it, and in ten minutes more found himself at the door of the very house which he had been watching the night before. It was she, then, whom he had seen!

He was handed over by a black porter to a smart slave-girl, who guided him up, through cloisters and corridors, to the huge library, where five or six young men were sitting, busily engaged, under Theon's supervising tendency, in copying manuscripts and drawing geometric diagrams.

Philammon gazed curiously at these symbols of a science unknown to him, and wondered whether the day would ever come when he too would understand their mysteries, but his eyes fell again as he saw the youths staring at his ragged sheepskin and matted locks with undisguised contempt. He could hardly collect himself enough to obey the summons of the venerable old man, as he beckoned him silently out of the room, and led him, with the titters of the young students ringing in his ears, through the door by which he had entered, and along a gallery, till he stopped and knocked humbly at a door. She must be within!

... Now! ... At last! His knees knocked together under him. His heart sank and sank into abysses! Poor wretch! He was half-minded once to escape and dash into the street. But was it not his one hope, his one object? But why did not that old man speak! If he would have but said something! If he would only have looked cross, contemptuous! ... But with the same impressive gravity, as of a man upon a business in which he had no voice, and wished it to be understood that he had none, the old man silently opened the door, and Philammon followed. ... There she was! looking more glorious than ever, more than when glowing with the enthusiasm of her own eloquence, more than when transfigured last night in golden tresses and glittering moonbeams. There she sat, without moving a finger, as the two entered. She greeted her father with a smile, which made up for all her seeming want of courtesy to him, and then fixed her large gray eyes full on Philammon.

'Here is the youth, my daughter. It was

your wish, you know, and I always believe that you know best—'

Another smile put an end to this speech, and the old man retreated humbly toward another door, with a somewhat anxious visage, and then lingering and looking back, his hand upon the latch—

'If you require any one, you know, you have only to call—we shall be all in the library.'

Another smile; and the old man disappeared, leaving the two alone.

Philammon stood trembling, choking, his eyes fixed on the floor. Where were all the fine things he had conned over for the occasion! He dared not look up at that face, lest it should drive them out of his head. And yet the more he kept his eyes turned from the face, the more he was conscious of it, conscious that it was watching him, and the more all the fine words were, by that very knowledge, driven out of his head. When would she speak! Perhaps she wished him to speak first. It was his duty to begin, for she had sent for him. But still she kept silence, and sat scanning him intently from head to foot, herself as motionless as a statue, her hands folded together before her, over the manuscript which lay upon her knee. If there was a blush on her cheek at her own daring, his eyes swam too much to notice it.

When would the intolerable suspense end! She was, perhaps, as unwilling to speak as he. But some one must strike the first blow, and, as often happens, the weaker party, impelled by sheer fear, struck it, and broke the silence in a tone half-indignant, half-apologetic—

'You sent for me hither!'

'I did. It seemed to me, as I watched you during my lecture, both before and after you were rude enough to interrupt me, that your offence was one of mere youthful ignorance. It seemed to me that your countenance bespoke a nobler nature than that which the gods are usually pleased to bestow upon monks. That I may now ascertain whether or not my surmises were correct, I ask you for what purpose are you come hither!'

Philammon hailed the question as a godsend.—Now for his message! And yet he faltered as he answered, with a desperate effort,—'To rebuke you for your sins.'

'My sins! What sins?' she asked, as she looked up with a stately, slow surprise in those large gray eyes, before which his own glance sank abashed, he knew not why. What sins?—He knew not. Did she look like a Messalina! But was she not a heathen and a sorceress!—And yet he blushed, and stammered, and hung down his head, as, shrinking at the sound of his own words, he replied—

'The foul sorceries—and profligacy worse than sorceries, in which, they say—' He could get no farther. for he looked up again and saw an awful quiet smile upon that face. His words had raised no blush upon the marble cheek.

'They say! The bigots and slanderers, with

beasts of the desert, and fanatic intriguers, who, in the words of Him they call their master, compass heaven and earth to make one proselyte, and when they have found him, make him two-fold more the child of hell than themselves. Go—I forgive you: you are young, and know not yet the mystery of the world. Science will teach you some day that the outward frame is the sacrament of the soul's inward beauty. Such a soul I had fancied your face expressed, but I was mistaken. Foul hearts alone harbour such foul suspicions, and fancy others to be what they know they might become themselves. Go! Do I look like—? 'The very tapering of these fingers, if you could read their symbolism, would give your dream the lie.' And she flashed full on him, like sun-rays from a mirror, the full radiance of her glorious countenance.

Alas, poor Philammon! where were thy eloquent arguments, thy orthodox theories then? Proudly he struggled with his own man's heart of flesh, and tried to turn his eyes away, the unguet might as well struggle to escape from the spell of the north. In a moment, he knew not how, with shame, remorse, longing for forgiveness, swept over him, and crushed him down, and he found himself on his knees before her, in abject and broken syllables entreating pardon.

'Go—I forgive you. But know before you go, that the celestial milk which fell from Heron's bosom, bleaching the plant which it touched to evilising whiteness, was not more taintless than the soul of Theon's daughter.'

He looked up in her face as he knelt before her. Unerring instinct told him that her words were true. He was a monk, accustomed to believe animal man to be the deadliest and worst of all sins—indeed, 'the great offence' itself, beside which all others were comparatively venial, where there was physical purity, must not all other virtues follow in its wake? All other sinners were invisible under the dazzling veil of that great loveliness, and in his self-abasement he went on—

'Oh, do not spurn me!—do not drive me away! I have neither friend, home, nor teacher. I fled last night from the men of my own faith, maligned by bitter insult and injustice—disappointed and disgusted with their ferocity, narrowness, ignorance. I dare not, I cannot, I will not return to the obscurity and the dulness of a Thebad Laura. I have a thousand doubts to solve, a thousand questions to ask, about that great ancient world of which I know nothing!—of whose mysteries, they say, you alone possess the key! I am a Christian; but I thirst for knowledge. . . I do not promise to believe you—I do not promise to obey you, but let me hear! Teach me what you know, that I may compare it with what I know. . . If indeed' (and he shuddered as he spoke the words) 'I do know anything!'

'Have you forgotten the epithets which you used to me just now?'

'No, no! But do you forget them; they were put into my mouth. I—I did not believe them when I said them. It was agony to me; but I did it, as I thought, for your sake—to save you. Oh, say that I may come and hear you again! Only from a distance—in the very farthest corner of your lecture-room. I will be silent, you shall never see me. But your words yesterday awoke in me—no, not doubts, but still I must, I must hear more, or be as miserable and homeless inwardly as I am in my outward circumstances!'

And he looked up imploringly for consent.

'Rise. This passion and that attitude are fitting neither for you nor me.'

And as Philammon rose, she rose also, went into the library to her father, and in a few minutes returned with him.

'Come with me, young man,' said he, laying his hand kindly enough on Philammon's shoulder. . . 'The rest of this matter you and I can settle,' and Philammon followed him, not daring to look back at Hypatia, while the whole room swam before his eyes.

'So, so I hear you have been saying rude things to my daughter. Well, she has forgiven you—'

'Has she?' asked the young monk, with an eager start.

'Ah! you may well look astonished. But I forgive you too. It is lucky for you, however, that I did not hear you, or else, old man as I am, I can't say what I might not have done. Ah! you little know, you little know what she is!—and the old peasant's eyes kindled with loving pride.

'May the gods give you some day such a daughter!—that is, if you learn to deserve it—as virtuous as she is wise, as wise as she is beautiful. Truly they have repaid me for my labours in their service. Look, young man! little as you merit it, here is a pledge of your forgiveness, such as the richest and noblest in Alexandria are glad to purchase with many an ounce of gold—a ticket of free admission to all her lectures henceforth! Now go, you have been favoured by our deserts, and should learn that the philosopher can practise what the Christian only preaches, and return good for evil.' And he put into Philammon's hand a slip of paper, and bid one of the secretaries show him to the outer door.

The youths looked up at him from their writing as he passed, with faces of surprise and awe, and evidently thinking no more about the absurdity of his sheepskin and his tanned complexion, and he went out with a stunned, confused feeling, as of one who, by a desperate leap, has plunged into a new world. He tried to feel content, but he dare not. All before him was anxiety, uncertainty. He had cut himself adrift, he was on the great stream. Whither would it lead him? Well—was it not the great stream? Had not all mankind, for all the ages, been floating on it? Or was it but a desert-river, dwindling away beneath the fiery sun, destined to lose itself a few miles on, among the

and sands? Were Arsenius and the faith of his childhood right? And was the Old World coming speedily to its death-throe, and the Kingdom of God at hand? Or was Cyril right, and the Church Catholic appointed to spread, and conquer, and destroy, and rebuild, till the kingdoms of this world had become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ? If so, what use in this old knowledge which he craved? And yet, if the day of the destruction of all things were at hand, and the times destined to become worse and not better, till the end—how could that be?

'What news?' asked the little porter, who had been waiting for him at the door all the while. 'What news, O favourite of the gods?' 'I will lodge with you, and labour with you. Ask me no more at present. I am—I am—'

'Those who descended into the Cave of Trophonius, and beheld the unspeakable, remained astonished for three days, my young friend—and so will you!' And they went forth together to earn their bread.

But what is Hypatia doing all this while, upon that cloudy Olympus, where she sits exalted far above the noise and struggle of man and his work-day world?

She is sitting again, with her manuscripts open before her, but she is thinking of the young monk, not of them.

'Beautiful as Antinous!' Rather as the young Phœbus himself, fresh glowing from the slaughter of the Python. Why should not he, too, become a slayer of Pythons, and loathsome monsters, bred from the mud of sense and matter? So bold and earnest! I can forgive him those words for the very fact of his having dared, here in my father's house, to say them to me. And yet so tender, so open to repentance and noble shame!—That is no plebeian by birth, patrician blood surely flows in those veins, it shows out in every attitude, every tone, every motion of the hand and lip. He cannot be one of the herd. Who ever knew one of them crave after knowledge for its own sake? . . . And I have longed so for one real pupil! I have longed so to find one such man, among the effeminate selfish triflers who pretend to listen to me. I thought I had found one—and the moment that I had lost him, behold, I find another, and that a fresher, purer, simpler nature than ever Raphael's was at its best. By all the laws of physiognomy—by all the symbolism of gesture and voice and complexion—by the instinct of my own heart, that young monk might be the instrument, the ready, valiant, obedient instrument, for carrying out all my dreams. If I could but train him into a Longinus, I could dare to play the part of a Zenobia, with him as counsellor. . . . And for my Odenatus—Orestes! Horrible!

She covered her face with her hand a minute. 'No!' she said, dashing away the tears—'That—and anything—and everything for the cause of Philosophy and the gods!'

CHAPTER XI

THE LAURA AGAIN

NOT a sound, not a moving object, broke the utter stillness of the glen of Soetia. The shadows of the crags, though paling every moment before the spreading dawn, still shrouded all the gorge in gloom. A winding line of haze slept above the course of the rivulet. The plumes of the palm-trees hung motionless, as if awaiting in resignation the breathless blaze of the approaching day. At length, among the green ridges of the monastery garden, two gray figures rose from their knees, and began, with slow and feeble strokes, to break the silence by the clatter of their hoes among the pebbles.

'These beans grow wonderfully, brother Anfugus. We shall be able to sow our second crop, by God's blessing, a week earlier than we did last year.'

The person addressed returned no answer, and his companion, after watching him for some time in silence, recommenced—

'What is it, my brother? I have remarked lately a melancholy about you, which is hardly fitting for a man of God.'

A deep sigh was the only answer. The speaker laid down his hoe, and placing his hand affectionately on the shoulder of Anfugus, asked again—

'What is it, my friend? I will not claim with you my abbot's right to know the secrets of your heart. But surely that breast hides nothing which is unworthy to be spoken to me, however unworthy I may be to hear it!'

'Why should I not be sad, Pambos, my friend? Does not Solomon say that there is a time for mourning?'

'True. But a time for mirth also.'

'None to the penitent, burdened with the guilt of many sins.'

'Recollect what the blessed Anthony used to say—"Trust not in thine own righteousness, and regret not that which is past."'

'I do neither, Pambos.'

'Do not be too sure of that. Is it not because thou art still trusting in thyself, that thou dost regret the past, which shows thee that thou art not that which thou wouldst gladly praise thyself on being?'

'Pambos, my friend,' said Arsenius solemnly, 'I will tell thee all. My sins are not yet past. For Honorius, my pupil, still lives, and in him lives the weakness and the misery of Rome. My sins past! If they are, why do I see rising before me, night after night, that train of accusing spectres, ghosts of men slain in battle, widows and orphans, virgins of the Lord shrieking in the grasp of barbarians, who stand by my bedside and cry, "Hast thou done thy duty, we had not been thus! Where is that imperial charge which God committed to thee?"'

And the old man hid his face in his hands and wept bitterly.

Pambo laid his hand again tenderly on the weeper's shoulder.

"Is there no pride here, my brother? Who art thou, to change the fate of nations and the hours of emperors, which are in the hand of the King of kings? If thou wert weak, and imperfect in thy work—for unfaithful, I will warrant thee, thou wert never.—He put thee there, because thou wert imperfect, that so that which has come to pass might come to pass, and thou bearest thine own burden only—and yet not thou, but He who bore it for thee."

"Why then am I tormented by these nightly visions?"

"Fear them not, friend. They are spirits of evil, and therefore lying spirits. Were they good spirits they would speak to thee only in pity, forgiveness, encouragement. But be they ghosts or demons, they must be evil, because they are accusers, like the Evil One himself, the accuser of the saints. He is the father of lies, and his children will be like himself. What said the blessed Anthony? That a monk should not busy his brain with painting spectres, or give himself up for lost, but rather be cheerful, is one who knows that he is redeemed, and in the hands of the Lord, where the Evil One has no power to hurt him. "For," he used to say, "the demons believe to us even as they had us. If they see us cast down and faithless, they terrify us still more, that they may plunge us in despair. But if they see us full of faith, and joyful in the Lord, with our souls filled with the glory which shall be, then they shrink abashed, and flee away in confusion." Cheer up, friend! such thoughts are of the night, the hour of Satan and of the powers of darkness, and with the dawn they flee away."

"And yet things are revealed to men upon their beds, in visions of the night."

"Be it so. Nothing, at all events, has been revealed to thee upon thy bed, except that which thou knowest already far better than Satan does, namely, that thou art a sinner. But for me, my friend, though I doubt not that such things are, it is the day, and not the night, which brings revelations."

"How, then?"

"Because by day I can see to read that book which is written, like the Law given on Sinai, upon tables of stone, by the finger of God Himself."

Arsenius looked up at him inquiringly. Pambo smiled.

"Thou knowest that, like many holy men of old, I am no scholar, and knew not even the Greek tongue, till thou, out of thy brotherly kindness, taughtest it to me. But hast thou never heard what Anthony said to a certain Pagan who reproached him with his ignorance of books? "Which is first," he asked, "spirit, or letter?—Spirit, sayest thou? Then know, the healthy spirit needs no letters. My book is the whole creation, lying open before me, wherein I can read, whosoever I please, the word of God."

"Dost thou not undervalue learning, my friend?"

"I am old among monks, and have seen much of their ways, and among them my simplicity seems to have seen this—many a man wearing himself with study, and tormenting his soul as to whether he believed rightly this doctrine and that, while he knew not with Solomon that in much learning is much sorrow, and that while he was puzzling at the letter of God's message, the spirit of it was going fast and faster out of him."

"And how dost thou know that of such a man?"

"By seeing him become a more and more learned theologian, and more and more zealous for the letter of orthodoxy, and yet less and less loving and merciful—less and less full of trust in God, and of hopeful thoughts for himself and for his brethren, till he seemed to have darkened his whole soul with disquisitions, which breed only strife, and to have forgotten utterly the message which is written in that book where with the blessed Anthony was content."

"Of what message dost thou speak?"

"Look," said the old abbot, stretching his hand toward the Eastern desert, "and judge, like a wise man, for thyself."

As he spoke, a long arrow of level light flashed down the gorge from crag to crag, awakening every crack and slab to vividness and life. The great crimson sun rose swiftly through the thin night-mist of the desert, and as he poured his glory down the glen, the haze rose in threads and plumes, and vanished, leaving the stream to sparkle round the rocks like the living, twinkling eye of the whole scene. Swallows flushed by hundreds out of the cliffs, and began their air dance for the day; the heron hopped stealthily homeward on his stilts from his stolen meal in the monastery garden; the brown sand-hazards underneath the stones opened one eyelid each, and having satisfied themselves that it was day, dragged their bloated bodies and whip-like tails out into the most burning patch of gravel which they could find, and nestling together as a further protection against cold, fell fast asleep again; the buzzard, who considered himself lord of the valley, awoke with a long querulous bark, and rising aloft in two or three vast rings, to stretch himself after his night's sleep, hung motionless, watching every lark which chirruped on the cliffs, while from the far-off Nile below, the awakening croak of pelicans, the clang of geese, the whistle of the godwit and curlew, came ringing up the windings of the glen, and last of all the voices of the monks rose chanting a morning hymn to some wild Eastern air, and a new day had begun in Seets, like those which went before, and those which were to follow after, week after week, year after year, of toil and prayer as quiet as its sleep.

"What does that teach thee, Arseneus, my friend?"

Arsenius was silent.

'To me it teaches this that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. That in His presence is life, and fulness of joy for evermore. That He is the giver, who delights in His own bounty, the lover, whose mercy is over all His works—and why not over thee, too, O thou of little faith? Look at those thousand birds—and without our Father not one of them shall fall to the ground and at them not of more value than many sparrows, thou for whom God sent His Son to die? Ah, my friend, we must look out and around to see what God is like. It is when we persist in turning our eyes inward, and prying curiously over our own imperfections, that we learn to make a God after our own image, and fancy that our own darkness and hardness of heart are the patterns of His light and love.'

'Thou speakest rather as a philosopher than as a penitent Catholic. For me, I feel that I want to look more, and not less, inward. Deeper self-examination, completer abstraction, than I can attain even here, are what I crave for. I long—forgive me, my friend—for I long more and more, duly, for the solitary life. This earth is accursed by man's sin; the less we see of it, it seems to me, the better.'

'I may speak as a philosopher, or as a heathen, for aught I know; yet it seems to me that, as they say, the half loaf is better than none, that the wise man will make the best of what he has, and throw away no lesson because the book is somewhat torn and soiled. The earth teaches me thus far already. Shall I shut my eyes to those invisible things of God which are clearly manifested by the things which are made, because some day they will be more clearly manifested than now? But as for more abstraction, are we so worldly here in Scetis?'

'Nay, my friend, each man has surely his vocation, and for each some peculiar method of life is more edifying than another. In my case, the habits of mind which I acquired in the world will cling to me in spite of myself even here. I cannot help watching the doings of others, studying their characters, planning and plotting for them, trying to prognosticate their future fate. Not a word, not a gesture of this our little family, but turns away my mind from the one thing needful.'

'And do you fancy that the anchorite in his cell has fewer distractions?'

'What can he have but the supply of the mere necessary wants of life? and then, even, he may abridge to the gathering of a few roots and herbs. Men have lived like the beasts already, that they might at the same time live like the angels—and why should not I also?'

'And thou art the wise man of the world—the student of the hearts of others—the anatomist of thine own? Hast thou not found out that, besides a craving stomach, man carries with him a corrupt heart? Many a man I have seen who, in his haste to fly from the fiends without him, has forgotten to close the door of his heart against worse fiends who were ready

to harbour within him. Many a monk, friend, changes his place, but not the anguish of his soul. I have known those who, driven to feed on their own thoughts in solitude, have desperately cast themselves from cliffs or ripped up their own bodies, in the longing to escape from thoughts, from which one companion, one kindly voice, might have delivered them. I have known those, too, who have been so puffed up by those very penances which were meant to humble them, that they have despised all means of grace, as though they were already perfect, and refusing even the Holy Eucharist, have lived in self-glorying dreams and visions suggested by the evil spirits. One such I knew, who, in the madness of his pride, refused to be counselled by any mortal man—saying that he would call no man master—and what befell him? He who used to pride himself on wandering a day's journey into the desert without food or drink, who boasted that he could sustain life for three months at a time only on wild herbs and the Blessed Bread, seized with an inward fire, fled from his cell back to the theatres, the circus, and the taverns, and ended his miserable days in desperate gluttony, holding all things to be but phantasmas, denying his own existence, and that of God Himself.'

Arsenius shook his head:

'Be it so. But my case is different. I have yet more to confess, my friend. Day by day I am more and more haunted by the remembrance of that world from which I fled. I know that if I returned I should feel no pleasure in those pomps, which, even while I battered on them, I despised. Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women, or discern any longer what I eat or what I drink? And yet—the palaces of those seven hills, their statesmen and their generals, their intrigues, their falls, and their triumphs—for they might rise and conquer yet!—for no moment are they out of my imagination,—no moment in which they are not tempting me back to them, like a moth to the candle which has already scorched him, with a dreadful spell, which I must at last obey, wretch that I am, against my own will, or break by fleeing into some outer desert, from whence return will be impossible!'

Pambo smiled.

'Again, I say, this is the worldly-wise man, the searcher of hearts! And he would soon flee from the little Lanra, which does turn his thoughts at times from such vain dreams, to a solitude where he will be utterly unable to escape those dreams. Well, friend!—and what if thou art troubled at times by anxieties and schemes for this brother and for that? Better to be anxious for others than only for thyself. Better to have something to love—even something to weep over—than to become in some lonely cavern thine own world,—perhaps, as more than one whom I have known, thine own God.'

'Do you know what you are saying?' asked Arsenius in a startled tone.

'I say, that by fleeing into solitude a man

cuts himself off from all which makes a Christian man, from law, obedience, fellow-help, self-sacrifice—from the communion of saints itself.

'How then?'

'How canst thou hold communion with those toward whom thou canst show no love? And how canst thou show thy love but by works of love?'

'I can, at least, pray day and night for all mankind. Has that no place—or rather, has it not the mightiest place—in the communion of saints?'

'He who cannot pray for his brothers whom he does see, and whose sins and temptations he knows, will pray but dully, my friend Anfugas, for his brothers whom he does not see, or for anything else. And he who will not labour for his brothers, the same will soon cease to pray for them, or love them either. And then, what is written? "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how will he love God whom he hath not seen?"'

'Again, I say, do you know whither your argument leads?'

'I am a plain man, and know nothing about arguments. If a thing be true, let it lead where it will, for it leads where God wills.'

'But at this rate, it were better for a man to take a wife, and have children, and mix himself up in all the turmoil of carnal affections, in order to have as many as possible to love, and fear for, and work for.'

Pambo was silent for a while.

'I am a monk and no logician. But this I say, that thou leavest not the Laura for the desert with my good will. I would rather, had I my wish, see thy wisdom installed some where nearer the metropolis—at Trœ or Canopus, for example—where thou mightest be at hand to fight the Lord's battles. Why wert thou taught worldly wisdom, but to use it for the good of the Church? It is enough. Let us go.'

And the two old men walked homeward across the valley, little guessing the practical answer which was ready for their argument in Abbot Pambo's cell, in the shape of a tall and grim ecclesiastic, who was busily satisfying his hunger with dates and millet, and by no means refusing the palm-wine, the sole delicacy of the monastery, which had been brought forth only in honour of a guest.

The stately and courtly hospitality of Eastern manners, as well as the self-restraining kindness of monastic Christianity, forbade the abbot to interrupt the stranger, and it was not till he had finished a hearty meal that Pambo asked his name and errand.

'My unworthiness is called Peter the Reader. I come from Cyril, with letters and messages to the brother Anfugas.'

Pambo rose, and bowed reverentially.

'We have heard your good report, sir, as of one zealously affected in the cause of the Church Catholic. Will it please you to follow us to the cell of Anfugas?'

Peter stalked after them with a sufficiently

important air to the little hut, and there taking from his bosom Cyril's epistle, handed it to Arsenius, who sat long, reading and re-reading with a clouded brow, while Pambo watched him with simple awe, not daring to interrupt by a question ineubrations which he considered of unfathomable depth.

'These are indeed the last days,' said Arsenius at length, 'spoken of by the prophet, when many shall run to and fro. So Heraclion has actually sailed for Italy.'

'His acquaintance was met on the high seas by Alexandrian merchantmen, three weeks ago.'

'And Orestes hardens his heart more and more?'

'Ay, Pharaoh that he is, or rather, the heathen woman hardens it for him.'

'I always feared that woman above all the schools of the heathen,' said Arsenius. 'But the Count Heraclion, whom I always held for the wisest as well as the most righteous of men! Alas!—alas! what virtue will withstand, when ambition sears the heart?'

'Faintly, truly,' said Peter, 'is that same lust of power. But for him, I have never trusted him since he began to be indulgent to those Donatists.'

'Too true. So does one sin beget another.'

'And I consider that indulgence to sinners is the worst of all sins whatsoever.'

'Not of all, surely, reverend sir?' said Pambo humbly. But Peter, taking no notice of the interruption, went on to Arsenius—

'And now, what answer am I to bear back from your wisdom to his holiness?'

'Let me see—let me see. He might—it needs consideration—I ought to know more of the state of parties. He has, of course, communicated with the African bishops, and tried to unite them with him?'

'Two months ago. But the stiff-necked schismatics are still jealous of him, and hold aloof.'

'Schismatics is too harsh a term, my friend. But has he sent to Constantinople?'

'He needs a messenger accustomed to courts. It was possible, he thought, that your experience might instruct the mission.'

'Me? Who am I? Alas! alas! fresh temptations daily! Let him send by the hand of whom he will. . . . And yet—were I—at least in Alexandria—I might advise from day to day. . . . I should certainly see my way clearer. . . . And unforeseen chances might arise, too.'

Pambo, my friend, thinkest thou that it would be sinful to obey the Holy Patriarch?'

'Alas!' and Pambo, laughing, 'and thou art he who was for fleeing into the desert an hour ago! And now, when once thou smellst the battle afar off, thou art pawing in the valley, like the old war-horse. Go, and God be with thee! Thou wilt be none the worse for it. Thou art too old to fall in love, too poor to buy a bishopric, and too righteous to have one given thee.'

'Art thou in earnest?'

'What did I say to thee in the garden? Go, and see our son, and send me news of him.'

'Ah! shame on my worldly-mindedness! I had forgotten all this time to inquire for him. How is the youth, reverend sir?'

'Whom do you mean?'

'Philammon, our spiritual son, whom we sent down to you three months ago,' said Pambro. 'Risen to honour he is, by this time, I doubt not?'

'He? He is gone!'

'Gone?'

'Ay, the wretch, with the curse of Judas on him! He had not been with us three days before he beat me openly in the patriarch's court, cast off the Christian faith, and fled away to the heathen woman, Hypatia, at whom he is enamoured.'

The two old men looked at each other with blank and horror-stricken faces.

'Enamoured of Hypatia?' said Arsenius at last.

'It is impossible!' sobbed Pambro. 'The boy must have been treated harshly, unjustly? Some one has wronged him, and he was accustomed only to kindness, and could not bear it. Cruel men that you are, and unfaithful stewards. The Lord will require the child's blood at your hands!'

'Ay,' said Peter, rising fiercely, 'that is the world's justice! Blame me, blame the patriarch, blame any and every one but the sinner. As if a hot head and a hotter heart were not enough to explain it all! As if a young fool had never before been bewitched by a fair face!'

'Oh, my friends, my friends,' cried Arsenius, 'why revile each other without cause? I, I only am to blame. I advised you, Pambro!—I sent him—I ought to have known—what was I doing, old worldling that I am, to thrust the poor innocent forth into the temptations of Babylon? This comes of all my schemings and my plottings! And now his blood will be on my head—as if I had not sinned enough to bear already, I must go and add this over and above all, to sell my own Joseph, the son of my old age, to the Midianites! Here, I will go with you—now—at once—I will not rest till I find him, clasp his knees till he pities my gray hairs! Let Herachin and Orestes go their way for aught I care—I will find him, I say. O Absalom, my son! would to God I had died for thee, my son! my son!'

CHAPTER XII

THE BOWER OF ACRYSIA

THE house which Pelagia and the Amal had hired after their return to Alexandria, was one of the most splendid in the city. They had been now living there three months or more, and in that time Pelagia's taste had supplied

the little which it needed to convert it into a paradise of lazy luxury. She herself was wealthy, and her Gothic guests, overburdened with Roman spoils, the very use of which they could not understand, freely allowed her and her nymphs to throw away for them the treasures which they had won in many a fearful fight. What matter? If they had enough to eat, and more than enough to drink, how could the useless surplus of their riches be better spent than in keeping their ladies in good humour? . . . And when it was all gone, they would go somewhere or other—who cared whither?—and win more. The whole world was before them waiting to be plundered, and they would fulfil their mission, whensoever it suited them. In the meantime they were in no hurry. Egypt furnished in profusion every sort of food which could gratify palates far more nice than theirs. And as for wine—few of them went to bed sober from one week's end to another. Could the souls of warriors have more, even in the halls of Valhalla?

So thought the petty who occupied the inner court of the house, one blazing afternoon in the same week in which Cyril's messenger had so lately broken in on the repose of the Sects.

Then repose, at least, was still untouched. The great city roared without, Orestes plotted, and Cyril counter-plotted, and the fate of a continent hung—or seemed to hang—trembling in the balance, but the turmoil of it no more troubled those lazy Titans within, than did the roll and rattle of the carriage-wheels disturb the parakeets and quibirds which peeped, under an awning of gilded wire, the inner court of Pelagia's house. Why should they fret themselves with it all? What was every fresh riot, execution, conspiracy, bankruptcy, but a sign—that the fruit was growing ripe for the plucking? Even Heraclius's rebellion, and Orestes' suspected conspiracy, were to the younger and coarser folks a sort of child's play, at which they could look on and laugh, and bet, from morning till night, while to the more cunning heads, such as Wulf and Smid, they were but signs of the general rottenness—now cracks in those great walls over which they intended, with a simple and boyish consciousness of power, to mount to victory when they chose.

And in the meantime, till the right opening opened, what was there better than to eat, drink, and sleep? And certainly they had chosen a charming retreat in which to fulfil that lofty mission. Columns of purple and green porphyry, among which gleamed the white limbs of delicate statues, surrounded a basin of water, fed by a perpetual jet, which sprinkled with cool spray the leaves of the oranges and unmoses, mingling its murmurs with the warblings of the tropic birds which nested among the branches.

On one side of the fountain, under the shade of a broad-leaved palmetto, lay the Amal's mighty limbs, stretched out on cushions, his yellow hair crowned with vine-leaves, his hand grasping a

golden cup, which had been won from Indian Rajahs by Puthian Choroos, from Choroos by Roman generals, from Roman generals by the heroes of sheepskin and horsehide, while Pelagia, by the side of the sleepy Hercules-Dionysos, lay leaning over the brink of the fountain, lazily dipping her fingers into the water, and basking, like the gnats which hovered over its surface, in the mere pleasure of existence.

On the opposite bank of the bay, tended each by a dark-eyed Illic, who killed the wine cups, and helped now and then to empty them, lay the especial friends and companions in arms of the Amal, Goderie the son of Emmerie, and Aglunad the son of Chuva, who both, like the Amal, loved a decent frolic with girls, and last, but not least, that most important and all but red personage, Smid the son of Troll, revered for cunning beyond the sons of men, for not only could he make and mend all matters, from a pontoon bridge to a gold bracelet, shoe horses and doctor them, charm all diseases out of man and beast, carve runes, interpret war-omens, foretell weather, raise the winds, and finally, conquer in the battle of meal-horns all except Wulf the son of Ovida, but he had actually, during a sojourn among the half-civilised Mesogoths, picked up a fair share of Latin and Greek, and a rough knowledge of reading and writing.

A few yards off lay old Wulf upon his back, his knees in the air, his hands crossed behind his head, keeping up, even in his sleep, a half-conscious comment of growls on the following intellectual conversation --

'Noble wine this, is it not?'

'Perfect. Who bought it for us?'

'Old Miriam bought it, at some great tax-farmer's sale. The fellow was lankrupt, and Miriam said she got it for the half what it was worth.'

'Serve the penny turning rascal right. The old vixen fox took care, I'll warrant her, to get her profit out of the bargain.'

'Never mind if she did. We can afford to pay like men, if we earn like men.'

'We shan't afford it long, at this rate,' growled Wulf.

'Then we'll go and earn more. I am tired of doing nothing.'

'People need not do nothing, unless they choose,' said Goderie. 'Wulf and I had courting fit for a king, the other morning on the sand-hills. I had had no appetite for a week before, and I have been as sharp-set as a Danneboken ever since.'

'Courting? What, with those long legged, brush-tailed brutes, like a fox upon stilts, which the prefect cozened you into buying?'

'All I can say is, that we put up a herd of those—what do you call them here—deer with goats' horns?'

'Antelopes?'

'That's it—and the curs ran into them as a falcon does into a skein of ducks. Wulf and I galloped and galloped over those accursed sand-

heaps till the horses stuck fast, and when they got their wind again, we found each pair of dogs with a deer down between them—and what can man want more, if he cannot get fighting? You eat them, so you need not suffer.'

'Well, dogs are the only things worth having, then, that this Alexandria does produce.'

'Except fair ladies,' put in one of the girls.

'Of course. I'll except the women. But the men—'

'The what? I have not seen a man since I came here, except a dock-worker or two—priests and fine gentlemen they are all—and you don't call them men, surely?'

'What on earth do they do, beside riding donkeys?'

'Philosophise, they say.'

'What's that?'

'I'm sure I don't know; some sort of slave's quill-driving, I suppose.'

'Pelagia! do you know what philosophising is?'

'No—and I don't care.'

'I do,' quoth Aglunad, with a look of superior wisdom; 'I saw a philosopher the other day.'

'And what sort of a thing was it?'

'I'll tell you. I was walking down the great street there, going to the harbour, and I saw a crowd of boys—men they call them here going into a large doorway. So I asked one of them what was doing, and the fellow, instead of answering me, pointed at my legs, and set all the other monkeys laughing. So I boxed his ears, and he tumbled down.'

'They all do so here, if you box their ears,' said the Amal meditatively, as if he had hit upon a great inductive law.

'Ah,' said Pelagia, looking up with her most winning smile, 'they are not such gnats as you, who make a poor little woman feel like a gazelle in a lion's paw.'

'Well—it struck me that, as I spoke in Gothic, the boy might not have understood me, being a Greek. So I walked in at the door, to save questions, and see for myself. And there a fellow held out his hand—I suppose for money, so I gave him two or three gold pieces, and a box on the ear, at which he tumbled down, of course, but seemed very well satisfied. So I walked in.'

'And what did you see?'

'A great hall, large enough for a thousand heroes, full of these Egyptian rascals scribbling with pencils on tablets. And at the farther end of it the most beautiful woman I ever saw—with right fair hair and blue eyes, talking, talking—I could not understand it, but the donkey-riders seemed to think it very fine, for they went on looking first at her, and then at their tablets, gaping like frogs in drought. And, certainly, she looked as fair as the sun, and talked like an Alruna-wife. Not that I knew what it was about, but one can see somehow, you know.—So I fell asleep, and when I woke, and came out, I met some one who understood

me, and he told me that it was the famous maiden, the great philosopher And that's what I know about philosophy'

'She was very much wasted then, on such soft-handed starvelings Why don't she marry some hero?'

'Because there are none here to marry,' said Pelagia, 'except some who are fast netted, I fancy, already'

'But what do they talk about, and tell people to do, these philosophers, Pelagia?'

'Oh, they don't tell any one to do anything—at least, if they do, nobody ever does it, as far as I can see, but they talk about suns and stars, and right and wrong, and ghosts and spirits, and what sort of thing, and about not enjoying oneself too much Not that I ever saw that they were any happier than any one else'

'She must have been an Alruna maiden,' said Wulf, half to himself

'She is a very conceited creature, and I hate her,' said Pelagia

'I believe you,' said Wulf

'What is an Alruna-maiden?' asked one of the girls

'Something as like you as a salmon is like a horse-leech Heroes, will you hear a saga?'

'If it is a cool one,' said Agilmund, 'about ice, and pine trees, and snowstorms I shall be roasted brown in three days more'

'Oh' said the Amal, 'that we were on the Alps again for only two hours, sliding down those snow-slopes on our shields, with the sleet whistling about our ears! That was sport!'

'To those who could keep their seat,' said Goderic. 'Who went head over heels into a glacier-crack, and was dug out of fifty feet of snow, and had to be put inside a fresh-killed horse before he could be brought to life?'

'Not you, surely,' said Pelagia 'Oh, you wonderful creature! what things you have done and suffered!'

'Well,' said the Amal, with a look of stolid self-satisfaction, 'I suppose I have seen a good deal in my time, eh?'

'Yes, my Hercules, you have gone through your twelve labours, and saved your poor little Hlesone after them all, when she was chained to the rock, for the ugly sea-monsters to eat, and she will cherish you, and keep you out of scrapes now, for her own sake,' and Pelagia threw her arms round the great bull-neck, and drew it down to her

'Will you hear my saga?' said Wulf impatiently

'Of course we will,' said the Amal, 'anything to pass the time.'

'But let it be about snow,' said Agilmund 'Not about Alruna-wives!'

'About them, too,' said Goderic, 'my mother was one, so I must needs stand up for them'

'She was, boy Do you be her son Now hear, Wolves of the Goths!'

And the old man took up his little lute, or as he would probably have called it, 'fidel,' and began chaunting to his own accompaniment.

Over the camp fires
Drank I with heroes,
Under the Donau bank
Warm in the snow-trench,
Sagamen heard I there,
Men of the Longbeards,
Cunning and ancient,
Honey-sweet voiced
Scaring the wolf-cull,
Scaring the horn-owl out,
Shaking the snow-wreaths
Down from the pine boughs,
Up to the star roof
Rang out their song
Shining how Whul men
Over the ice-floes
Stealing from Scanland on
Came into Scoring,
Shining of Gambara
Frey's beloved
Mother of Ayn
Mother of Thor
Shining of Wendel men,
Aubri and Ayn
How to the Whulfolk
Went they with war words—

'I am my ye, strangers,
And many are we,
Pay us now toll and fee,
Clothing, and rings, and beoves,
Flee at the river's mead
Bide the sharp bull a dawn'

'I am my ye, strangers, work then,
I am my ye, strangers, work then,

'I am my ye, strangers, work then,
I am my ye, strangers, work then,
I am my ye, strangers, work then,

'I am my ye, strangers, work then,
I am my ye, strangers, work then,
I am my ye, strangers, work then,

Out of the morning land,
Over the snow-circles,
In awful Freya came,
Tripping to Scoring
While were the moorlands,
And frozen before her,
But green were the moorlands,
And green were the moorlands,

'I am my ye, strangers, work then,
I am my ye, strangers, work then,
I am my ye, strangers, work then,
I am my ye, strangers, work then,
I am my ye, strangers, work then,

Out of her garments
Shaking the south wind,
Around in the larches
Awaking the throats,
And making chaste housewives all
Long for their heroes home,
Loving and love giving,
Came she to Scoring
Came she to Scoring
Came she to Scoring,
Wist of Valas—

'Vala, why weepst thou?
Far in the wide blue,
High up in the Blinn house,
Heard I thy weeping'

'Stop not thy weeping,
Till one can fight seven,
Sons have I, heroes tall,
First in the sword play,
This day at the Wendels' hands
Eagles must tear them;
While their mothers, thrall weary,
Must grind for the Wendels.'

Wept the Alruna-wife,
Kissed her fair Freya—
Far off in the morning land
High in Vallalle,
A window stands open,
Its sill is the snow-peaks,
Its posts are the water-spouts
Storm rack its timber,
Gold cloud-flakes above it

Are piled for the roofing
Far up to the Elfin-home,
High in the wide-blue.
Smiles out each morning thence
Odin Allfather,
From under the cloud-eaves,
Smiles out on the heroes,
Smiles out on chaste house-wives all,
Smiles on the broad man,
Smiles on the middle work
And there is the sword-lark,
With them is the glory—
So Odin hath sworn it—
Who first in the morning
Shall meet him and greet him.

Still the Alruna wept—
Who then shall greet him?
Women alone are here
Far on the moorlands
Behind the war-lindens,
To wait for the bull's down
Watch Wain to ring all,
One against seven.
Sweetly the Queen laughed—
Hear then my counsel now,
Take to thee, comrade,
Beloved of Freya,
Take thou thy woman folk,
Maidens and wives
Over your ankers
Lace on the white war-horn,
Over your bosoms
Link up the hard maillets,
Over your hips
That long to meet with comrade, —
So war-lindens full bearded
King Odinn shall deem you,
When off the great sea reach
At sunrise ye greet him.

Night's son was driving
His golden-haired horses up
Over the Eastern fells
High flushed the warriors
Smiled from the cloud-eaves out
Allfather Odinn,
Waiting the battle-spout
Frey stood by him
Who are the heroes tall
Lusty limbed Longbeards?
Over the swains' hall
Why cry they to us?
Horns should be crashing fast,
Wolves should be full fed,
Where'er such, mail-bearing,
Swing hurls in the sword-play.

Sweetly laughed Freya—
A name thou hast given them—
Shames neither thee nor thine,
Well can they wear it
Give them the victory,
First have they greeted thee,
Give them the victory,
Yokefellow mine!
Maidens and wives are these—
Wives of the Wights,
Few are their heroes
And far on the war-road,
So over the swains' hall
They cry unto thee.

Royally laughed he then,
Dear was that craft to him,
Odin Allfather,
Shaking the clouds
"Cunning are women all,
Bold and importunate!
Longbeards their name shall be,
Ravens shall think them
Where the women are heroes,
What must the men be like?
There is the victory,
No need of me!"

"There!" said Wulf, when the song was ended; "is that cool enough for you?"

"Rather too cool, ah, Pelagia!" said the Anial, laughing.

"Ay," went on the old man, bitterly enough, "such were your mothers, and such were your sisters, and such your wives must be, if you mean to last much longer on the face of the earth—women who care for something better than good eating, strong drinking, and soft lying."

"All very true, Prince Wulf," said Agilmund, "but I don't like the saga after all. It was a great deal too like what Pelagia here says: those philosophers talk about—right and wrong, and that sort of thing."

"I don't doubt it."

"Now I like a really good saga, about gods and giants, and the fire kingdoms and the snow kingdoms, and the Asir making men and women out of two sticks, and all that."

"Ay," said the Anial, "something like nothing one ever saw in one's life, all stark mad and topsy-turvy, like one's dreams when one has been drunk, something grand which you cannot understand, but which sets you thinking over it all the morning after."

"Well," said Goderic, "my mother was an Alruna woman, so I will not be the first to foul its own nest. But I like to hear about wild beasts and ghosts, ogres, and fire-drakes, and meors—something that one could kill if one had a chance, as one's fathers had."

"Your fathers would never have killed meors," said Wulf, "if they had been—"

"Like us—I know," said the Anial. "Now tell me, prince, you are old enough to be our father, and did you ever see a meor?"

"My brother saw one, in the Northern sea three fathoms long, with the body of a lion-bull, and the head of a cat and the beard of a man, and tusks as long, lying down on its breast, watching for the fishermen, and he struck it with an arrow, so that it fled to the bottom of the sea, and never came up again."

"What is a meor, Agilmund?" asked one of the girls.

"A sea-devil who eats sailors. There used to be plenty of them where our fathers came from, and ogres too, who came out of the fens into the hall at night, when the warriors were sleeping, to suck their blood, and steal along, and steal along, and jump upon you—so."

Pelagia, during the saga, had remained looking into the fountain, and playing with the water-drops, in assumed indifference. Perhaps it was to hide burning blushes, and something very like two hot tears, which fell unobserved into the ripple. Now she looked up suddenly—

"And of course you have killed some of these dreadful creatures, Amalric?"

"I never had such good luck, darling. Our forefathers were in such a hurry with them, that *Geda Langobardorum*. The metre and language are intended as imitations of those of the earlier *Fædla* poems."

¹ This punning legend may be seen in Yngli Warnefrid's

by the time we were born, there was hardly one left.

'Ay, they were men,' growled Wulf

'As for me,' went on the Amal, 'the biggest thing I ever killed was a snake in the Donan fens. How long was he, prince? You had time to see, for you sat eating your dinner and looking on, while he was trying to crack my bones.'

'Four lathoms,' answered Wulf

'With a wild bull lying by him, which he had just killed. I spoilt his dinner, eh, Wulf?'

'Yes,' said the old grumbler, mollified, 'that was a right good fight.'

'Why don't you make a saga about it, then, instead of about right and wrong, and such things?'

'Because I am turned philosopher. I shall go and hear that Alanna-maiden this afternoon.'

'Well said. Let us go too, young men. It will pass the time, at all events.'

'Oh, no! no! no! do not! you shall not! almost shirked Pelagia.'

'Why not, then, pretty one?'

'She is a witch—she—I will never love you again if you dare to go. Your only reason is that Agilmund's report of her beauty.'

'So? You are afraid of my liking her golden locks better than your black ones?'

'I? Afraid?' And she leapt up, panting with pretty rage. 'Come, we will go too—at once—and brave this nun, who fancies herself too wise to speak to a woman, and too pure to love a man! Look out my jewels! Saddle my white mule! We will go royally. We will not be ashamed of Cupid's livery, my girls—sash on shawl and all! Come, and let us see whether saucy Aphrodite is not a match after all for Pallas Athene and her owl!'

And she darted out of the cloister.

The three younger men burst into a roar of laughter, while Wulf looked on with grim approval.

'So you want to go and hear the philosopher, prince?' said Smid.

'Wheresoever a holy and wise woman speaks, a warrior need not be ashamed of listening. Did not Alaric bid us spare the nuns in Rome, comrade? And though I am no Christian as he was, I thought it no shame for Odin's man to take their blessing, nor will I to take this one's, Smid, son of Troll!'

CHAPTER XIII

THE BOTTOM OF THE ABYSS

'HERE am I, at last!' said Raphael Aben-Ezra to himself. 'Fairly and safely landed at the very bottom of the bottomless, disporting myself on the firm floor of the primeval nothing, and finding my new element, like boys when they begin to swim, not so impracticable after all. No man, angel, or demon, can this day cast it in my teeth that I am weak enough to believe or disbelieve any phenomenon or theory

in or concerning heaven or earth; or even that any such heaven, earth, phenomena, or theories exist—or otherwise. . . I trust that is a sufficiently exhaustive statement of my opinions? . . . I am certainly not dogmatic enough to deny—or to assert either—that there are sensations . . . far too numerous for comment . . . but as for proceeding any further, by induction, deduction, analysis, or synthesis, I utterly decline the office of Arachne, and will spin no more cobwebs out of my own inside—if I have any. Sensations? What are they, but parts of oneself—if one has a self? What put this child's fancy into one's head, that there is anything outside of one which produces them? You have exactly similar feelings in your dreams, and you know that there is no reality corresponding to them—No, you don't! How dare you be dogmatic enough to affirm that? Why should not your dreams be as real as your waking thoughts? Why should not your dreams be the reality, and your waking thoughts the dream? What matter which?'

'What matter, indeed? Here have I been staring for years—unless that, too, is a dream, which it very probably is—at every mountebank "man" which ever tumbled and capered on the philosophic tight-rope, and they are every one of them dead dolls, wooden, worked with wires, which are *petitions in principle*. Each philosopher begs the question in hand, and then marches forward, as brave as a triumph, and pines himself—on proving it all afterwards. No wonder that his theory fits the universe, when he has first clipped the universe to fit his theory. Have I not tried my hand at many? one—starting, too, no one can deny, with the very minimum of chipping, . . . for I suppose one cannot begin lower than at simple "I am I" unless—which is equally demonstrable—at "I am not I." I recollect—or dream—that I offered that sweet dream, Hypatia, to deduce all things in heaven and earth, from the Astronomical Hypotheses to the number of plumes in an archangel's wing, from that one simple proposition, if she would but write me out a demonstration of it first, as some sort of *modus operandi* for the apex of my inverted pyramid. But she disdained. . . People are apt to disdain what they know they cannot do. "It was an axiom," it was, "like one and one making two."

How cross the sweet dream was, at my telling her that I did not consider that any axiom either, and that one thing and one thing seeming to us to be two things, was no more proof that they really were two, and not three hundred and sixty-two, than a man seeming to be an honest man, proved him not to be a rogue, and at my asking her, moreover, when she appealed to universal experience, how she proved that the combined folly of all fools resulted in wisdom!

"I am I" an axiom, indeed! What right have I to say that I am not any one else? How do I know it? How do I know that there is any one else for me not to be?

I, or rather something, feel a number of sensations, longings, thoughts, fancies—the great devil take them all—fresh ones every moment, and each at war tooth and nail with all the rest; and then on the strength of this infinite multiplicity and contradiction, of which alone I am aware, I am to be illogical enough to stand up, and say, "I by myself I," and swear stoutly that I am one thing, when all I am conscious of is the devil only knows how many things. Of all quaint deductions from experience, that is the quaintest! Would it not be more philosophical to conclude that I, who never saw or felt or heard this which I call myself, am what I have seen, heard, and felt—and no more and no less—that sensation which I call that loose, that dead man, that jakes, those forty thousand two-legged jakes who appear to be running for their lives below there, having got hold of this same notion of their being one thing each—as I choose to fancy in my toothy habit of imputing to them the same disease of thought which I find in myself—namely the word!—The folly of my ancestors—it I ever had any—prevents my having any better expression. Why should I not be all I feel—the sky, those clouds—the whole universe? Hercules! what a creative genius my sensorium must be!—I'll take to writing poetry—a mock-epic, in seventy-two books, entitled "The Universe of Raphael Aben-Ezer," and take Homer's *Margites* for my model Homer's! Mine! Why must not the *Margites*, like everything else, have been a sensation of my own? Hypatia used to say Homer's poetry was a part of her—only she could not prove it—but I have proved that the *Margites* is a part of me—but that I believe my own proof—scepticism forbid! Oh, would to heaven that the said whole disagreeable universe were annihilated, if it were only just to settle by fair experiment whether any of master "I" remained when they were gone! Buzzard and dogmatist! And how do you know that that would settle it? And if it did—why need it be settled?

"I dare say there is an answer put for all this. I could write a pretty one myself in half an hour. But then I should not believe it—not the rejoinder to that—not the denunner to that again. So I am both sleepy and hungry—or rather, sleepiness and hunger are me. Which is it? Heigh ho!" and Raphael finished his meditation by a mighty yawn. This hopeful oration was delivered in a fitting lecture-room. Between the bare walls of a doleful fire-scarred tower in the Campagna of Rome, standing upon a knoll of dry brown grass, ringed with a few grim juncos, blasted and black with smoke, there sat Raphael Aben-Ezer, working out the last formula of the great world problem—"Given Self, to find God." Though the doorless stone archway he could see a long vista of the plain below, covered with broken trees, trampled crops, smoking villas, and all the ugly scars of recent war, far onward to the quiet purple mountains and the silver sea,

towards which struggled, far in the distance, long dark lines of moving specks, flowing together, breaking up, stopping short, recoiling back to surge forward by some fresh channel, while now and then a glitter of keen white sparks ran through the dense black masses.

The Count of Africa had thrown for the empire of the world—and lost.

"Brave old Sam!" said Raphael, "how merrily he flashes off the sword-blades yonder, and never cares that every tiny spark brings a death-shriek after it! Why should he? It is no concern of his. Astrologers are fools. His business is to shine, and on the whole, he is one of my few satisfactory sensations. How now? This is questionably pleasant!"

As he spoke, a column of troops came marching across the field, straight towards his retreat.

"It those new sensations of mine find me here, they will infallibly produce in me a new sensation, which will render all further ones impossible. . . Will? What kinder thing could they do for me? Ay—but how do I know that they would do it? What possible proof is there that if a two-legged phantasm pokes a leaden gray phantasm in among my sensations, those sensations will be my last? Is the fact of my turning pile, and lying still, and being in a day or two converted into crows' flesh, my reason why I should not feel? And how do I know that would happen? It seems to happen to retain sensations of my eyeball—or something else—who cares? which I call soldiers, but what possible analogy can there be between what seems to happen to those single sensations called soldiers, and what may or may not really happen to all my sensations put together, which I call me? Should I bear apples if a phantasm seemed to come and plant me? Then why should I die if another phantasm seemed to come and poke me in the ribs?"

"Still I don't intend to deny it. I am no dogmatist. Positively the phantasms are marching straight for my tower! Well, it may be safer to run away, on the chance. But as for losing it long," continued he, rising and cramming a few mouldy crusts into his wallet, "that, like everything else, is past proof. Why—if now, when I have some sort of excuse for fancying myself one thing in one place, I am driven mad with the number of my sensations, what will it be when I am eaten, and turned to dust, and undeniably many things in many places. Will not the sensations be multiplied by—unbearable? I would swear at the thought, if I had anything to swear by." To be transmuted into the sensoria of forty different nasty carrion crows, besides two or three foxes, and a large black beetle! I'll run away, just like anybody else. . . if anybody existed. Come, Bran!

"Bran! where are you? unlucky inseparable sensation of mine? Picking up a dinner already off these dead soldiers? Well, the pity is that this foolish contradictory taste of mine, while it makes me hungry; forbids me to follow your

example. Why am I to take lessons from my soldier-phantasms, and not from my canine one? Illogical! Bran! Bran! and he went out and whistled in vain for the dog.

'Bran! unhappy phantom, who will not vanish by night or day, lying on my chest even in dreams, and who would not even let me vanish, and solve the problem—though I don't believe there is any—why did you drag me out of the sea there at Ostia? Why did you not let me become a whole shoal of crabs? How did you know, or I either, that they may not be very jolly fellows, and not in the least troubled with philosophic doubts? But perhaps there were no crabs, but only phantasms of crabs. And, on the other hand, if the crab-phantasms give jolly sensations, why should not the crow-phantasms? So whichever way it turns out, no matter, and I may as well wait here, and seem to become crows, as I certainly shall do—Bran! . . . Why should I wait for her? What pleasure can it be to me to have the feeling of a four legged, bruddled, lop-eared, toad-mouthed thing always been what seem to be my legs? There she is! Where have you been, madam? Don't you see I am in marching order, with staff and wallet ready shouldered? Come!'

But the dog, looking up in his face as only dogs can look, ran toward the back of the ruin, and up to him again, and back again, until he followed her.

'What's this? Here is a new sensation with a vengeance! O storm and cloud of material appearances, were there not enough of you already, that you must add to your number these also! Bran! Bran! Could you find no other day in the year but this, wherein to present my ears with the squeals of—one—two—three—nine blind puppies!'

Bran answered by rushing into the hole where her new family lay tumbling and squalling, bringing out one in her mouth, and laying it at his feet.

'Needless, I assure you. I am perfectly aware of the state of the case already. What! another! Silly old thing!—do you fancy, as the fine ladies do, that burdening the world with noisy likenesses of your precious self, is a thing of which to be proud? Why, she's bringing out the whole litter! . . . What was I thinking of last? Ah—the argument was self-contradictory, was it, because I could not argue without using the very terms which I repudiated! Well . . . And—why should it not be contradictory? Why not? One must face that too, after all. Why should not a thing be true and false also? What harm in a thing's being false? What necessity for it to be true? True! What is truth? Why should a thing be the worse for being illogical? Why should there be any logic at all? Did I ever see a little beast flying about with "Logic" labelled on its back? What do I know of it, but as a sensation of my own mind—if I have any! What proof is that that I am to obey it, and not it me? If

a flea bites me I get rid of that sensation; and if logic bothers me, I'll get rid of that too! Phantasms must be taught to vanish courteously. One's only hope of comfort lies in kicking feebly against the tyranny of one's own boring notions and sensations—every philosopher confesses that—and what god is logic, pray, that it is to be the sole exception? . . . What, old lady! I give you fair warning, you must choose this day, like any man, between the ties of family and those of duty.'

Bran seized him by the skirt, and pulled him down towards the puppies, took up one of the puppies and lifted it towards him, and then repeated the action with another.

'You unconscionable old brute! You don't actually dare to expect me to carry your puppies for you?' and he turned to go.

Bran sat down on her tail and began howling. 'Farewell, old dog! you have been a pleasant dream after all . . . But if you will go the way of all phantasms!' And he walked away.

Bran ran with him, leaping and barking, then recollected her family and ran back, tried to bring them, one by one, in her mouth, and then to bring them all at once; and failing sat down and howled.

'Come, Bran! Come, old girl!'

She moved half-way up to him, then half-way back again to the puppies, then towards him again and then suddenly gave it up, and dropping her tail, walked slowly back to the blind supplicants, with a deep reproachful growl.

'* * *!' said Raphael with a mighty oath, 'you are right after all! Here are nine things come into the world, phantasms or not, there it is, I can't deny it. They are something, and you are something, old dog, or at least like enough to something to do instead of it, and you are not I, and as good as I, and they too, for aught I know, and have as good a right to live as I, and by the seven planets and all the rest of it, I'll carry them!'

And he went back, tied up the puppies in his blanket, and set forth, Bran barking, squeaking, wagging, leaping, running between his legs and upsetting him, in her agonies of joy.

'Forward! Whither you will, old lady! The world is wide. You shall be my guide, tutor, queen of philosophy, for the sake of this mere common sense of yours. Forward, you new Hypatia! I promise you I will attend no lectures but yours this day!'

He toiled on, every now and then stepping across a dead body, or clambering a wall out of the road, to avoid some plunging, shrieking horse, or obscene knot of prowling camp followers, who were already stripping and plundering the slain. At last, in front of a large villa, now a black and smoking skeleton, he leaped a wall, and found himself landed on a heap of corpses. . . . They were piled up against the garden fence for many yards. The struggle had been fierce there some three hours before.

'Put me out of my misery! In mercy kill me!' moaned a voice beneath his feet.

Raphael looked down; the poor wretch was slashed and mutilated beyond all hope.

'Certainly, friend, if you wish it,' and he drew his dagger. The poor fellow stretched out his throat, and awaited the stroke with a ghastly smile. Raphael caught his eye, his heart failed him, and he rose.

'What do you advise, Bran?' But the dog was far ahead, leaping and barking impatiently.

'I obey,' said Raphael, and he followed him, while the wounded man called intently and upbraidingly after him.

'He will not have long to wait. Those plunderers will not be as squeamish as I. Strange, now! From Armenian reminiscences I should have fancied myself as free from such tender weakness as any of my Canaanite-slaying ancestors.

And yet by some mere spirit of contradiction, I couldn't kill that fellow, exactly because he asked me to do it.

There is more in that than will fit into the great inverted pyramid of "I am I." Never mind, let me get the dog's lessons by heart first. What next, Bran? Ah! Could one believe the transformation? Why, this is the very town villa which I passed yesterday morning, with the garden chairs standing among the flower-beds, just as the young ladies had left them, and the peacocks and silver pheasants minding about, wondering why their pretty mistresses did not come to feed them. And here is a trampled mass of wreck and corruption for the girls to find, when they venture back from Rome, and complain how horrible war is for breaking down all their shrubs, and how cruel soldiers must be to kill and cook all their poor dear tame turtle-doves! Why not? Why should they lament over other things—which they can just a little mend—and which perhaps need no more mending? Ah! there lies a gallant fellow underneath that fruit-tree!

Raphael walked up to a ring of dead, in the midst of which lay, half sitting against the trunk of the tree, a tall and noble officer in the first bloom of manhood. His cuirass and armour, gorgeously inlaid with gold, were hewn and battered by a hundred blows, his shield was cloven through and through, his sword broken in the stiffened hand which grasped it still. Cut off from his troop, he had made his last stand beneath the tree, knee-deep in the gay scarlet flowers, and there he lay, bestrawed, as if by some mockery—or pity—of mother nature, with faded roses, and golden fruit, shaken from off the boughs in that last deadly struggle. Raphael stood and watched him with a sad cheer.

'Well!—you have said your fancied personality dear! How many dead men?

Eleven! Conquered fellow! Who told you that your one life was worth the eleven which you have taken?

Bran went up to the corpse perhaps from its sitting posture fancying it still living—melted.

the cold chuck, and recoiled with a mournful whine.

'Eh? That is the right way to look at the phenomena, is it? Well, after all, I am sorry for you. . . almost like you. All your wounds in front, as a man's should be. Poor fop! Lais and Thais will never curl those dainty ringlets for you again! What is that has-relied upon your shield? Venus receiving Psyche into the abode of the gods! Ah! you have found out all about Psyche's wings by this time. How do I know that? And yet, why am I, in spite of my common sense -- if I have any -- talking to you as you, and liking you, and pitying you, if you are nothing now, and probably never were anything? Bran! What right had you to pity him without giving your reasons in due form, as Hypatia would have done? Forgive me, sir, however, whether you exist or not, I cannot leave that collar round your neck for these camp-wolves to convert into strong liquor.'

And as he spoke, he bent down, and detached, gently enough, a magnificent necklace.

'Not for myself, I assure you. Like Ats's golden apple, it shall go to the fittest here, Bran.'

And he wreathed the jewels round the neck of the wastrel who, evidently exalted in her own eyes by the burden, leaped and jerked forward again, taking apparently as a matter of course, the road back towards Ostia, by which they had come thither from the sea. And as he followed, careless where he went, he continued talking to himself aloud after the manner of restless self-discontented men.

'And then my talk goes about his dignity and his intellect, and his heavenly parentage and his aspirations after the music, and the beautiful, and the infinite—and everything else unlike himself. How can he prove it? Why, these poor blackguards lying about are very fair specimens of humanity. And how much have they been bothered since they were born with aspirations after anything infinite, except infinite soul wine? To eat, to drink, to destroy a certain number of their species, to reproduce a certain number of the same, two-thirds of whom will die in infancy, a dead waste of pain to their mothers and of expense to their putative sires. . . and then—what says Solomon? What befalls them befalls beasts. As one dies, so dies the other, so that they have all one breath, and a man has no pre-eminence over a beast, for all is vanity. All go to one place, all are of the dust, and turn to dust again. Who knows that the breath of man goes upward, and that the breath of the beast goes downward to the earth? Who, indeed, my most wise ancestor? Not I, certainly. Raphael Aben-Ezra, how art thou better than a beast? What pre-eminence hast thou, not merely over this dog, but over the feras whom thou so wantonly cursest? Man must painfully win house, clothes, fire.

A pretty proof of his wisdom, when every flea has the wit to make my blanket, without any labour of his own, lodge him a

great deal better than it lodges me! Man makes clothes, and the fleas live in them. Which is the wiser of the two?

'Ah, but—man is fallen. Well—and the flea is not so much better he than the man, for he is what he was intended to be, and so fulfils the very definition of virtue, which no one can say of us of the red-ochre voin. And even if the old myth be true, and the man only fell, because he was set to do higher work than the flea, what does that prove—but that he could not do it?

'But his arts and his sciences? Apago! The very sound of those grown-up children's rattles turns me sick. One concerted ass in a generation increasing labour and sorrow, and dying after all even as the fool dies, and ten million brutes and slaves, just where their forefathers were, and where their children will be after them, to the end of the force. The thing that has been, it is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun.

'And as for your palace and cities, and temples—look at this Canisagna, and judge. Flea-bites go down after a while and so do they. What are they? But the humps which we human fleas make in the old earth's skin?

Make them? We only cause them, as fleas cause flea bites. What are all the works of man, but a sort of cutaneous abscess in this unhealthy earth-lode, and we a race of larger fleas, running about among its fur, which we call trees? Why should not the earth be an animal? How do I know it is not? Because it is too big? Bah! What is big, and what is little? Because it has not the shape of one?

Look into a fisher-man's net, and see what forms are there! Because it does not speak?

Perhaps it has nothing to say, being too busy. Perhaps it can talk no more sense than we. In both cases it shows its wisdom by holding its tongue. Because it moves in one necessary direction? How do I know that it does? How can I tell that it is not flirting with all the seven spheres at once, at this moment? But if it does so much the wiser of it, if that be the best direction for it. Oh, what a base satire on ourselves and our notions of the fair and fitting, to say that a thing cannot be alive and rational, just because it goes steadily on upon its own road, instead of skipping and scrambling fantastically up and down without method or order, like us and the fleas, from the cradle to the grave! Besides, if you grant,

with the rest of the world, that fleas are less noble than we, because they are our parasites, then you are bound to grant that we are less noble than the earth, because we are its parasites. Positively, it looks more probable than anything I have seen for many a day. . . And, by the bye, why should not earthquakes, and floods, and pestilences, be only just so many ways which the cunning old brute earth has of scratching herself when the human fleas and their palace and city bites get too troublesome?

At a turn of the road he was aroused from

this profitable meditation by a shriek, the shrillness of which told him that it was a woman's. He looked up, and saw close to him, among the smouldering ruins of a farmhouse, two ruffians driving before them a young girl, with her hands tied behind her, while the poor creature was looking back pitiously after some thing among the ruins, and struggling in vain, bound as she was, to escape from her captors and return.

'Conduct unjustifiable in any fleas,—eh, Bran? How do I know that, though? Why should it not be a piece of excellent fortune for her, if she had but the equanimity to see it? Why—what will happen to her? She will be taken to Rome, and sold as a slave. And in spite of a few discomforts in the transfer, and the prejudice which some persons have against standing an hour on the catasta to be hampered from head to foot in the minimum of clothing, she will most probably end in being far better housed, fed, belizened, and pampered to her heart's desire, than ninety nine out of a hundred of her sister fleas. . . till she begins to grow old, which she must do in any case. . . And if she have not contrived to wheedle her master out of her liberty, and to make up a pretty little purse of savings, by that time why, it is her own fault. Eh, Bran?

But Bran by no means agreed with his view of the case, for after watching the two ruffians, with her head stuck on one side, for a minute or two, she suddenly and silently, after the manner of mastiffs, sprang upon them, and dragged one to the ground.

'Oh! that is the "fit and beautiful," in this case, as they say in Alexandria, is it? Well! Why? You are at least a more practical teacher than ever Hypatia was. Heaven grant that there may be no more of them in the ruins!

And rushing on the second plunderer, he laid him dead with a blow of his dagger, and then turned to the first, whom Bran was hobnobbing down by the throat.

'Slavery, mercy!' shrieked the wretch. 'Take only life!'

'There was a fellow half a mile back begging me to kill him—with which of you two am I to agree?—for you can't both be right.'

'Life! Only life!'

'A carnal appetite, which man must learn to conquer,' said Raphael, as he raised the pommel.

In a moment it was over, and Bran and he rose—Where was the girl? She had rushed back to the ruins, whither Raphael followed her, while Bran ran to the pyre, which he had laid upon a stone, and commenced her maternal cares.

'What do you want, my poor girl?' asked he in Latin. 'I will not hurt you.'

'My father! My father!'

He untied her bruised and swollen wrists, and without stopping to thank him, she ran to a heap of fallen stones and beams, and began digging wildly with all her little strength, breathlessly calling 'Father!'

'Such is the gratitude of flea to flea! What is there, now, in the mere fact of being accustomed to call another person father, and not master, or slave, which should produce such passion as that! . . . Brute habit! . . . What services can the said man render, or have rendered, which make him worth— Here is Bran! . . . What do you think of that, my female philosopher!'

Bran sat down and watched too. The poor girl's tender hands were bleeding from the stones, while her golden tresses rolled down over her eyes, and entangled in her impatient fingers; but still she worked frantically. Bran seemed suddenly to comprehend the case, rushed to the rescue, and began digging too, with all her might.

Raphael rose with a shrug, and joined in the work.

'Hang these brute instincts! They make one very hot. What was that?'

A feeble man rose from under the stones. A human limb was uncovered! The girl threw herself on the place, shrieking in her father's name. Raphael put her gently back and exerting his whole strength, drew out of the ruins a stalwart elderly man, in the dress of an officer of high rank.

He still breathed! The girl lifted up his head and covered him with wild kisses. Raphael looked round for water, found a spring and a broken sherd, and bathed the wounded man's temples till he opened his eyes and showed signs of returning life.

The girl still sat by him, fondling her recovered treasure, and bathing the grizzled face in holy tears.

'It is no business of mine,' said Raphael. 'Come, Bran!'

The girl sprang up, threw herself at his feet, kissed his hands, called him her saviour, her deliverer, sent by God!

'Not in the least, my child! You must thank my teacher the dog, not me.'

And she took him at his word, and threw her soft arms round Bran's neck, and Bran understood it, and wagged her tail, and licked the gentle face lovingly.

'Intolerably absurd, all this!' said Raphael. 'I must be going, Bran.'

'You will not leave us? You surely will not leave an old man to die here!'

'Why not? What better thing could happen to him?'

'Nothing,' murmured the officer, who had not spoken before.

'Ah, God! he is my father!'

'Well?'

'He is my father!'

'Well?'

'You must save him! You shall, I say!'

And she seized Raphael's arm in the imperiousness of her passion.

He shrugged his shoulders but felt, he knew not why, marvellously inclined to obey her.

'I may as well do this as anything else, having nothing else to do. Whither now, sir?'

'Whither you will. Our troops are disgraced, our eagles taken. We are your prisoners by right of war. We follow you.'

'Oh, my fortune! A new responsibility! Why cannot I stir, without live animals, from fleas upward, attaching themselves to me? Is it not enough to have nine blind puppies at my back, and an old brute at my heels, who will persist in saving my life, that I must be burdened over and above with a respectable elderly rebel and his laughter? Why am I not allowed by fate to care for nobody but myself? Sir, I give you both your freedom! The world is wide enough for us all. I really ask no ransom.'

'You seem philosophically disposed, my friend.'

'I? Heaven forbid! I have gone right through that slough, and come out sheer on the other side. For sweeping the last lingering taint of it out of me, I have to thank, not sulphur and exorcisms, but your soldiers and their morning's work. Philosophy is superfluous in a world where ~~we~~ are fools.'

'Do you include yourself under that title?'

'Most certainly, my best sir. Don't fancy that I make any exceptions. If I can in any way prove my folly to you, I will do it.'

'Then help me and my daughter to Ostia.'

'A very fair instance. Well—my dog happens to be going that way, and after all, you seem to have a sufficient share of human imbecility to be a very fit companion for me. I hope, though, you do not set up for a wise man!'

'God knows—no! Am I not of Herachan's army?'

'True, and the young lady here made herself so great a fool about you, that she actually included the very dog.'

'So we three loafs will forth together.'

'And the greatest one, as usual, must help the rest. But I have nine puppies in my family already. How am I to carry you and them?'

'I will take them,' said the girl, and Bran, after looking on at the transfer with a somewhat dubious face, seemed to satisfy herself that it all was right, and put her head contentedly under the girl's hand.

'Eh? You trust her, Bran?' said Raphael, in an undertone. 'I must really emancipate myself from your instructions if you require a similar simplicity in me. Stay! there wanders a mule without a rider, we may as well press him into the service.'

He caught the mule, lifted the wounded man into the saddle, and the cavalcade set forth, turning out of the highroad into a by-lane, which the officer, who seemed to know the country thoroughly, assured him would lead them to Ostia by an unfrequented route.

'If we arrive there before sundown, we are saved,' said he.

'And in the meantime,' answered Raphael, 'between the dog and this dagger, which, as I take care to inform all comers, is delicately poisoned, we may keep ourselves clear of ma-

raiders. And yet, what a meddling fool I am !' he went on to himself. 'What possible interest can I have in this unrepentant rebel ! The least evil is, that if we are taken, which we most probably shall be, I shall be crucified for helping him to escape. But even if we get safe off—here is a fresh tie between me and those very brother fleas, to be rid of whom I have chosen beggary and starvation. Who knows where it may end ? Pooh ! The man is like other men. He is certain, before the day is over, to prove ungrateful, or attempt the mountebank-heroic, or give me some other excuse for bidding him good evening. And in the meantime there is something gained in the fact of having so sober a respectability, with a young daughter too, abroad on this fool's errand, which really makes me curious to discover with what variety of flea I am to class him.'

But while *Aben-Ezra* was talking to himself about the father, he could not help, somehow, thinking about the daughter. Again and again he found himself looking at her. She was, undeniably, most beautiful. Her features were not as regularly perfect as *Hypatia's*, nor her stature so commanding, but her face shone with a clear and joyful determination, and with a tender and modest thoughtfulness, such as he had never beheld before united in one countenance, and as she stepped along, briskly and lightly, by her father's side, looping up her scattered tresses as she went, laughing at the straggles of her noisy harem, and looking up with rapture at her father's gradually brightening face, *Raphael* could not help stealing glances after glances, and was surprised to find them returned with a bright, honest, smiling gratitude, which met him full eyed, as free from prudery as it was from coquetry. 'A lady she is,' said he to himself, 'but evidently no city one. There is nature—or something else, there, pure and unadulterated, without any of man's additions or beautifications.' And as he looked, he began to feel it a pleasure such as his weary heart had not known for many a year, simply to watch her.

'Positively there is a foolish enjoyment after all in making other fleas smile. As that I am ! As if I had not drunk all that ditch-water cup to the dogs years ago !'

They went on for some time in silence, till the officer, turning to him—

'And may I ask you, my quaint preserver, whom I would have thanked before but for this foolish faintness, which is now going off, what and who you are ?'

'A flea, sir—a flea—nothing more.'

'But a patrician flea, surely, to judge by your language and manners ?'

'Not that exactly. True, I have been rich, as the saying is, I may be rich again, they tell me, when I am fool enough to choose.'

'Oh if we were but rich !' sighed the girl.

'You would be very unhappy, my dear young lady. Believe a flea who has tried the experiment thoroughly.'

'Ah ! but we could ransom my brother ! and now we can find no money till we get back to Africa.'

'And none then,' said the officer, in a low voice. 'You forget, my poor child, that I mortgaged the whole estate to raise my legion. We must not shrink from looking at things as they are.'

'Ah ! and he is prisoner ! he will be sold for a slave—perhaps—ah ! perhaps crucified, for he is not a Roman ! Oh, he will be crucified !' and she burst into an agony of weeping. Suddenly she dashed away her tears and looked up clear and bright once more. 'No ! forgive me, father ! God will protect His own !'

'My dear young lady,' said *Raphael*, 'if you really dislike such a prospect for your brother, and are in want of a few dirty coins wherewith to prevent it, perhaps I may be able to find you them in Ostia.'

She looked at him incredulously, as he glanced over his bags, and then, blushing, begged his pardon for her unspoken thoughts.

'Well, as you choose to suppose. But my dog has been so civil to you already, that perhaps she may have no objection to make you a present of that necktie of hers. I will go in the *Rabbas* and we will make all right, so don't cry. I hate crying, and the pious in quite enough enough for the present tragedy.'

'The *Rabbas* ! Are you a Jew ?' asked the officer.

'Yes, sir, a Jew. And you, I presume, a Christian. Perhaps you may have scruples about receiving your set his generally more about taking—from one of our stubborn and unbelieving race. Don't be frightened, though, for your conscience, I assure you I am no more a Jew at heart than I am a Christian.'

'God help you then !'

'Some one, or something, has helped me a great deal too much, for three-and-thirty years of paupering. But pardon me, that was a strange speech for a Christian.'

'You must be a good Jew, sir, before you can be a good Christian.'

'Possibly. I intend to be neither—nor a good Pagan either. My dear sir, let us drop the subject. It is beyond me. If I can be as good a brute animal as my dog there—it being first demonstrated that it is good to be good. I shall be very well content.'

The officer looked down on him with a stately, loving sorrow. *Raphael* caught his eye, and felt that he was in the presence of no common man.

'I must take care what I say here, I suspect or I shall be entangled shortly in a regular Socratic dialogue. And now, sir, may I return your question, and ask who and what are you ? I really have no intention of giving you up to any *Carsai*, *Antiallus*, *Tiglath Pileser*, or other flea-devouring flea. They will fatten well enough without your blood. So I only ask as a student of the great nothing in general, which men call the universe.'

'I was prefect of a legion this morning. What I am now, you know as well as I.'

'Just what I do not. I am in deep wonder at seeing your hilarity, when, by all flea-analogies, you ought to be either howling your fate like Achilles on the shores of Styx, or pretending to grin and bear it, as I was taught to do when I played at *Stonem*. You are not of that set certainly, but you confessed yourself a fool just now.'

'And it would be long, would it not, before you made one of them do as much? Well, be it so. A fool I am, yet, if God helps us as far as Ostia, why should I not be cheerful?'

'Why should you?'

'What better thing can happen to a fool, than that God should teach him that he is one, when he flattered himself the wisest of the wise? Listen to me, sir. Four months ago I was blessed with health, honour, lands, friends—all but what the least of men could wish. And it, for no reason in the world, I have chosen to risk all these, against the solemn warnings of the wisest friend, and the wisest saint who treats this earth of God's—should I not rejoice to have it proved to me, even by such a lesson as this, that the friend who never deceived me before was right in this case too, and that the God who has checked and turned me for forty years of wild toil and warfare, whenever I dared to do what was right in the sight of my own eyes, has not forgotten me yet, or given up the thankless task of my education?'

'And who, pray, is this peerless friend?'

'Augustine of Hippo.'

'Humph! It had been better for the world in general, if the great dialectician had exerted his powers of persuasion on *Heracles* himself.'

'He did so, but in vain.'

'I don't doubt it. I know the sleek Count well enough to judge what a flat sermon would lay upon that smooth vulpine determination of his.'

'An instrument in the hands of God, my dear brother. We must obey His call, even to the death,' etc. etc. And Raphael laughed bitterly.

'You know the Count?'

'As well, sir, as I care to know any man.'

'I am sorry for your oversight, then, sir,' said the Prefect severely, 'if it has been able to discern no more than that in so august a character.'

'My dear sir, I do not doubt his excellence—nay, his inspiration. How well he divined the perfectly fit moment for stabbing his old comrade *Sticheu*! But really, as two men of the world, we must be aware by this time that every man has his price.'

'Oh, hush! hush!' whispered the girl. 'You cannot guess how you pain him. He worships the Count. It was not ambition, as he pretends, but merely loyalty to him, which brought him here against his will.'

'My dear madam, forgive me. For your sake I am silent.'

'For her sake! A pretty speech for me!'

What next?' said he to himself. 'Ah, Bran, Bran, this is all your fault!'

'For my sake! Oh, why not for your own sake? How sad to hurt one—one like you, only suffering and speaking evil!'

'Why then? If fools are fools, and one can safely call them so, why not do it?'

'Ah,—if God was merciful enough to send down His own Son to die for them, should we not be merciful enough not to judge their failings harshly?'

'My dear young lady, spare a worn-out philosopher any new anthropologic theories. We really must push on a little faster, if we intend to reach Ostia to night.'

But, for some reason or other, Raphael suffered no more for a full half-hour.

Long, however, ere they reached Ostia, the night had fallen, and their situation began to be more than questionably safe. Now and then a wolf, slinking across the road towards his ghastly feast, glided like a lank ghost out of the darkness, and into it again, answering Bran's growl with a gleam of his white teeth. Then the voices of some marauding party rang coarse and loud through the still night, and made them hesitate and stop a while. And at last, worst of all, the measured tramp of an imperial column began to roll like distant thunder along the plain below. They were advancing upon Ostia! What if they arrived there before the routed army could rally, and defend themselves long enough to re-embark?

What if a thousand ugly possibilities began to crowd up?

'Suppose we found the gates of Ostia shut, and the Imperialists "youicked outside?" said Raphael half to himself.

'God would protect His own,' answered the girl, and Raphael had no heart to rob her of her hope, though he looked upon their chances of escape as growing smaller and smaller every moment. The poor girl was weary, the mule weary also, and as they crawled along, at a pace which made it certain that the fast passing column would be at Ostia an hour before them, to join the vanguard of the pursuers, and and them in investing the town, she had to lean again and again on Raphael's arm. Her shoes, matted for so rough a journey, had been long since torn off, and her tender feet were marking every step with blood. Raphael knew it by her filtering gait, and remarked, too, that neither sigh nor moan passed her lips. But as for helping her, he could not, and began to curse the fancy which had led him to eschew even sandals as unworthy the self-dependence of a Cyme.

And so they crawled along while Raphael and the Prefect, each guessing the terrible thoughts of the other, were thankful for the darkness which hid their despairing countenances from the young girl; she, on the other hand, chatting cheerfully, almost laughingly, to her silent father.

At last the poor girl stepped on some stone

more sharp than usual—and, with a sudden writho and shriek, sank to the ground. Raphael lifted her up, and she tried to proceed, but sank down again. What was to be done?

'I expected this,' said the Prefect, in a slow stately voice. 'Hear me, sir! Jew, Christian, or philosopher, God seems to have bestowed on you a heart which I can trust. To your care I commit this girl—your property, like me, by right of war. Mount her upon this mule. Hasten with her—where you will—for God will be there also. And may He so deal with you as you deal with her henceforth. An old and disgraced soldier can do no more than die.'

And he made an effort to dismount, but fainting from his wounds, sank upon the neck of the mule. Raphael and his daughter caught him in their arms.

'Father! Father! impossible! Cruel! Oh—do you think that I would have followed you hither from Africa, against your own entreaties, to desert you now?'

'My daughter, I command!'

The girl remained firm and sound.

'How long have you learned to disobey me? Lift the old disgraced man down, sir, and leave him to die in the right place—on the battlefield where his general sent him.'

The girl sank down on the road in an agony of weeping. 'I must help myself, I see,' said her father, dropping to the ground. 'Authority vanishes before old age and humiliation. Victoria! has your father no sins to answer for already, that you will send him before his God with your blood too upon his head?'

Still the girl sat weeping on the ground, while Raphael, utterly at his wits' end, tried hard to persuade himself that it was no concern of his.

'I am at the service of either or of both, for life or death, only be so good as to settle it quickly. Hell! here it is settled for us, with a vengeance!'

And as he spoke, the tramp and jingle of horsemen rang along the lane, approaching rapidly.

In an instant Victoria had sprung to her feet—weakness and pain had vanished.

'There is one chance—one chance for him! Lift him over the bank, sir! Lift him over, while I run forward and meet them. My death will delay them long enough for you to save him!'

'Death!' cried Raphael, seizing her by the arm. 'If that were all—'

'God will protect His own,' answered she calmly, laying her finger on her lips, and then breaking from his grasp in the strength of her heroism, vanished into the night.

Her father tried to follow her, but fell on his face, groaning. Raphael lifted him, strove to drag him up the steep bank, but his knees knocked together, a faint sweat seemed to melt every limb. . . . There was a pause, which seemed ages long. . . . Nearer and nearer came

the trampling. A sudden gleam of the moon revealed Victoria standing with outspread arms, right before the horses' heads. A heavenly glory seemed to bathe her from head to foot.

or was it tears sparkling in his own eyes? . . . Then the grate and jar of the horse-hoofs on the road, as they pulled up suddenly. . . . He turned his face away and shut his eyes.

'What are you?' thundered a voice.

'Victoria, the daughter of Majoricus the Prefect.'

The voice was low, but yet so clear and calm, that every syllable rang through Aben-Era's tingling ears.

A shout—a shriek—the confused murmur of many voices. He looked up, in spite of himself—a horseman had sprung to the ground, and clasped Victoria in his arms. The human heart of flesh, asleep for many a year, leaped into mad life within his breast, and drawing his dagger, he rushed into the throng—

'Villains! Hellhounds! I will balk you! She shall die first!'

And the bright blade gleamed over Victoria's head.

He was struck down—blinded—half-stunned—but rose again with the energy of madness. What was this? Soft arms around him. Victoria's!

'Save him! spare him! He saved us! Sir! It is my brother! We are safe! Oh, spare the dog! It saved my father!'

'We have mistaken each other, indeed, sir!' said a gay young Tribune, in a voice trembling with joy. 'Where is my father?'

'Fifty yards behind! Down, Bran! Quiet! O Solomon, mine ancestor, why did you not prevent me making such an egregious fool of myself? Why, I shall be forced, in self-justification, to carry through the farce!'

There is no use telling what followed during the next five minutes, at the end of which time Raphael found himself astride of a goodly war horse, by the side of the young Tribune, who carried Victoria before him. Two soldiers in the meantime were supporting the Prefect on his mule, and convincing that stubborn bearer of burdens that it was not quite so unable to trot as it had fancied, by the combined arguments of a drunch of wine and two sword-points, while they heaped their general with blessings, and kissed his hands and feet.

'Your father's soldiers seem to consider themselves in debt to him—not, surely, for taking them where they could best run away?'

'Ah, poor fellows!' said the Tribune, 'we have had as real a panic among us as I ever read of in Arrian or Polybius. But he has been a father rather than a general to them. It is not often that, out of a routed army, twenty gallant men will volunteer to ride back into the enemy's ranks, on the chance of an old man's breathing still.'

'Then you knew where to find us?' said Victoria.

'Some of them knew. And he himself showed us this very by-road yesterday, when we took

up our ground, and told us it might be of service on occasion—and so it has been.

'But they told me that you were taken prisoner. Oh, the torture I have suffered for you!'

'Silly child! Did you fancy my father's son would be taken alive? I and the first troop got away over the garden walls, and cut our way out into the plain, three hours ago.'

'Did I not tell you,' said Victoria, leaning toward Raphael, 'that God would protect His own?'

'You did,' answered he, and fell into a long and silent meditation.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ROCKS OF THE SIRENS

THREE four months had been busy and eventful enough to Hypatia and to Philammon, yet the events and the business were of so gradual and uniform a tenor, that it is as well to pass quickly over them, and show what had happened principally by its effects.

The robust and fiery desert-lad was now metamorphosed into the pale and thoughtful student, oppressed with the weight of careful thought and weary memory. But those remembrances were all recent ones. With his entrance into Hypatia's lecture-room, and into the fairy realm of Greek thought, a new life had begun for him, and the Laura, and Pambo, and Aramus, seemed him phantoms from some antenatal existence, which faded day by day before the influx of new and startling knowledge.

But though the friends and scenes of his childhood had fallen back so swiftly, into the far horizon, he was not lonely. His heart found a leveler, if not a healthier home, than it had ever known before. For during those four peaceful and busy months of study there had sprung up between Hypatia and the beautiful boy one of those pure and yet passionate friendships—call them rather, with St. Augustine, by the sacred name of love, which, fair and holy as they are when they link youth to youth, or girl to girl, reach their full perfection only between man and woman. The unselfish adoration with which a maiden may bow down before some strong and holy priest, or with which an enthusiastic boy may cling to the wise and tender matron, who, amid the turmoil of the world, and the pride of beauty, and the cares of wisdom, bends down to him with counsel and encouragement—earth knows no fairer bonds than these, save wedded love itself. And that second relation, motherly rather than sisterly, had bound Philammon with a golden chain to the wondrous maid of Alexandria.

From the commencement of his attendance in her lecture-room she had invited her discourses to what she fancied were his especial spiritual

needs, and many a glance of the eye towards him, on any particularly important sentence, set the poor boy's heart beating at that sign that the words were meant for him. But before a month was past, won by the intense attention with which he watched for every utterance of hers, she had persuaded her father to give him a place in the library as one of his pupils, among the youths who were employed there daily in transcribing, as well as in studying, the authors then in fashion.

She saw him at first but seldom—more seldom than she would have wished, but she dreaded the tongue of scandal, heathen as well as Christian, and contented herself with inquiring daily from her father about the progress of the boy. And when at times she entered for a moment the library, where he sat writing, or passed him on her way to the Museum, a look was interchanged, on her part of most gracious approval, and on his of adoring gratitude, which was enough for both. Her spell was working surely, and she was too confident in her own cause and her own powers to wish to hurry that transformation for which she so fondly hoped.

'He must begin at the beginning,' thought she to herself. 'Mathematics and the *Parmenides* are enough for him as yet. Without a training in the liberal sciences he cannot gain a faith worthy of those gods to whom some day I shall present him, and I should find his Christian ignorance and fanaticism transferred, whole and rude, to the service of those gods whose shrine is unapproachable save to the spiritual man, who has passed through the successive vestibules of science and philosophy.'

But soon, attracted herself, as much as wishing to attract him, she employed him in copying manuscripts for her own use. She sent back his theses and declamations, corrected with her own hand, and Philammon had them by in his little garret at Euclaiemon's house as precious badges of honour, after exhibiting them to the reverential and envious gaze of the little porter. So he toiled on, early and late, counting himself well paid for a week's intense exertion by a single smile or word of approbation, and went home to pour out his soul to his host on the one inexhaustible theme which they had in common—Hypatia and her perfections. He would have rivetted often enough on the same subject to his fellow-pupils, but he shrank not only from their artificial city manners, but also from their morality, for suspecting which he saw but too good cause. He longed to go out into the streets, to proclaim to the whole world the treasure which he had found, and call on all to come and share it with him. For there was no jealousy in that pure love of his. Could he have seen her lavishing on thousands far greater favours than she had conferred on him, he would have rejoiced in the thought that there were so many more blessed beings upon earth, and have loved them all and every one as brothers, for having deserved her notice. Her very beauty,

when his first flush of wonder was past, he ceased to mention—ceased even to think of it. Of course she must be beautiful. It was her right, the natural complement of her other graces; but it was to him only what the mother's smile is to the infant, the sunlight to the skylark, the mountain breeze to the hunter—an inspiring element, on which he fed unconsciously. Only when he doubted for a moment some especially striking or fanciful assertion, did he become really aware of the great loveliness of her who made it, and then his heart silenced his judgment with the thought—Could any but true words come out of those perfect lips?—any but royal thoughts take shape within that queenly head? 'Pious fool!' Yet was it not natural enough?

Then, gradually, as she passed the boy, poring over his book, in some alcove of the Musæum Gardens, she would invite him by a glance to join the knot of loungers and questioners who dangled about her and her father, and fancied themselves to be reproducing the days of the Athenian sages amid the graces of another Acadamus. Sometimes, even, she had beckoned him to her side as she sat in some retired arbour, attended only by her father, and there some passing observation, earnest and personal, however lofty and measured, made him aware, as it was intended to do, that she had a deeper interest in him, a livelier sympathy for him, than for the many, that he was in her eyes not merely a pupil to be instructed, but a soul whom she desired to educate. And those delicious gleams of sunlight grew more frequent and more prominent, for by each she satisfied herself more and more that she had not mistaken either his powers or his susceptibilities, and, in each, whether in public or private, Philammon seemed to bear himself more worthily. For over and above the natural ease and dignity which accompanied physical beauty, and the modesty, self-restraint, and deep earnestness which he had acquired under the discipline of the Lyra, his Greek character was developing itself in all its quickness, subtlety, and versatility, until he seemed to Hypatia some young Titian, by the side of the sippant, hasty, and insincere talkers who made up her chosen circle.

But man can no more live upon Platonic love than on the more prolific species of that common ailment, and for the first month Philammon would have gone hungry to his couch full many a night, to his awake from baser causes than philosophic meditation, had it not been for his magnanimous host, who never lost heart for a moment, either about himself, or any other human being. As for Philammon's going out with him to earn his bread, he would not hear of it. Did he suppose that he could meet any of those monkish rascals in the street, without being knocked down and carried off by main force? And besides there was a sort of impatience in allowing so hopeful a student to neglect the 'Divine Ineffable' in order to supply the base necessities of the teeth. So he should pay no

rent for his lodgings—positively none, and as for eatables—why, he must himself work a little harder in order to enter for both. Had not all his neighbours their litters of children to provide for, while he, thanks to the immortals, had been far too wise to burden the earth with animals who would add to the ugliness of their father the Tartarian hue of their mother? And after all, Philammon could pay him back when he became a great sophist, and made money, as of course he would some day or other, and in the meantime, something might turn up—things were always turning up for those whom the gods favoured, and besides, he had fully ascertained that on the day on which he first met Philammon, the planets were favourable, the Mercury being in something or other, he forgot what, with Helios, which portended for Philammon, in his opinion, a similar career with that of the glorious and devout Emperor Julian.

Philammon winced somewhat at the hint, which seemed to have an ugly verisimilitude in it, but still, philosophy he must learn, and bread he must eat, so he submitted.

But one evening, a few days after he had been admitted as Theon's pupil, he found, much to his astonishment, lying on the table in his garret, an undeniable glittering gold piece. He took it down to the porter the next morning, and begged him to discover the owner of the lost coin, and return it duly. But what was his surprise, when the little man, amid endless raps and gesticulations, informed him with an air of mystery, that it was anything but lost, that his master's rent had been paid for him, and that by the beauty of the upper powers, a fresh piece of coin would be forthcoming every month! Julian Philammon demanded to know who was his benefactor. Endymion resolutely kept the secret and imprecated a whole Tartarus of unnecessary curses on his wife if she allowed her female gorulity—though the poor creature seemed never to open her lips from morning till night—to betray so great a mystery.

Who was the unknown friend? There was but one person who could have done it. And yet he dared not the thought was too delightful—think it was she. It must have been her father. The old man had asked him more than once about the state of his purse. True, he had always returned evasive answers, but the kind old man must have divined the truth. Ought he not—must he not—go and thank him? No, perhaps it was more courteous to say nothing. If he—she—for of course she had permitted, perhaps advised, the gift—had intended him to thank them, would they have so carefully concealed their own generosity? Be it so, then. But how would he not repay them for it! How delightful to be in her debt for anything—for everything! Would that he could have the enjoyment of owing her existence itself!

So he took the coin, bought into himself a cloak of the most philosophic fashion, and went his way, such as it was, rejoicing.

But his faith in Christianity? What had become of that?

What usually happens in such cases. It was not dead; but nevertheless it had fallen fast asleep for the time being. He did not believe it, he would have been shocked to hear such a thing asserted of him; but he happened to be busy believing something else—geometry, conic sections, cosmogony, psychology, and what not. And so it befell that he had not just then time to believe in Christianity. He recollected at times its existence, but even then he neither affirmed nor denied it. When he had solved the great questions those which Hypatia set forth as the roots of all knowledge—how the world was made, and what was the origin of evil, and what his own personality was, and that being settled—whether he had one, with a few other preliminary matters, then it would be time to return, with his enlarged light, to the study of Christianity, and if, of course, Christianity should be found to be at variance with that enlarged light, as Hypatia seemed to think.

Why, then, what then? He would not think about such disagreeable possibilities. Sufficient for the day was the evil that real possibilities? It was impossible. Philosophy could not mislead. Had not Hypatia defined it, as man's search after the unseen? And if he found the unseen by it, did it not come to just the same thing as if the unseen had revealed itself to him? And he must find it for logic and mathematics could not err. If every step was correct, the conclusion must be correct also, so he must end, after all, in the right path—that is, of course, supposing Christianity to be the right path—and return to fight the Church's battles, with the sword which he had wrested from Goliath the Philistine. But he had not won the sword yet, and in the meanwhile, learning was wearisome work, and sufficient for the day was the good, as well as the evil, thereof.

So, enabled by his gold coin each month to devote himself entirely to study, he became very much what Peter would have coarsely termed a heathen. At first, indeed, he slipped into the Christian churches, from a habit of conscience. But habits soon grow sleepy, the fear of discovery and recapture made his attendance more and more of a labour. And keeping himself apart as much as possible from the congregation, as a lonely and secret worshipper, he soon found himself as separate from them in heart as in daily life. He felt that they, and even more than they, those flowery and bombastic pulpit rhetoricians, who were paid for their sermons by the clapping and cheering of the congregation, were not thinking of, longing after, the same things as himself. Besides, he never spoke to a Christian, for the negroes at his lodgings seemed to avoid him—whether from modesty or terror, he could not tell, and put off thus from the outward 'communion of saints,' he found himself fast parting away from the inward one. So he went no more to church, and looked the

other way, he hardly knew why, whenever he passed the Cæsareum, and Cyril, and all his mighty organisation, became to him another world, with which he had even less to do than with those planets over his head, whose mysterious movements, and symbolisms, and influences Hypatia's lectures on astronomy were just opening before his bewitched imagination.

Hypatia watched all this with growing self-satisfaction, and fed herself with the dream that through Philammon she might see her wildest hopes realised. After the manner of women, she crowned him, in her own imagination, with all powers and excellencies which she would have wished him to possess, as well as with those which he actually possessed, till Philammon would have been as much astonished as self-glorified could he have seen the idealised caricature of himself which the sweet enthusiasm had painted for her private enjoyment. They were blissful months those to poor Hypatia. Great, for some reason or other, had neglected to enlighten him, and the Philagema-nave had retired mercifully into the background. Perhaps she should be able now to comprehend all without it. And yet—it was so long to wait! Years might pass before Philammon's education was matured, and with them golden opportunities which might never occur again.

'Ah!' she sighed at times, 'that Julian had lived a generation later! That I could have brought all my hard earned treasures to the feet of the Port of the Sun, and cried, "Take me! Hero, warrior, statesman, sage, priest of the God of Light! Take thy slave! Command her—send her—to martyrdom, if thou wilt!" A pretty price would that have been wherewith to buy the honour of being the mistress of thy apostles, the fellow-labourer of Ambrosius, Maximus, Lactantius, and the choir of sages who upheld the throne of the last true Cæsar!'

CHAPTER XX

NEPHELOCOCUGIA

HYPATIA had always avoided carefully discussing with Philammon any of those points on which she differed from his former faith. She was content to let the divine light of philosophy penetrate by its own power, and educe its own conclusions. But one day, at the very time at which this history reopens, she was tempted to speak more openly to her pupil than she yet had done. Her father had introduced him, a few days before, to a new work of hers on Mathematics, and the delighted and adoring look with which the boy welcomed her, as he met her in the Museum Gardens, pardonably tempted her curiosity to inquire what miracles her own wisdom might have already worked. She stopped in her walk, and motioned her father to begin a conversation with Philammon.

'Well!' asked the old man, with an encouraging smile, 'and how does our pupil like his new —'

'You mean my conic sections, father? It is hardly fair to expect an unbiased answer in my presence.'

'Why so?' said Philammon. 'Why should I not tell you, as well as all the world, the fresh and wonderful field of thought which they have opened to me in a few short hours?'

'What then?' asked Hypatia, smiling, as if she knew what the answer would be. 'In what does my commentary differ from the original text of Apollonius, on which I have so faithfully based it?'

'Oh, as much as a living body differs from a dead one. Instead of mere dry disquisitions on the properties of lines and curves, I found a mine of poetry and theology. Every dull mathematical formula seemed transfigured, as if by a miracle, into the symbol of some deep and noble principle of the unseen world.'

'And do you think that he of Parga did not see as much? or that we can pretend to surpass, in depth of insight, the sages of the elder world? Be sure that they, like the poets, meant only spiritual things, even when they seem to talk only of physical ones, and conceal heaven under an earthly garb, only to hide it from the eyes of the profane, while we, in these degenerate days, must interpret and display each detail to the dull ears of men.'

'Do you think, my young friend,' asked Thoon, 'that mathematics can be valuable to the philosopher otherwise than as vehicles of spiritual truth? Are we to study numbers merely that we may be able to keep accounts, or as Pythagoras did, in order to deduce from their laws the ideas by which the universe, man, Divinity itself, consists?'

'That seems to me certainly to be the nobler purpose.'

'Or conic sections, that we may know better how to construct machinery, or rather to devise from them symbols of the relations of Deity to its various emanations?'

'You use your dialectic like Socrates himself, my father,' said Hypatia.

'If I do, it is only for a temporary purpose. I should be sorry to accustom Philammon to suppose that the essence of philosophy was to be found in those minute investigations of words and analyses of notions, which seem to constitute Plato's chief power in the eyes of those who, like the Christian sophist Augustine, worship his letter while they neglect his spirit, not seeing that those dialogues, which they fancy the shrine itself, are but vestibules——'

'Say rather, veils, father.'

'Veils, indeed, which were intended to baffle the rude gaze of the carnal-minded, but still vestibules, through which the enlightened soul might be led up to the inner sanctuary, to the Hesperid gardens and golden fruit of the Timæus and the oracles. . . And for myself, were but those two books left, I care not whether

every other writing in the world perished to-morrow."¹

'You must except Homer, father.'

'Yes, for the herd. . . But of what use would he be to them without some spiritual commentary?'

'He would tell them as little, perhaps, as the circle tells to the carpenter who draws one with his compasses.'

'And what is the meaning of the circle?' asked Philammon.

'It may have infinite meanings, like every other natural phenomenon, and deeper meanings in proportion to the exaltation of the soul which beholds it. But, consider, is it not, as the one perfect figure, the very symbol of the totality of the spiritual world, which, like it, is invisible, except at its circumference, where it is limited by the dead gross phenomena of sensuous matter, and even as the circle takes its origin from one centre, itself unseen,—a point, as Euclid defines it, whereof neither parts nor magnitude can be predicated,—does not the world of spirits revolve round one ahsymal being, unseen and undefinable—in itself, as I have so often preached, nothing, for it is conceivable only by the negation of all properties, even of those of reason, virtue, force, and yet, like the centre of the circle, the cause of all other existences?'

'I see,' said Philammon, for the moment, certainly, the said ahsymal Deity struck him as a somewhat chill and barren notion. But that might be caused only by the dulness of his own spiritual perceptions. At all events, if was a logical conclusion, it must be right.

'Let that be enough for the present. Hereafter you may be—I fancy that I know you will enough to prophecy that you will be—able to recognise in the equilateral triangle inscribed within the circle, and touching it only with its angles, the three supra-sensual principles of existence, which are contained in Deity as it manifests itself in the physical universe, coinciding with its utmost limits, and yet, like it, dependent on that unseen central One which none dare name.'

'Ah!' said poor Philammon, blushing scarlet at the sense of his own dulness, 'I am indeed, not worthy to have such wisdom wasted upon my imperfect apprehension. . . But, if I may dare to ask. . . does not Apollonius regard the circle, like all other curves, as not depending primarily on its own centre for its existence, but as generated by the section of any cone by a plane at right angles to its axis?'

'But must we not draw, or at least conceive a circle, in order to produce that cone? And is not the axis of that cone determined by the centre of that circle?'

Philammon stood rebuked.

'Do not be ashamed, you have only, unwittingly, laid open another, and perhaps, as deep a symbol. Can you guess what it is?'

¹ This astounding speech is usually attributed to Proclus, Hypatia's 'great' successor.

Philammon puzzled in vain

'Does it not show you this? That, as every conceivable right section of the cone discloses the circle, so in all which is fair and symmetric you will discover Deity, if you but analyse it in a right and symmetric direction!'

'Beautiful!' said Philammon, while the old man added—

'And does it not show us, too, how the one perfect and original philosophy may be discovered in all great writers, if we have but that scientific knowledge which will enable us to extract it!'

'True, my father—but just now, I wish Philammon, by such thoughts as I have suggested, to rise to that higher and more spiritual insight into nature, which reveals her to us as instinct throughout—all fair and noble forms of her at last—with Deity itself, to make him feel that it is not enough to say, with the Christians, that God has made the world, if we make that very assertion an excuse for believing that His presence has been ever since withdrawn from it.'

'Christians, I think, would hardly say that,' said Philammon.

'Not in words. But, in fact, they regard Deity as the maker of a dead machine, which, once made, will move of itself thenceforth, and repudiate as heretics every philosophic thinker, whether Gnostic or Platonist, who, unsatisfied with so dead, barren, and stunted a conception of the glorious all, wishes to honour the Deity by acknowledging His universal presence, and to believe, honestly, the assertion of their own Scriptures, that He lives and moves, and lives His being in the universe.'

Philammon gently answered that the passage in question was worded somewhat differently in the Scripture.

'True. But if the one be true, its converse will be true also. If the universe lives and moves, and has its being in Him, must He not necessarily pervade all things?'

'Why?—Forgive my dulness, and explain.'

'Because, if He did not pervade all things, those things which He did not pervade would be as it were interstices in His being, and in so far, without Him.'

'True, but still they would be within His circumference.'

'Well argued. But yet they would not live in Him, but in themselves. To live in Him they must be pervaded by His life. Do you think it possible—do you think it even reverent to affirm that there can be anything within the minute glory of Deity which has the power of excluding from the space which it occupies that very being from which it draws its worth, and which must have originally pervaded that thing, in order to bestow on it its organisation and its life? Does He retire after creating, from the spaces which He occupied during creation, reduced to the base necessity of making room for His own universe, and endure the suffering—for the analogy of all material nature tells us that it is suffering—of a foreign body, like a

thorn within the flesh, subsisting within His own substance? Rather believe that His wisdom and splendour, like a subtle and piercing fire, insinuates itself eternally with restless force through every organised atom, and that were it withdrawn but for an instant from the petal of the meanest flower, gross matter, and the dead chaos from which it was formed, would be all which would remain of its loveliness.

'Yes'—she went on, after the method of her school, who preferred, like most decaying ones, harangues to dialectic, and synthesis to induction.

'Look at yon lotus-flower, rising like Aphrodite from the wave in which it has slept throughout the night, and saluting, with bending swan neck, that sun which it will follow lovingly around the sky. Is there no more there than brute matter, pipes and fibres, colour and shape, and the meaningless life-in-death which men call vegetation? Those old Egyptian priests knew better, who could see in the number and the form of those ivory petals and golden stamens, in that mysterious daily birth out of the wave, in that nightly baptism, from which it rises each morning re-born to a new life, the signs of some divine idea, some mysterious law, common to the flower itself, to the white-robed priests who held it in the temple rites, and to the goddess to whom they both were consecrated. The flower of Isis! Ah!—well. Nature has her sad symbols, as well as her fair ones. And in proportion as a misguided nation has forgotten the worship of her to whom they owed their greatness, for novel and barbaric superstitions, so has her sacred flower grown rarer and more rare, till now—it emblem of the worship over which it used to shed its perfume—it is only to be found in gardens such as these—curiosity to the vulgar, and, to such as me, a lingering monument of wisdom and of glory past away.'

Philammon, it may be seen, was far advanced by this time, for he bore the allusions to Isis without the slightest shudder. Nay—he dared even to offer consolation to the beautiful mourner.

'The philosopher,' he said, 'will hardly lament the loss of a mere outward idolatry. For if, as you seem to think, there were a root of spiritual truth in the symbolism of nature, that cannot die. And thus the lotus-flower must still retain its meaning, as long as its species exists on earth.'

'Idolatry!' answered she, with a smile. 'My pupil must not repeat to me that worn-out Christian calumny. Into whatsoever low superstitions the pious vulgar may have fallen, it is the Christians now, and not the heathens, who are idolaters. They who ascribe miraculous power to dead men's bones, who make temples of charnel-houses, and bow before the images of the meanest of mankind, have surely no right to accuse of idolatry the Greek or the Egyptian, who embodies in a form of symbolic beauty ideas beyond the reach of words!'

'Idolatry! Do I worship the Pharos when I

gaze at it, as I do for hours, with loving awe, as the token to me of the all conquering might of Hylas? Do I worship the roll on which Homer's words are written, when I welcome with delight the celestial truths which it unfolds to me, and even prize and love the material book for the sake of the message which it brings? Do you fancy that any but the vulgar worship the image itself, or dream that it can help or hear them? Does the lover mistake his mistress's picture for the living, speaking reality? We worship the idea of which the image is a symbol. Will you blame us because we use that symbol to represent the idea to our own affections and emotions instead of leaving it a barren notion, a vague imagination of our own intellect?

'Then,' asked Philammon, with a faltering voice, yet unable to restrain his animosity, 'then you do reverence the heathen gods?'

Why Hypatia should have felt this question a sore one, puzzled Philammon, but she evidently did feel it as such, for she answered haughtily enough—

'If Cyril had asked me that question, I should have disclaimed to answer. To you I will tell, that before I can answer your question you must learn what those whom you call heathen gods are. The vulgar, or rather those who find it their interest to calumniate the vulgar for the sake of confounding philosophers with them, may fancy them mere human beings, subject like man to the sufferings of pain and love, to the limitations of personality. We, on the other hand, have been taught by the principal philosophers of Greece, by the priests of ancient Egypt, and the sages of Babylon, to recognise in them the universal powers of nature, those children of the all quickening spirit, which are but various emanations of the one primeval unity—say rather, various phases of that unity, as it has been variously conceived, according to the differences of climate and race, by the wise of different nations. And thus, in our eyes, he who reverences the many, worships by that very act, with the highest and fullest adoration, the one of whose perfection they are the partial antitypes, perfect each in themselves, but each the image of only one of its perfections.'

'Why, then,' said Philammon, much relieved by this explanation, 'do you so dislike Christianity? may it not be one of the many methods—'

'Because,' she answered, interrupting him impatiently, 'because it claims itself to be one of those many methods, and stakes its existence on the denial, because it arrogates to itself the exclusive revelation of the Divine, and cannot see, in its self-conceit, that its own doctrines disprove that assumption by their similarity to those of all creeds. There is not a dogma of the Galileans which may not be found, under some form or other, in some of those very religions from which it pretends to disdain borrowing.'

'Except,' said Theon, 'its exaltation of all which is human and low-born, illiterate, and levelling.'

'Except that—'. But look! here comes some one whom I cannot—do not choose to meet. Turn this way—quick!'

And Hypatia, turning pale as death, drew her father with unphilosophic haste down a side-walk.

'Yes,' she went on to herself, as soon as she had recovered her equanimity. 'Were this Galilean superstition content to take its place humbly among the other "religious heresies" of the empire, one might tolerate it well enough, as an anthropomorphic adulation of divine things fitted for the base and foolish herd, perhaps peculiarly fitted, because peculiarly flattering to them. But now—'

'There is Minam again,' said Philammon, 'right before us!'

'Minam?' asked Hypatia severely. 'You know her then? How is that?'

'She lodges at Eudamion's house, as I do,' answered Philammon frankly. 'Not that I ever interchanged, or wish to interchange, a word with so base a creature.'

'Do not! I charge you!' said Hypatia, almost imploringly. But there was now no way of avoiding her, and perhaps Hypatia and her tormentress met face to face.

'One word! one moment, beautiful lady,' began the old woman, with a shivering obeisance. 'Nay, do not push by so cruelly. I have—see what I have for you!' and she held out with a mysterious air, 'The Rainbow of Solomon.'

'Ah! I knew you would stop a moment—not for the ring's sake, of course, not even for the sake of one who once offered it to you—Ah! and where is he now? Didst of love, perhaps? at last, here is his last token to the fairest one, the cruel one. Well, perhaps she is right.'

To be an empress, an empress! Far finer than anything the poor Jew could have offered. But still. An empress need not be above leaving her subject's petition.

All this was uttered rapidly, and in a whirling undertone, with a continual snaky writhing of her whole body, except her eye, which seemed, in the intense fixity of its glare, to act as a fulcrum for all her limbs, and from that eye, as long as it kept its mysterious hold, there was no escaping.

'What do you mean? What have I to do with this ring?' asked Hypatia, half-frightened.

'He who owned it once, offers it to you now. You recollect a little black agate—a paltry thing.'

If you have not thrown it away, as you most likely have, he wishes to redeem it with this opal—a gem surely more fit for such a hand as that.'

'If I gave me the agate, and I shall keep it.'

'But this opal—worth, oh, worth ten thousand gold pieces—in exchange for that paltry trinket? It is not worth one.'

'I am not a dealer, like you, and have not yet learnt to value things by their money price. If that agate had been worth money, I would never have accepted it.'

'Take the ring, take it, my darling,' whispered Theon impatiently, 'it will pay all our debts.'
'Ah, that it will—pay them all,' answered the old woman, who seemed to have mysteriously overheard him.

'What!—my father! Would you, too, counsel me to be so mercenary? My good woman,' she went on, turning to Miriam, 'I cannot expect you to understand the reason of my refusal. You and I have a different standard of worth. But for the sake of the talisman engraved on that agate, if for no other reason, I cannot give it up.'

'Ah! for the sake of the talisman! That is wise, now! That is noble! Take a philosopher! Oh, I will not say a word more. Let the beautiful prophetess keep the agate, and take the opal too, for see, there is a charm in it also! The name by which Solomon compelled the demons to do his bidding. Look! What might you not do now, if you knew how to use that! To—
'*er-er-er-er*—is with six wings each,
'*er-er-er-er*—*er-er-er-er*—you called them,
'*er-er-er-er*—*er-er-er-er*—I confess, send me—
Only look at it!'

Hypatia took the tempting bait, and exclaimed it with more anxiety than she would have wished to confess, while the old woman went

'But the wise lady knows how to use the black agate, of course? Ahu-Era told her that did he not?'

Hypatia blushed somewhat, she was ashamed to confess that Ahu-Era had not revealed the secret to her, probably not believing that there was any, and that the talisman had been to her only a curious plyingthing, of which she liked to believe one day that it might possibly have some occult virtue, and the next day to laugh at the notion as unphilosophical and feeble, so she answered, rather severely, that her secrets were her own property.

'Ah, then! she knows it all! the foolwite lady! And the talisman has told her whether Herubai has lost or won Rome by this time, and whether she is to be the mother of a new dynasty of Ptolemies, or to die a virgin, which the Four Angels await! And surely she has had the great demon come to her the day, when she rubbed the flat side, has she not?'

'Go, foolish woman! I am not like you, the dupe of childish superstitions.'

'Childish superstitions! He! he! he!' said the old woman, as she turned to go, with observations more lowly than ever. 'And she has not seen the Angels yet! Ah well! perhaps some day, when she wants to know how to use the talisman, the beautiful lady will condescend to let the poor old Jewess show her the way.'

And Miriam disappeared down an alley, and plunged into the thickest shrubberies, while the three dreamers went on their way.

Little thought Hypatia that the moment the old woman had found herself alone, she had dashed herself down on the turf, rolling and

biting at the leaves like an infuriated wild beast.
'I will have it yet! I will have it, if I tear out her heart with it!'

CHAPTER XVI

VENUS AND PALLAS

As Hypatia was passing across to her lecture-room that afternoon, she was stopped midway by a procession of some twenty Goths and dmsels, headed by Pelagia herself, in all her glory of jewels, shawls, and snow-white milk, while by her side rode the Amal, his long legs, like those of Gung Roll the Norseman, all but touching the ground, as he crushed down with his weight a delicate little lady, the best substitute to be found in Alexandria for the long black chargers of his native land.

On they came, followed by a wondering and admiring mob, straight to the door of the Museum, and stopping began to dismount, while their slaves took charge of the mules and horses.

There was no escape for Hypatia, paid forbade her to follow her own suddenly instinct, and to recede among the crowd behind her, and in another moment the Amal had lifted Pelagia from her mule, and the rival beauties of Alexandria stood, for the first time in their lives, face to face.

'May Ah! behind you this day, Hypatia!' said Pelagia with her sweetest smile. 'I have brought my guards to bear somewhat of your wisdom this afternoon. I am anxious to know whether you can teach them anything more worth listening to than the foolish little songs which Aphrodite taught me, when she raised me from the sea-form, as she rose herself, and named me Pelagia.'

Hypatia drew herself up to her stateliest height, and returned no answer.

'I think my bodyguard will well bear comparison with yours. At least they are the juniors and descendants of deities. So it is but fitting that they should enter before your provincials. Will you show them the way?'

'No answer.'

'Then I must do it myself. Come Amal!' and she swept up the steps, followed by the Goths, who put the Alexandrians aside right and left as if they had been children.

'Ah! treacherous wanton that you are!' cried a young man's voice out of the murmuring crowd. 'After having plundered us of every coin out of which you could dupe us, here you are squandering our patronages on barbarians!'

'Give us back our presents, Pelagia,' cried another, 'and you are welcome to your herd of wild bulls!'

'And I will!' cried she, stopping suddenly, and clutched at her chains and bracelets, she was on the point of dashing them among the astonished crowd—

'There! take your gifts! Pelagia and her girls scorn to be debtors to boys, while they are worshipped by men like these!'

But the Amal, who, luckily for the students, had not understood a word of this conversation, seized her arm, asking if she were mad.

'No, no!' panted she, inarticulate with passion. 'Give me gold—every coin you have. These wretches are twitting me with what they gave me before—before—oh Amal, you understand me!' And she clung imploringly to his arm.

'Oh! Heroes! each of you throw his purse among these fellows! they say that we and our ladies are living on their spoils!' And he tossed his purse among the crowd.

In an instant every Goth had followed his example more than one following it up by dashing a bracelet or necklace into the face of some hapless philosopher.

'I have no lady, my young friends,' said old Wulf, in good enough Greek, 'and owe you nothing, so I shall keep my munny, as you might have kept yours, and as you might, too, old Smid, if you had been as wise as I!'

'Don't be stingy, prince, for the honour of the Gotlis,' said Smid, laughing.

'If I take in gold I pay in iron,' answered Wulf, drawing half out of its sheath the long broad blade, at the ominous brown stains of which the studentry recoiled, and the whole party swept into the empty lecture-room, and seated themselves at their ease in the front ranks.

Poor Hypatia! At first she determined not to lecture—then to send for Orestes—then to call on her students to defend the sanctity of the Museum, but pride, as well as prudence, advised her better, to retreat would be to confess herself conquered—to disgrace philosophy—to lose her hold on the minds of all waverers. No! she would go on and brave everything, insults, even violence, and with trembling limbs and a pale cheek, she mounted the tribune and began.

To her surprise and delight, however, her barbarian auditors were perfectly well behaved. Pelagia, in childish good-humour at her triumph, and perhaps, too, determined to show her contempt for her adversary by giving her every chance, enforced silence and attention, and checked the tittering of the girls, for a full half-hour. But at the end of that time the heavy breathing of the lumbering Amal, who had been twice awoken by her, resounded unchecked through the lecture-room, and descended into a snore, for Pelagia herself was as fast asleep as he. But now another censor took upon himself the office of keeping order. Old Wulf, from the moment Hypatia had begun, had never taken his eyes off her face; and again and again the maiden's weak heart had been cheered, as she saw the smile of sturdy intelligence and honest satisfaction which twinkled over that scarred and lustily visage; while every now and then the graybeard wagged approval, until she

found herself, long before the end of the oration, addressing herself straight to her new admirer.

At last it was over, and the students behind, who had sat meekly through it all, without the slightest wish to 'upset' the intruders, who had so thoroughly upset them, rose hurriedly, glad enough to get safe out of so dangerous a neighbourhood. But to their astonishment, as well as to that of Hypatia, old Wulf rose also, and stumbling along to the foot of the tribune, pulled out his purse, and laid it at Hypatia's feet.

'What is this?' asked she, half terrified at the approach of a figure more rugged and barbaric than she had ever beheld before.

'My fee for what I have heard to-day. You are a right noble maiden, and may Freya send you a husband worthy of you, and make you the mother of kings!'

And Wulf retired with his party.

Open homage to her rival, before her very face! Pelagia felt quite inclined to hate old Wulf.

But at least he was the only traitor. The rest of the Goths agreed unanimously that Hypatia was a very foolish person, who was wasting her youth and beauty in talking to donkey-riders, and Pelagia remounted her mule, and the Goths their horses, for a triumphal procession homeward.

And yet her heart was sad, even in her triumph. Right and wrong were ideas as unknown to her as they were to hundreds of thousands in her day. As far as her own consciousness was concerned, she was as destitute of a soul as the mule on which she rode. Gifted by nature with boundless frolic and good-humour, wit and cunning, her Greek taste for the physically beautiful and graceful developed by long training, until she had become, without a rival, the most perfect pantomime, dancer, and musician who catered for the luxurious tastes of the Alexandrian theatres, she had lived since her childhood only for enjoyment and vanity, and wished for nothing more. But her new affection, or rather worship, for the huge manhood of her Gothic lover had awoke in her a new object—to keep him—to live for him—to follow him to the ends of the earth, even if he tired of her, ill-used her, despised her. And slowly, day by day, Wulf's sneers had awakened in her a dread that perhaps the Amal might despise her. . . . Why, she could not guess; but what sort of women were those Alrunas of whom Wulf sang, of whom even the Amal and his men spoke with reverence, as something nobler, not only than her, but even than themselves? And what was it which Wulf had recognised in Hypatia which had bowed the stern and coarse old warrior before her in that public homage? . . . it was not difficult to say what. . . . But why should that make Hypatia or any one else attractive? . . . And the poor little child of nature gazed in deep bewilderment at a crowd of new questions, as a butterfly might at the pages of the book on which it has settled, and was sad and discun-

tented—not with herself, for was she not Pelagia the perfect?—but with these strange fancies which came into other people's heads.—Why should not every one be as happy as they could? And who knew better than she how to be happy, and to make others happy?

'Look at that old monk standing on the pavement, Amalric! Why does he stare so at me? Tell him to go away.'

The person at whom she pointed, a delicate-featured old man, with a venerable white beard, seemed to hear her, for he turned with a sudden start, and then, to Pelagia's astonishment, put his hands before his face, and burst convulsively into tears.

'What does he mean by behaving in that way? Bring him here to me this moment! I will know!' cried she, petulantly catching at the new object, in order to escape from her own thoughts.

In a moment a Goth had led up the weeper, who came without demur to the side of Pelagia's nunnery.

'Why were you so rude as to burst out crying in my face?' asked she petulantly.

The old man looked up sadly and tenderly, and answered in a low voice, meant only for her ear.

'And how can I help weeping, when I see anything as beautiful as you are destined to the flames of hell for ever?'

'The flames of hell?' said Pelagia, with a shudder. 'What for?'

'Do you not know?' asked the old man, with a look of sad surprise. 'Have you forgotten what you are?'

'I? I never hurt a fly!'

'Why do you look so terrified, my darling? What have you been saying to her, you old villain?' and the Amal raised his whip.

'Oh! do not strike him. Come, come to-morrow, and tell me what you mean.'

'No, we will have no monks within our doors, frightening silly women. Off, sirrah! and thank the lady that you have escaped with a whole skin.' And the Amal caught the bridle of Pelagia's mule, and pushed forward, leaving the old man gazing sadly after them.

But the beautiful sinner was evidently not the object which had brought the old monk of the desert into a neighbourhood so strange and ungenial to his habits; for, recovering himself in a few moments, he hurried on to the door of the Museum, and there planted himself, scanning earnestly the faces of the passers out, and meeting, of course, with his due share of student rivalry.

'Well, old cat, and what mouse are you on the watch for, at the hole's mouth here?'

'Just come inside, and see whether the mouse will not singe your whiskers for you.'

'Here is my mouse, gentlemen,' answered the old monk, with a bow and a smile, as he laid his hand on Philammon's arm, and presented to his astonished eyes the delicate features and high retreating forehead of Arsenius.

'My father,' cried the boy, in the first impulse of affectionate recognition, and then—he had expected some such meeting all along, but now that it was come at last, he turned pale as death.

The students saw his emotion.

'Hands off, old Heantontimoroumenos! He belongs to our guild now! Monks have no more business with souls than with wives. Shall we hustle him for you, Philammon?'

'Take care how you show off, gentlemen! the Gotlis are not yet out of hearing!' answered Philammon, who was learning fast how to give a smart answer, and then, fanning the temper of the young dandies, and shrinking from the notion of any insult to one so revered and so beloved as Arsenius, he drew the old man gently away, and walked up the street with him in silence, dreading what was coming.

'And are these your friends?'

'Heaven forbid! I have nothing in common with such animals but flesh and blood, and a seat in the lecture-room!'

'Of the heathen woman?'

Philammon, after the fashion of young men in fear, rushed desperately into the subject himself, just because he dreaded Arsenius's entering on it quietly.

'Yes, of the heathen woman. Of course you have seen Cyril before you came hither?'

'I have, and—'

'And,' went on Philammon, interrupting him, 'you have been told every lie which prejudice, stupidity, and revenge can invent. That I have trampled on the cross—sacrificed to all the deities in the pantheon—and probably—(and he blushed scarlet)—that that purest and holiest of beings—whip, if she were not what people call a pagan, would be, and deserves to be, worshipped as the queen of saints—that she and I—' and he stopped.

'Have I said that I believed what I may have heard?'

'No, and therefore, as they are all simple and sheer falsehoods, there is no more to be said on the subject. Not that I shall not be delighted to answer any questions of yours, my dearest father—'

'Have I asked any, my child?'

'No. So we may as well change the subject for the present,'—and he began overwhelming the old man with inquiries about himself, Pambos, and each and all of the inhabitants of the Laura, to which Arsenius, to the boy's infinite relief, answered cordially and minutely, and even vouchsafed a smile at some jest of Philammon's on the contrast between the monks of Nitra and those of Sicily.

Arsenius was too wise not to see well enough what all this shippancy meant, and too wise, also, not to know that Philammon's version was probably quite as near the truth as Peter's and Cyril's, but for reasons of his own, merely replied by an affectionate look, and a compliment to Philammon's growth.

'And yet you seem thin and pale, my boy.'

'Study,' said Philammon, 'study. One can

not burn the midnight oil without paying some penalty for it. However, I am richly repaid already, I shall be more so hereafter.

'Let us hope so. But who are those Goths whom I passed in the streets just now?'

'Ah! my father,' said Philammon, glad in his heart of any excuse to turn the conversation, and yet half uneasy and suspicious at Arsenius's evident determination to avoid the very object of his visit. 'It must have been you, then, whom I saw stop and speak to Pelagia at the farther end of the street. What words could you possibly have had wherewith to honour such a creature?'

'God knows. Some secret sympathy touched my heart. Alas! poor child! But how came you to know her?'

'All Alexandria knows the sh unless alone in a quiet room,' interrupted a voice at their elbow—none other than that of the little porter, who had been dodging and watching the pair the whole way, and could no longer restrain his longing to meddle. 'And well it had been for many a rich young man had old Miriam never brought her over, in an evil day, from Athens hither.'

'Miriam?'

'Yes, monk, a name not unknown, I am told, in palaces as well as in slave markets.'

'An evil-eyed old Jewess.'

'A Jewess she is, as her name might have informed you, and as for her eyes, I consult them, or used to do so, of course for her injured nation have been long expelled from Alexandria by your fanatic title—as altogether divine and demonic, let the loose imagination of monks fill them what it likes.'

'But how did you know, this Pelagia, my son? She is no fit company for such as you.'

Philammon told, humbly enough, the story of his Nile journey, and Pelagia's invitation to him.

'You did not surely accept it?'

'Heaven forbid that Hypatia's scholar should so degrade himself!'

Arsenius shook his head sadly.

'You would not have had me go?'

'No, boy. But how long hast thou learned to call thyself Hypatia's scholar, or to call it a degradation to visit the most sinful, if thou mightest thereby bring back a lost lamb to the Good Shepherd? Nevertheless, thou art too young for such employment—and she meant to tempt thee doubtless.'

'I do not think it. She seemed struck by my talking Athenian Greek, and having come from Athens.'

'And how long since she came from Athens?' said Arsenius, after a pause. 'Who knows?'

'Just after it was sacked by the barbarians,' said the little porter, who, beginning to suspect a mystery, was peaking and peering like an excited parrot. 'The old damo brought her hither among a cargo of captive boys and girls.'

'The time agrees. Can this Miriam be found?'

'A sapient and courteous question for a monk

to ask! Do you not know that Cyril has expelled all Jews four months ago?'

'True, true. . . . Alas!' said the old man to himself, 'how little the rulers of this world guess their own power! They move a finger carelessly, and forget that that finger may crush to death hundreds whose names they never hear!—and every soul of them as precious in God's sight as Cyril's own.'

'What is the matter, my father?' asked Philammon. 'You seem deeply moved about this woman.'

'And she is Miriam's slave?'

'Her freedwoman this many years past,' said the porter. 'The good lady—for reasons doubtless excellent in themselves, though not altogether patent to the philosophic mind—thought good to turn her loose on the Alexandrian republic, to seek what she might devour.'

'God help her! And you are certain that Miriam is not in Alexandria?'

The little porter turned very red, and Philammon did so likewise, but he remembered his promise, and kept it.

'You both know something of her, I can see. You cannot drive an old statesman, sir!' turning to the little porter with a look of authority—'poor monk though he be now. If you think fitting to tell me what you know, I promise you that neither she nor you shall be losers by your confidence in me. If not, I shall find means to disavow it.'

Both stood silent.

'Philammon, my son, and art thou too in league against—no, not against me, against thyself, poor misguided boy?'

'Against myself?'

'Yes! I have said it. But unless you will trust me, I cannot trust you.'

'I have promised.'

'And I, sir statesman, or monk, or both, neither, have sworn by the immortal and the porter, looking very big.

Arsenius joined.

'There are these who hold that an oath by an idol, being nothing, is of itself void. I do not agree with them. If thou thinkest it sin to break thine oath, to thee it is sin. And for thee, my poor child, thy promise is as real, were it made to Iscariot himself. But hear me. Can either of you, by asking this woman, be so far absolved as to give me speech of her? Tell her—that is, if she be in Alexandria, which God grant—all that has passed between us here, and tell her, on the solemn oath of a Christian, that Arsenius, whose name she knows well, will neither injure nor betray her. Will you do this?'

'Arsenius?' said the little porter, with a look of mingled awe and pity.

The old man smiled. 'Arsenius, who was once called the Father of the Emperor. Even she will trust that name.'

'I will go this moment, sir, I will fly!' and off rushed the little porter.

'The little fellow forgots,' said Arsenius, with

a smile, 'to how much he has confessed already, and how easy it were now to trace him to the old hag's lair.' Philammon, my son. I have many tears to weep over thee—but they must wait a while, I have thee safe now, and the old man chitcheled his arm. 'Thou wilt not leave thy poor old father? Thou wilt not desert me for the heathen woman?'

'I will stay with you, I promise you, indeed! if—if you will not say unjust things of her.'

'I will speak evil of no one, accuse no one, but myself. I will not say one harsh word to thee, my poor boy. But listen now! Thou knowest that thou camest from Athens. Knowest thou that it was I who brought thee hither?'

'You?'

'I, my son. But when I brought thee to the Laura, it seemed right that thou, as the son of a noble gentleman, shouldst hear nothing of it. But tell me—dost thou recollect father or mother, brother or sister, or anything of thy home in Athens?'

'No.'

'Thanks be to God. But, Philammon, if thou hadst had a sister—hush! And if—I only say if—'

'A sister?' interrupted Philammon. 'Pelagia?'

'God forbid, my son! But a sister thou hadst once—some three years older than thee she seemed.'

'What? did you know her?'

'I saw her but once—on one sad day—Poor children both! I will not sadden you by telling you where and how.'

'And why did you not bring her hither with me? You surely had not the heart to part us?'

'Ah, my son, what right had an old monk with a fair young girl? And, indeed, even had I had the courage, it would have been impossible. There were others, richer than I, to whose covetousness her youth and beauty seemed a precious prize. When I saw her last, she was in company with an ancient Jewess. Heaven grant that this Minna may prove to be the one.'

'And I have a sister!' gasped Philammon, his eyes bursting with tears. 'We must find her! You will help me?—Now—this moment! There is nothing else to be thought of, spoken of, done, henceforth, till she is found!'

'Ah, my son, my son! Better, better, perhaps, to leave her in the hands of God! What if she were dead? To discover that, would be to discover needless sorrow. And what if God grant that it be not so? she had only a name to live, and were dead, worse than dead, in sinful pleasure—'

'We would save her, or die trying to save her! Is it not enough for me that she is my sister?'

Arsenius shook his head. He little knew the strange new light and warmth which his words had poured in upon the young heart beside him.

'A sister! What mysterious virtue was there in that simple word, which made Philammon's brain reel and his heart throb madly? A sister! not merely a friend, an equal, a help-

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mate, given by God Himself, for loving whom none, not even a monk, could blame him—Not merely something delicate, weak, beautiful—for of course she must be beautiful—whom he might cherish, guide, support, deliver, die for, and find death delicious. Yes—all that, and more than that, lay in the sacred word. For those divided and partial notions had flitted across his mind too rapidly to stir such passion as moved him now, even the hint of her sin and danger had been heard heedlessly, it heard at all. It was the word itself which bore its own message, its own spell to the heart of the fatherless and motherless foundling, as he faced for the first time the deep, everlasting, divine reality of kindred.

A sister! of his own flesh and blood—born of the same father, the same mother—his, his, for ever! How hollow and fleeting seemed all 'spiritual consolations,' 'spiritual daughterhoods,' inventions of the changing fancy, the wayward will of man! Arsenius—Pamlo—ay, Hypatia herself—what were they to him now? Here was a real relationship.

A sister! What else was worth caring for upon earth?

'And she was at Athens when Pelagia was'—he cried at last—'perhaps knew her—let us go to Pelagia herself!'

'Heaven forbid!' said Arsenius. 'We must wait at least till Minna's answer comes.'

'I can show you her house at least in the meanwhile, and you can go in yourself when you will. I do not ask to enter. Come! I feel certain that my finding her is in some way bound up with Pelagia. Had I not met her on the Nile, had you not met her in the street, I might never have heard that I had a sister. And if she went with Minna, Pelagia must know her—she may be in that very house at this moment!'

Arsenius had his reasons for suspecting that Philammon was but too right. But he contented himself with yielding to the boy's excitement, and set off with him in the direction of the dancer's house.

They were within a few yards of the gate, when hurried footsteps behind them, and voices calling them by name, made them turn, and behold, evidently to the disgust of Arsenius as much as Philammon himself, Peter the Reader and a large party of monks!

Philammon's first impulse was to escape. Arsenius himself caught him by the arm, and seemed inclined to hurry on.

'No!' thought the youth, 'am I not a free man, and a philosopher?' and facing round, he awaited the enemy.

'Ah, young apostate! So you have found him, reverend and ill-used sir. Praised be Heaven for this rapid success!'

'My good friend,' asked Arsenius, in a trembling voice, 'what brings you here?'

'Heaven forbid that I should have allowed your sanctity and age to go forth without some guard against the insults and violence of this wretched youth and his profligate companions.

We have been following you afar off all the morning, with hearts full of filial solicitude.'

'Many thanks, but indeed your kindness has been superfluous. My son here, from whom I have met with nothing but affection, and whom, indeed, I believe far more innocent than report declared him, is about to return peacefully with me. Are you not, Philammon?'

'Alas! my father,' said Philammon, with an effort, 'how can I find courage to say it?—but I cannot return with you.'

'Cannot return?'

'I vowed that I would never again cross that threshold till—'

'And Cyril does. He bade me, indeed he bade me, assure you that he would receive you back as a son, and forgive and forget all the past.'

'Forgo and forget? That is my part—not his. Will he fight me against that tyrant and his crew? Will he proclaim me openly to be an innocent and persecuted man, unjustly beaten and driven forth for obeying his own commands? Till he does that, I shall not forget that I am a free man.'

'A free man!' said Peter, with an imploring smile, 'that remains to be proved, my grey youth, and will need more evidence than that surly philosophic cloak and those well-winked looks which you have adopted since I saw you last.'

'Remains to be proved.'

Arsemus made an imploring gesture to Peter to be silent.

'Nay, sir. As I foretold to you, this one way alone remains, the blame of it, if there be blame, must rest on the unhappy youth whose perversity renders it necessary.'

'For God's sake, spare me!' cried the old man, dragging Peter aside, while Philammon stood astonished, divided between indignation and vague dread.

'Did I not tell you again and again that I never could bring myself to call a Christian man my slave? And him, above all, my spiritual son?'

'And, most reverend sir, whose zeal is only surpassed by your tenderness and mercy, did not the holy patriarch assure you that your scruples were groundless? Do you think that either he or I can have less horror than you have of slavery in itself? Heaven forbid! But when an immortal soul is at stake—when a lost lamb is to be brought back to the fold—surely you may employ the authority which the law gives you for the salvation of that precious charge committed to you? What could be more conclusive than his Holiness's argument this morning? "Christians are bound to obey the laws of this world for conscience' sake, even though, in the abstract, they may disapprove of them, and deny their authority. Then, by pious reasoning, it must be lawful for them to take the advantage which those same laws offer them, when by so doing the glory of God may be advanced!"'

Arsemus still hung back, with eyes brimming

with tears, but Philammon himself put an end to the parley.

'What is the meaning of all this? Are you too, in a conspiracy against me? Speak, Arsemus!'

'This is the meaning of it, blinded sinner!' cried Peter. 'That you are by law the slave of Arsemus, lawfully bought with his money in the city of Ravenna, and that he has the power, and, as I trust, for the sake of your salvation, the will also, to compel you to accompany him.'

Philammon recoiled across the pavement, with eyes flashing defiance. A slave! The light of heaven grew black to him. Oh, that Hypatia might never know his shame! Yet it was impossible. Too dreadful to be true.

'You lie!' almost shrieked he. 'I am the son of a noble citizen of Athens. Arsemus told me so, but this moment, with his own lips—'

'Ah, but he bought you—bought you in the public market, and he can prove it!'

'Hear me, hear me, my son!' cried the old man, springing toward him. Philammon, in his fury, mistook the gesture and thrust him fiercely back.

'You son! your slave! Do not insult the name of son by applying it to me. Yes, sir, your slave in body, but not in soul! Ay, save me—dig home the fugitive—scourge him—brand him—chain him in the mill, if you can, but even for that the free heart has a remedy. If you will not let me live as a philosopher, you shall see me die like one!'

'Seize the fellow, my brethren!' cried Peter, while Arsemus, utterly unable to restrain either pity, hid his face and wept.

'Wretches!' cried the boy, 'you shall never take me alive, while I have teeth or nails left. Treat me as a brute beast, and I will defend myself as such!'

'Out of the way there, rascals! Place for the Prefect! What are you squabbling about here, you mammamery monks?' shouted peremptory voices from behind. The crowd parted, and disclosed the apparitors of Orestes, who followed in his robes of office.

A sudden hope flashed before Philammon, and in an instant he had burst through the mob, and was clinging to the Prefect's chariot.

'I am a free-born Athenian, whom these monks wish to kidnap back into slavery! I claim your protection!'

'And you shall have it, right or wrong, my handsome fellow. By Heaven, you are much too good-looking to be made a monk of! What do you mean, you villains, by attempting to kidnap free men? Is it not enough for you to look up every mad girl whom you can dup, but you must—'

'This master is here present, your Excellency, who will swear to the purchase.'

'On to anything else for the glory of God. Out of the way! And take care, you tall scoundrel, that I do not get a handle against you. You have been one of my mixed men for many a month. Off!'

'His master demands the rights of the law as a Roman citizen,' said Peter, pushing forward Arsenius.

'If he be a Roman citizen, let him come and make his claim at the tribunal to-morrow, in legal form. But I would have you remember, ancient sir, that I shall require you to prove your citizenship before we proceed to the question of purchase.'

'The law does not demand that,' quoth Peter. 'Knock that fellow down, apparitor!' Whereat Peter vanished, and an ominous growl rose from the mob of monks.

'What am I to do, most noble sir?' said Philammon.

'Whatever you like, till the third hour to-morrow—if you are fool enough to appear at the tribunal. If you will take my advice, you will knock down those fellows right and left, and run for your life.' And Orestes drove on.

Philammon saw that it was his only chance, and did so, and in another minute he found himself rushing headlong into the archway of Pelagia's house, with a dozen monks at his heels.

As luck would have it, the outer gates, at which the Goths had just entered, were still open, but the inner ones which led into the court beyond were fast. He tried them, but in vain. There was an open door in the wall on his right; he rushed through it, into a long range of stables, and into the arms of Wulf and Smid, who were unsaddling and leading, like true warriors, their own horses.

'Souls of my fathers!' shouted Smid, 'here's our young monk come back! What brings you here head over heels in this way, young curly-pate?'

'Save me from those wretches!' pointing to the monks, who were peeping into the doorway.

Wulf seemed to understand it all in a moment; for, snatching up a heavy whip, he rushed at the fox, and with a few tremendous strokes cleared the doorway, and shut to the door.

Philammon was going to explain and thank, but Smid stopped his mouth.

'Never mind, young one, you are our guest now. Come in, and you shall be as welcome as ever. See what comes of running away from us at first.'

'You do not seem to have benefited much by leaving me for the monks,' said old Wulf. 'Come in by the inner door. Smid! go and turn those monks out of the gateway.'

But the mob, after battering the door for a few minutes, had yielded to the agonised entreaties of Peter, who assured them that if those carnate hemls once broke out upon them, they would not leave a Christian alive in Alexandria. So it was agreed to leave a few to watch for Philammon's coming out, and the rest, balked of their prey, turned the tide of their wrath against the Prefect, and rejoined the mass of their party, who were still hanging round his chariot, ready for mischief.

In vain the hapless shepherd of the people attempted to drive on. The apparitors were

frightened and hung back, and without their help it was impossible to force the horses through the mass of tossing arms and beards in front. The matter was evidently growing serious.

'The bitterest ruffians in all Nitria, your Excellency,' whispered one of the guards, with a pale face, 'and two hundred of them at the least. The very same set, I will be sworn, who nearly murdered Dioscurus.'

'If you will not allow me to proceed, my holy brethren,' said Orates, trying to look collected, 'perhaps it will not be contrary to the canons of the Church if I turn back. Leave the horses' heads alone. Why, in God's name, what do you want?'

'Do you fancy we have forgotten Hieracas?' cried a voice from the rear, and at that name, yell upon yell arose, till the mob, gaining courage from its own noise, burst out into open threats. 'Revenge for the blessed martyr Hieracas!' 'Revenge for the wrongs of the Church!' 'Down with the friend of Heathens, Jews, and Barbarians!' 'Down with the favourite of Hypatia!' 'Butcher!'

And the last epithet so smote the delicate fancy of the crowd, that a general cry arose of 'Kill the butcher!' and one furious monk attempted to clamber into the chariot. An apparitor tore him down, and was dragged to the ground in his turn. The monks closed in. The guards, finding the enemy number ten to their one, threw down their weapons in a panic, and vanished, and in another minute the hopes of Hypatia and the gods would have been lost for ever, and Alexandria robbed of the blessing of being ruled by the most finished gentleman south of the Mediterranean, had it not been for unexpected succour, of which it will be time enough considering who and what is in danger, to speak in a future chapter.

CHAPTER XVII

A STRAY GLEAM

THE last blue headland of Sardinia was fading fast on the north-west horizon, and a steady breeze bore before it innumerable ships, the wrecks of Hierachian's armament, plunging and tossing impatiently in their desperate homeward race toward the coast of Africa. Far and wide, under a sky of cloudless blue, the white sails glittered on the glittering sea, as gaily now, above their loads of shame and disappointment, terror and pain, as when, but one short month before, they bore with them only wild hopes and gallant daring. Who can calculate the sum of misery in that hapless flight? And yet it was but one, and that one of the least known and most trivial, of the tragedies of that age of woe, one petty death-spasm among the unnumbered throes which were shaking to dissolution the Babylon of the West. Her time had come. Even as Saint John beheld her in

his vision, by agony after agony, she was rotting to her well-earned doom. Tyrannising it luxuriously over all nations, she had sat upon the mystic beast—building her power on the brute animal appetites of her dupes and slaves—but she had duped herself even more than them. She was finding out by bitter lessons that it was 'to the beast, and not to her, that her vassal kings of the earth had been giving their power and strength, and the ferocity and lust which she had pampered so cunningly in them, had become her curse and her destruction. Drunk with the blood of the saints, blinded by her own conceit and jealousy to the fact that she had been crushing and extirpating out of her empire for centuries past all which was noble, purifying, regenerative, divine, she sat impotent and doting, the prey of every fresh adventurer, the slave of her own slaves.

'And the kings of the earth, who had smimed with her, hated the harlot, and made her desolate and naked, and devoured her flesh, and burned her with fire. For God had put into their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.' Everywhere sensuality, division, hatred, treachery, cruelty, uncertainty, terror, the vials of God's wrath poured out. Where was to be the end of it all? asked every man of his neighbour, generation after generation, and received for answer only, 'It is better to die than to live.'

And yet in one ship out of that sad fleet, there was peace, peace amid shame and terror, amid the groans of the wounded, and the sighs of the starving, amid all but blank despair. The great trememes and quinquemes rushed onward past the lagging transports, careless, in the mad race for safety, that they were leaving the greater number of their comrades defenceless in the rear of the flight; but from one little fishing-craft alone no base enticements, no bitter execrations greeted the passing flesh and roll of their mighty oars. One after another, day by day, they came rushing up out of the northern offing, each like a huge hundred-footed dragon, pausing and quivering, as if with terror, at every loud pulse of its oars, hailing the wild water right and left with the mighty share of its beak, while from the bows some gorgon or chimera, elephant or boar, stared out with brazen eyes toward the coast of Africa, as if it, too, like the human beings which it carried, was dead to every care but that of dastard flight. Past they rushed, one after another, and off the poop some shouting voice chilled all hearts for a moment, with the fearful news that the Emperor's Neapolitan fleet was in full chase. And the soldiers on board that little vessel looked silently and steadfastly into the silent, steadfast face of the old Prefect, and Victoria saw him shudder, and turn his eyes away—and stood up among the rough fighting men, like a godless, and cried aloud that 'the Lord would protect His own', and they behaved her, and were still, till many days and many ships were passed, and

the little fishing-craft, outstripped even by the transports and merchantmen, as it strained and crawled along before its single square-sail, was left alone upon the sea.

And where was Raphael Aben-Ezra?

He was sitting, with Bran's head between his knees, at the door of a temporary awning in the vessel's stern, which shielded the wounded men from sun and spray, and as he sat he could hear from within the tent the gentle voices of Victoria and her brother, as they tended the sick like ministering angels, or read to them words of divine hope and comfort—in which his homeless heart felt that he had no share.

'As I live, I would change places now with any one of those poor mangled ruffians, to have that voice speaking such words to me and to believe them.' And he went on perusing the manuscript which he held in his hand.

'Well!' he sighed to himself after a while, 'at least it is the most commendatory, not to say hopeful, view of our destinies with which I have met since I threw away my nurse's belief that the seed of David was fated to conquer the whole earth, and set up a second Roman Empire at Jerusalem, only worse than the present one, in that the devils of superstition and bigotry would be added to those of tyranny and rapine.'

A hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice asked, 'And what may this so hopeful view be?'

'Ah! my dear General!' said Raphael, looking up. 'I have a poor ball of faw whereon to exercise my culinary powers this morning. Had it not been for that shark who was so luckily deluded last night, I should have been reduced to the necessity of stewing my friend the fat decurion's big boots.'

'They would have been savoury enough, I will warrant, after they had passed under your magical hand.'

'It is a comfort, certainly, to find that after all one did learn some thing useful in Alexandria.' So I will even go forward at once, and employ my artistic skill.'

'Tell me first what it was about which I heard you just now soliloquizing, as so hopeful a view of some matter or other?'

'Honestly— if you will neither betray me to your son and daughter, nor consider me as having in anywise committed myself— it was Paul of Tarsus's notion of the history and destinies of our stiff-necked nation. See what your daughter has persuaded me into reading!'

And he held up a manuscript of the Epistle to the Hebrews. 'It is execrable Greek. But it is sound philosophy, I cannot deny. He knows Plato better than all the ladies and gentlemen in Alexandria put together, if my opinion on the point be worth having.'

'I am a plain soldier, and no judge on that point, sir. He may or may not know Plato, but I am right sure that he knows God.'

'Not too fast,' said Raphael with a smile. 'You do not know, perhaps, that I have spent

the last ten years of my life among men who professed the same knowledge!

'Augustine, too, spent the best ten years of his life among such, and yet he is now combating the very errors which he once taught.'

'Having found it, most truly. But you

must talk to him yourself, and argue the matter over, with one who can argue. To me such questions are an unknown land.'

'Well. Perhaps I may be tempted to do even that. At least a thoroughly converted philosopher—for poor dear Synesius is half heathen still, I often fancy, and hankers after the wisdom of the Egyptian—will be a curious sight, and to talk with so famous and so learned a man would always be a pleasure, but to argue with him, or any other human being, none whatsoever.'

'Why, then?'

'My dear sir, I am sick of syllogisms, and probabilities, and pros and contras. What do I care if, on weighing both sides, the nineteen pounds weight of questionable arguments against, are outweighed by the twenty pounds weight of equally questionable arguments for? Do you not see that my belief of the victorious proposition will be proportional to the one over balancing pound only, while the whole other nineteen will go for nothing?'

'I really do not.'

'Happy are you, then. I do, from many a sad experience. No, my worthy sir. I want a faith just arguments, one which, whether I can prove it or not to the satisfaction of the lawyers, I believe to my own satisfaction, and act on it as undoubtingly and unreasoningly as I do upon my own newly-rediscovered personal identity. I don't want to possess a faith. I want a faith which will possess me. And if I ever arrived at such a one, believe me, it would be by some such practical demonstration as this very tent has given me.'

'This tent?'

'Yes, sir, this tent, within which I have seen you and your children lead a life of deeds as new to me the Jew, as they would be to Hypatia the Gentile. I have watched you for many a day, and not in vain. When I saw you, an experienced officer, encounter your light with wounded men, I was only surprised. But since I have seen you and your daughter, and, strangest of all, your gay young Alekhades of a man, starving yourselves to feed those poor ruffians—performing for them, day and night, the offices of menial slaves—comforting them, as you men ever comforted me—blaming no one but yourselves, caring for every one but yourselves, achieving nothing but yourselves, and all this without hope of fame or reward, or dream of appeasing the wrath of any god or goddess, but simply because you thought it right. When I saw that, sir, and more which I have seen, and when, reading in this book here, I found most unexpectedly those very grand moral rules which you were practis-

ing, seeming to spring unconsciously, as natural results, from the great thoughts, true or false, which had preceded them, then, sir, I began to suspect that the creed which could produce such deeds as I have watched within the last few days, might have on its side not merely a slight preponderance of probabilities, but what we Jews used once to call, when we believed in it—or in anything—the mighty power of God.'

And as he spoke, he looked into the Prefect's face with the look of a man wrestling in some deadly struggle, so intense and terrible was the earnestness of his eye, that even the old soldier shrank before it.

'And therefore,' he went on, 'therefore, sir, beware of your own actions, and of your children's. If, by any folly or baseness, such as I have seen in every human being whom I ever met as yet upon this accursed stage of fools, you shall crush my new-budding hope that there is something somewhere which will make me what I know that I ought to be, and can be—If you shall crush that, I say, by any misdoing of yours, you had better have been the murderer of my firstborn, with such a hate—a hate which Jews alone can feel—will I hate you and yours.'

'God help us and strengthen us!' said the old warrior in a tone of noble humility.

'And now,' said Raphael, glad to change the subject, after this unexpected outburst, 'we must once more seriously consider whether it is wise to hold on our present course. If you return to Carthage, or to Hippo—'

'I shall be belated.'

'Most assuredly. And how much sorer you may consider such an event a gain to yourself, yet for the sake of your son and your daughter—'

'My dear sir,' interrupted the Prefect, 'you mean kindly. But do not, do not tempt me. By the Count's side I have fought for thirty years, and by his side I will die, as I deserve.'

'Victorinus! Victorinus!' cried Raphael, 'help me.' Your father,' he went on, as they came out from the tent, 'is still decided on losing his own head, and throwing away ours, by going to Carthage.'

'For my sake—for our sakes—father!' cried Victorinus, clinging to him.

'And for my sake, also, most excellent sir,' said Raphael, smiling quietly. 'I have no wish to be so uncourteous as to urge any help which I may have seemed to afford you. But I hope that you will recollect that I have a life to lose, and that it is hardly fair of you to imperil it as you intend to do. If you could help or save Herachan, I should be dumb at once. But now, for a mere point of honour to destroy fifty good soldiers, who know not their right hands from their left—shall I ask their opinion?'

'Will you raise a mutiny against me, sir?' asked the old man sternly.

'Why not mutiny against Philip drunk, in behalf of Philip sober? But really, I will obey

you . . . only you must obey us . . . What is Hesiod's definition of the man who will neither counsel himself nor be counselled by his friends? . . . Have you no trusty acquaintances in Cyrenaica, for instance?'

The Prefect was silent.

'Oh, hear us, my father! Why not go to Enochus? He is your old comrade—a well-wisher, too, to this . . . this expedition. And recollect, Augustine must be there now. He was about to sail for Berenice, in order to consult Synesius and the Pentapolitan bishops, when we left Carthage.'

And at the name of Augustine the old man paused.

'Augustine will be there, true. And this our friend must meet him. And thus at least I should have his advice. If he thinks it my duty to return to Carthage, I can but do so, after all. But the soldiers!'

'Excellent sir,' said Raphael, 'Synesius and the Pentapolitan landlords—who can hardly call their lives their own, thanks to the Moors—will be glad enough to feed & pay them, or any other brave fellows with arms in their hands, at this moment. And my friend Victorinus, here, will enjoy, I do not doubt, a little wild campaigning against intruding barbarians.'

The old man bowed silently. The battle was won.

The young tribune, who had been watching his father's face with the most intense anxiety, caught at the gesture, and hurrying forward, announced the change of plan to the soldiers. It was greeted with a shout of joy, and in another five minutes the sails were about, the rudder shifted, and the ship on her way towards the western point of Sicily, before a steady north-west breeze.

'Ah!' cried Victoria, delighted. 'And now you will see Augustine! You must promise me to talk to him!'

'This, at least, I will promise, that whatever the great sophist shall be pleased to say, shall meet with a patient hearing from a brother sophist. Do not be angry at the term. Recollect that I am somewhat tired, like my ancestor Solomon, of wisdom and wise men, having found it only too like madness and folly. And you cannot surely expect me to believe in him, while I do not yet believe in God!'

Victoria sighed. 'I will not believe you. Why always pretend to be worse than you are?'

'That kind souls like you may be spared the pain of finding me worse than I seem. There, let us say no more, except that I heartily wish that you would hate me!'

'Shall I try?'

'That must be my work, I fear, not yours. However, I shall give you good cause enough before long, doubt it not.'

Victoria sighed again, and retired into the tent to nurse the sick.

'And now, sir,' said the Prefect, turning to Raphael and his son, 'do not mistake me. I

may have been weak, as worn-out and hopeless men are wont to be, but do not think of me as one who has yielded to adversity in fear for my own safety. As God hears me, I desire nothing better than to die, and I only turn out of my course on the understanding that if Augustine will advise, my children hold me free to return to Carthage and meet my fate. All I pray for is, that my life may be spared until I can place my dear child in the safe shelter of a nunnery.'

'A nunnery?'

'Yes, indeed, I have intended ever since her birth to dedicate her to the service of God. And in such times as these, what better lot for a defenceless girl?'

'Pardon me!' said Raphael, 'but I am too dull to comprehend what benefit or pleasure your Deity will derive from the celibacy of your daughter. Except, indeed, on one supposition, which, as I have some faint remnants of reverence and decency reawakening in me just now, I must leave to be uttered only by the pure lips of sexless priests.'

'You forget, sir, that you are speaking to a Christian.'

'I assure you, no! I had certainly been forgetting it till the last two minutes, in your very pleasant and rational society. There is no danger henceforth of my making so silly a mistake.'

'Sir,' said the Priest, reddening at the undisguised contempt of Raphael's manner.

'When you know a little more of St. Paul's Epistles, you will cease to insult the opinions and feelings of those who obey them, by sacrificing their most precious treasures to God.'

'Oh, it is Paul of Tarsus, then, who gives you the advice! I thank you for informing me of the fact, for it will save me the trouble of any future study of his works. Allow me, therefore, to return by your hands this manuscript of his with my thanks from me to the daughter of yours, by whose perpetual imprisonment you intend to give pleasure to your Deity.' Henceforth the less communication which passes between me and any member of your family, the better.' And he turned away.

'But, my dear sir!' said the honest soldier, really chagrined, 'you must not!—we owe you too much, and love you too well, to part thus for the caprice of a moment. If any word of mine has offended you—forget it, and forgive me, I beseech you!' and he caught both Raphael's hands in his own.

'My very dear sir,' answered the Jew quietly, 'let me ask the same forgiveness of you, and believe me, for the sake of past pleasant passages, I shall not forget my promise about the mortgage.'

But—here we must part. To tell you the truth, I half an hour ago was fearfully near becoming neither more nor less than a Christian. I had actually deluded myself into the fancy that the Deity of the Galileans might be, after all, the God of our old Hebrew forefathers—of Adam and Eve, of Abraham and David, and of the rest who believed that

children and the fruit of the womb were an heritage and gift which cometh of the Lord—and that Paul was right—actually right—in his theory that the church was the development and fulfilment of our old national polity. I must thank you for opening my eyes to a mistake which, had I not been besotted for the moment, every monk and nun would have contradicted by the mere fact of their existence, and reserve my nascent faith for some dirty who takes no delight in seeing his creatures stultify the primary laws of their being. Farewell!

And while the Prefect stood petrified with astonishment, he retired to the further extremity of the dock, muttering to himself—

'Did I not know all along that this gleam was too sullen and too bright to last? Did I not know that he, too, would prove himself like all the rest—an ass? Paul! to have looked for common sense on such a night as this! Back to chaos again, Raphael Aben-Ezer, and spin ropes of sand to the end of the farcical!'

And mixing with the soldiers, he exchanged no word with the Prefect and his children, till they reached the port of Brevince, and then putting the necklace into Victoria's hands, vanished among the crowds upon the quay, no one knew whither.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PERFECT TESTED

WHEN we last sight of Philammon, his destiny had linked him once more among his old friends the Goths, in search of two important elements of human comfort, freedom and a sister. The former he found at once, in a large hall where sundry Goths were lounging and toying, into the nearest corner of which he slipped, and stood, his late terror and rage forgotten altogether in the old new and absorbing thought. His sister might be in that house! and yielding to so sweet a dream, he began fancying to himself which of all those gay maidens she might be who had become in one moment more dear, more great to him, than all things else in heaven or earth. That fair-haired, rounded Italian? That fierce, humorous, aquiline-faced Jewess? That delicate, swart, sidelong-eyed Copt? No. She was Athenian, like himself. That tall, lazy Greek girl, then, from beneath whose sleepy lids flashed, once an hour, sudden lightnings, revealing depths of thought and feeling uncultivated, perhaps even unsuspected, by their possessor? Her? Or that, her seeming sister? Or the next? Or—Was it Pelagia herself, most beautiful and most sinful of them all? Fearful thought! He blushed scarlet at the bare imagination. yet why, in his secret heart, was that the most pleasant hypothesis of them all? And suddenly flashed across him that observation of one of the girls on board the

boat, on his likeness to Pelagia. Strange, that he had never recollected it before! It must be so! and yet on what a slender thread, woven of scattered hints and surmises, did that 'must' depend! He would be sane! he would wait, he would have patience. Patience, with a sister yet unfound, perhaps perishing? Impossible!

Suddenly the train of his thoughts was changed perforce—

'Come! come and see! There's a fight in the streets,' called one of the dunces down the stairs, at the highest pitch of his voice.

'I shan't go,' yawned a huge fellow, who was lying on his back on a sofa.

'Oh come up, my hero,' said one of the girls. 'Such a charming riot, and the Prefect himself in the middle of it! We have not had such a one in the street this month.'

'The princes won't let me knock any of these donkey-riders on the head, and seeing other people do it only makes me furious. Give me the wine-jug—curse the gals! she has run up stairs!'

The shouting and tramping came nearer, and in another minute Wulf came rapidly down stairs, through the hall into the hall-moat, and into the presence of the Anai.

'Prince! here is a chance for us. These rascally Goths are murdering their Prefect under our very windows.'

'The lying cat! Save him right for cheating us. He has plenty of guards. Why can't the fool take care of himself?'

'They have all run away, and I saw some of them hiding among the mob. As I live, the man will be killed in two minutes more.'

'Why not?'

'Why should he, when we can save him and win his favour for ever? The men hugers are nothing for a fight; it's a bad plan not to give hounds blood now and then, or they lose the knack of hunting.'

'Well, it wouldn't take five minutes.'

'And heroes should show that they can forgive when an enemy is in distress.'

'Very true! Like an Anai too!' And the Anai sprang up and shouted to his men to follow him.

'Good bye, my pretty one. Why, Wulf, cried he, as he burst out into the court, 'here's our monk again! By Odin, you're welcome, my handsome boy! come along and fight too, young fellow, what were those arms given you for?'

'He is my man,' said Wulf, laying his hand on Philammon's shoulder, 'and blood he shall taste.' And out the three hurried, Philammon, in his present reckless mood, ready for anything.

'Bring your whips. Never mind swords. Those rascals are not worth it,' shouted the Anai, as he hurried down the passage brandishing his heavy thong, some ten feet in length, threw the gate open, and the next moment recoiled from a dense rush of people who surged in and surged out again as rapidly as the Goths,

with the combined force of his weight and arm, hewed his way straight through them, felling a wretch at every blow, and followed up by his terrible companions.

They were but just in time. The four white blood-horses were plunging and rolling over each other, and Orestes reeling in his chariot, with a stream of blood running down his face, and the hands of twenty wild monks clutching at him. 'Monks again!' thought Phlammion, and as he saw among them more than one hateful face, which he recollected in 'yri's courtyard on that fatal night, a flush of fierce revenge ran through him.

'Mercy!' shrieked the miserable Prefect—'I am a Christian! I swear that I am a Christian! the Bishop Atticus baptized me at Constantinople!'

'Down with the butcher! down with the heathen tyrant, who refuses the adoration on the Gospels rather than he reconciled to the patriarch! Tear him out of the chariot!' yelled the monks.

'The craven hound!' said the Amal, stopping short, 'I won't help him!' But in an instant Wulf rushed forward, and struck right and left, the monks recoiled, and Phlammion, burning to prevent so shameful a scandal to the faith to which he still clung convulsively, sprang into the chariot and caught Orestes in his arms.

'You are safe, my lord, don't struggle,' whispered he, while the monks flew on him. A stone or two struck him, but they only quickened his determination, and in another moment the whistling of the whips round his head, and the yell and backward rush of the monks, told him that he was safe. He carried his burden safely within the doorway of Pelagius's house, into the crowd of peeping and shrieking damsels, where twenty pairs of the prettiest hands in Alexandria seized on Orestes, and drew him into the court.

'Like a second Hylas, carried off by the nymphs!' sniggered he, as he vanished into the harem, to reappear in five minutes, his head bound up with silk handkerchiefs, and with as much of his usual impudence as he could muster.

'Your Excellency—heroes all—I am your devoted slave. I owe you life itself, and more, the valour of your succour is only surpassed by the deliciousness of your cure. I would gladly undergo a second wound to enjoy a second time the services of such hands, and to see such feet busying themselves on my behalf.'

'You wouldn't have said that five minutes ago,' quoth the Amal, looking at him very much as a bear might at a monkey.

'Never mind the hands and feet, old fellow, they are none of yours!' bluntly observed a voice from behind, probably Smid's, and a laugh ensued.

'My saviours, my brothers!' said Orestes, politely ignoring the laughter. 'How can I repay you? Is there anything in which my office here enables me—I will not say to reward,

for that would be a term beneath your dignity as free barbarians—but to gratify you?'

'Give us three days' pillage of the quarter,' shouted some one.

'Ah, true valour is apt to underrate obstacles, you forget your small numbers.'

'I say,' quoth the Amal—'I say, take care, Prefect.—If you mean to tell me that we forty couldn't cut all the throats in Alexandria in three days, and yours into the bargain, and keep your soldiers at bay all the time—'

'Half of them would join us!' cried some one. 'They are half our own flesh and blood after all!'

'Pardon me, my friends, I do not doubt it a moment. I know enough of the world never to have found a sheep-dog yet who would not, on occasion, help to make away with a little of the mutton which he guarded. Eh, my venerable sir?' turning to Wulf with a knowing bow.

Wulf chuckled grimly, and said something to the Amal in German about being civil to guests.

'You will pardon me, my heroic friends,' said Orestes, 'but, with your kind permission, I will observe that I am somewhat faint and disturbed by late occurrences. To trespass on your hospitality further would be an impertinence. If, therefore, I might send a slave to find some of my apartments—'

'No, by all the gods!' roared the Amal, 'you're my guest now, my lady's at least. And no one ever went out of my house sober yet if I could help it. Set the cooks to work, my men! The Prefect shall feast with us like an emperor, and we'll send him home to-night as drunk as he can wish. Come along, your Excellency, we're rough fellows, we Goths, but by the Valkyrs, no one can say that we neglect our guests!'

'It is a sweet compulsion,' said Orestes, as he went in.

'Stop, by the bye! Didn't one of you men catch a monk?'

'Here he is, prince, with his elbows safe behind him.' And a tall, baggavil, half-naked monk was dragged forward.

'Capital! bring him in. His Excellency shall judge him while dinner's cooking, and Smid shall have the hanging of him. He hurt nobody in the scuffle, he was thinking of his dinner.'

'Some rascal bit a piece out of my leg, and I tumbled down,' grumbled Smid.

'Well, pay out this fellow for it, then. Bring a chair, slaves! Here, your Highness, sit there and judge.'

'Two chairs!' said some one, 'the Amal shan't stand before the emperor himself.'

'By all means, my dear friends. The Amal and I will act as the two Cæsars, with divided empire. I presume we shall have little difference of opinion as to the hanging of this worthy.'

'Hanging's too quick for him.'

'Just what I was about to remark—there are certain judicial formalities, considered gener-

ally to be conducive to the stability, if not necessary to the existence, of the Roman empire—'

'I say, don't talk so much,' shouted a Goth, 'If you want to have the hanging of him yourself, do. We thought we would save you trouble.'

'Ah, my excellent friend, would you rob me of the delicate pleasure of revenge? I intend to spend at least four hours to-morrow in killing this pious martyr. He will have a good time to think, between the beginning and the end of the rack.'

'Do you hear that, master monk?' said Smid, chucking him under the chin, while the rest of the party seemed to think the whole business an excellent joke, and divided their remarks openly enough between the Prefect and his victim.

'The man of blood has said it. I am a martyr,' answered the monk in a dogged voice.

'You will take a good deal of time in becoming one.'

'Death may be long, but glory is everlasting.'

'True. I forgot that, and will save you the said glory, if I can help it, in a year or two. Who was it struck me with the stone?'

No answer.

'Tell me, and this moment he is in my hands; I pardon you freely.'

The monk laughed. 'Pardon? Pardon me eternal bliss, and the things unspeakable, which God has prepared for those who love Him? Tyrant and butcher! I struck thee, thou second Diocletian—I hurled the stone! I, Ammonius. Would to heaven that it had smitten thee through, thou Sisera, like the nail of Isai the Kenite!'

'Thanks, my friend. Heroes, you have a cellar for monks as well as for wine! I will trouble you with this hero's psalm singing to-morrow, and send my attendants for him in the morning.'

'If he begins howling when we are in bed, your men won't find much of him left in the morning,' said the Amal. 'But here come the slaves, announcing dinner.'

'Stay,' said Orates, 'there is one more with whom I have an account to settle—that young philosopher there.'

'Oh, he is coming in, too. He never was drunk in his life, I'll warrant, poor fellow, and it's high time for him to begin.' And the Amal laid a good-natured bear's paw on Philammon's shoulder, who hung back in perplexity, and cast a piteous look towards Wulf.

Wulf answered it by a shake of the head which gave Philammon courage to stammer out a courteous refusal. The Amal swore an oath at him which made the cloister ring again, and with a quiet shove of his heavy hand, sent him staggering half across the court, but Wulf interposed.

'The boy is mine, prince. He is no drunkard, and I will not let him become one. Would to heaven,' added he, under his breath, 'that I could say the same to some others. Send us

out our supper here, when you are done. Half a sheep or so will do between us, and enough of the strongest to wash it down with. Smid knows my quantity.'

'Why in heaven's name are you not coming in?'

'That mob will be trying to burst the gates again before two hours are out, and as some one must stand sentry, it may as well be a man who will not have his ears stopped up by wine and women's kisses. The boy will stay with me.'

So the party went in, leaving Wulf and Philammon alone in the outer hall.

Then the two sat in some half hour, casting stealthy glances at each other, and wondering perhaps, each of them vainly enough, what was going on in the opposite brain. Philammon, though his heart was full of his sister, could not help noticing the air of deep sadness which hung about the scarred and weather-beaten features of the old warrior. The grimness which he had remarked on their first meeting seemed to be now changed to a settled melancholy. The furrows round his mouth and eyes had become deeper and sharper. Some perpetual indignation seemed smouldering in the knitted brow and protruding upper lip. He sat there silent and motionless for some half hour, his chin resting on his hands, and they again upon the butt of his axe, apparently in deep thought, and listening with a silent sneer to the clinking of glasses and dishes within.

Philammon felt too much respect, both for his age and his stately vulgarity, to break the silence. At last some louder burst of merriment than usual aroused him.

'What do you call that?' said he, speaking in Greek.

'Folly and vanity.'

'And what does she there—the Alruna—the prophet-woman, call it?'

'Whom do you mean?'

'Why, the Greek woman whom we went to hear talk this morning.'

'Folly and vanity.'

'Why can't she cure that Roman hairdresser there of it, then?'

Philammon was silent. 'Why not, indeed?'

'Do you think she could cure any one of it?'

'Oh what?'

'Of getting drunk, and wasting their strength and their fame, and their hard-won treasures upon eating and drinking, and fine clothes, and bad women.'

'She is most pure herself, and she preaches purity to all who hear her.'

'Curse preaching! I have preached for these four months.'

'Perhaps she may have some more winning arguments—perhaps—'

'I know. Such a beautiful bit of flesh and blood as she is might get a hearing, when a grizzled old head-splitter like me was called a dotard. Eh? Well. It's natural.'

A long silence.

'She is a grand woman. I never saw such a one, and I have seen many. There was a prophetic once, lived in an island in the Wisers-stream—and when a man saw her, even before she spoke a word, one longed to crawl to her feet on all fours, and say, "There, tread on me, I am not fit for you to wipe your feet upon." And many a warrior did it. Perhaps I may have done it myself, before now. And this one is strangely like her. She would make a prince's wife, now.'

Philammon started. What new feeling was it, which made him indignant at the notion?

'Beauty? What's beauty without soul? What's beauty without wisdom? What's beauty without chastity? Beast! fool! wallowing in the mire which every hug has fouled!'

'Like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman who is without discretion.'

'Who said that?'

'Solomon, the king of Israel.'

'I never heard of him. But he was a right Sagaman, whoever said it. And she is a pure maiden, that other one?'

'Spotless as the Idesed Virgin, Philammon was going to say—but checked himself. There were sad recollections about the words.'

Wulf sat silent for a few minutes, while Philammon's thoughts revolved at once to the new purpose for which alone life seemed worth having. To find his sister! That one thought had in a few hours changed and matured the boy into the man. Hitherto he had been only the leaf before the wind, the puppet of every new impression, but now circumstance, which had been leading him along in such soft fetters for many a month, was become his deadly foe, and all his energy and cunning, all his little knowledge of man and of society, rose up sturdily and shrewdly to fight in this new cause. Wulf was now no longer a phenomenon to be wondered at, but an instrument to be used. The broken hints which he had just given of discontent with Pelagia's presence inspired the boy with sudden hope, and cautiously he began to hint at the existence of persons who would be glad to remove her. Wulf caught at the notion, and replied to it with searching questions, till Philammon, finding plain speaking the better part of cunning, told him openly the whole events of the morning, and the mystery which Arsenius had half revealed, and then shuddered with mingled joy and horror, as Wulf, after rummaging over the matter for a weary five minutes, made answer—

'And what if Pelagia herself were your sister?'

Philammon was bursting forth in some passionate answer, when the old man stopped him and went on slowly, looking him through and through—

'Because, when a penniless young monk claims kin with a woman who is drinking out of the wine-cups of the Cæsars, and filling a place for a share of which kings' daughters have been thankful—and will be again before long—why

then, though an old man may be too good-natured to call it all a lie at first sight, he can't help supposing that this young monk has an eye to his own personal profit, eh?'

'My profit?' cried poor Philammon, starting up. 'Good God! what object on earth can I have, but to rescue her from this infamy to purity and holiness?'

He had touched the wrong chord.

'Infamy? you accursed Egyptian slave!' cried the jernice, starting up in his turn, red with passion, and clatching at the whip which hung over his head. 'Infamy? As if she, and you too, ought not to consider yourselves blest in her being allowed to wash the feet of an Amal!'

'Oh, forgive me!' said Philammon, terrified at the hints of his own clumsiness. 'But you forget—you forget, she is not married to him!'

'Married to him? A free-woman? No, thank Freya! he has not fallen as low as that, at least—and never shall, if I kill the witch with my own hands. A free-woman!'

Poor Philammon! And he had been told but that morning that he was a slave. He hid his face in his hands, and burst into an agony of tears.

'Come, come,' said the testy warrior, softened at once. 'Woman's tears don't matter, but somehow I never could bear to make a man cry. When you are cool, and have learnt common courtesy, we'll talk more about this. So! Hush, enough is enough. Here comes the supper, and I am as hungry as Luke.'

And he commenced devouring like his name-sake, 'the gray beast of the wood,' and forcing, in his rough hospitable way, Philammon to devour also, much against his will and stomach.

'There I feel happier now!' quoth Wulf, at last. 'There is nothing to be done in this accursed place but to eat. I got no fighting or hunting. I hate women as they hate me. I don't know anything, indeed, that I don't hit except eating and singing. And now, what with those girls' vile minims and flutes, no idle ears to listen to a true rattling war-song. There they are at it now, with their cat-mewing, squealing all together like a set of stallions on a foggy morning! We'll have a song too, to drown the noise.' And he burst out with a wild rich melody, acting, in his mouth gestures and a suppressed tone of voice, the sense which the words denoted—

An elk looked out of the pine forest,
He snuffed up east, he snuffed down west,
Stealthily and still.

Hestmate and his horns were heavy with snow,
I laid my arrow across my bow,
Stealthily and still.

And then quickening his voice, as his whole face blazed up into fierce excitement—

The bow it rattled, the arrow flew,
It smote his black bones through and through,
Hurrah!

I sprang at his throat like a wolf of the wood,
And I warmed my hands in the smoking blood,
Hurrah!

And with a shout that echoed and rang from wall to wall, and pealed away above the roofs, he leapt to his feet with a gesture and look of savage frenzy which made Philammon recoil. But the passion was gone in an instant, and Wulf sat down again chuckling to himself.

'There—that is something like a warrior's song. That makes the ~~old~~ blood spin along again! But this debauching furnace of a climate! no man can keep his muscles, or his courage, or his money, or anything else in it. May the gods curse the day when first I saw it.'

Philammon said nothing, but sat utterly rigid at an outbreak so unlike Wulf's usual quiet reserve and stately self-restraint, and shuddering at the thought that it might be an instance of that demonic possession to which the barbarians were supposed by Christians and by Neo-Platonists to be peculiarly subject. But the horror was not yet at its height, for in another minute the doors of the women's court flew open, and, attracted by Wulf's shout, out poured the whole Bacchanalian crew, with Orontes, crowned with flowers, and led by the Amal and Pelagia, rushing in the midst, wine-cup in hand.

'There is my philosopher, my preserver, my patron saint!' hiccupped he. 'Bring him to my arms, that I may encircle his lovely neck with pearls of India, and barbaric gold.'

'For God's sake let me escape,' whispered he to Wulf, as the rout rushed upon him. Wulf opened the door in an instant, and he dashed through it. As he went, the old man held out his hand—

'Come and see me again, boy! Me only. The old warrior will not hurt you.'

There was a kindly tone in the voice, a kindly light in the eye, which made Philammon promise to obey. He glanced one look back through the gateway as he fled, and just saw a wild whirl of Goths and girls, spinning madly round the court in the world-old Tenton waltz, while, high above their heads, in the uplifted arms of the mighty Amal, was tossing the beautiful figure of Pelagia, tearing the garland from her floating hair to fling the dancers with its ruses. And that night he his sister! He hid his face and fled, and the gate shut out the revellers from his eyes, and it is high time that it should shut them out from ours also.

Soon four hours more had passed. The revellers were sleeping off their wine, and the moon shone bright and cold across the court, when Wulf came out, carrying a heavy jar of wine, followed by Sind, a goblet in each hand.

'Here, comrade, out into the middle, to catch a breath of night-air. Are all the fools asleep?'

'Every mother's son of them. Ah! this is refreshing after that room. What a pity it is that all men are not born with heads like ours!'

'Very sad indeed,' said Wulf, filling his goblet.

'What a quantity of pleasure they lose in this

life! There they are, snoring like hogs. Now, you and I are good to finish this jar, at least.'

'And another after it, if our talk is not over by that time.'

'Why, are you going to hold a council of war?'

'That is as you take it. Now, look here, Sind. Whomsoever I cannot trust, I suppose I may trust you, eh?'

'Well,' quoth Sind sulkily, putting down his goblet, 'that is a strange question to ask of a man who has marched, and hungered, and plundered, and conquered, and been well beaten by your side for five-and-twenty years, through all lands between the Wesel and Alexandria.'

'I am growing old, I suppose, and so I suspect every one. But taken to me, for between wine and all temper out it must come. You saw that Ahuna-woman?'

'Of course.'

'Well?'

'Well?'

'Why, did not you think she would make a wife for my son?'

'Well?'

'And why not for our Amal?'

'That's his concern as well as hers, and hers as well as ours.'

'She ought she not to think herself only too much honoured by marrying a son of Odin? Is she going to be more dainty than Placidia?'

'What was good enough for an emperor's daughter must be good enough for her.'

'Good enough? And Adolf only a Bili, while Amal is a full-blooded Amal—Odin's son by both sides?'

'I don't know whether she would understand that.'

'Then we would make her. Why not carry her off, and marry her to the Amal whether she chose or not? She would be well content enough with him in a wick, I will warrant.'

'But there is Pelagia in the way.'

'Put her out of the way, then.'

'Impossible.'

'It was this morning a week hence it may not be. I heard a promise made to night which will do it, if there be the spirit of a Goth left in the poor besotted lad whom we know of.'

'Oh, he is all right at heart, never fear him. But what was the promise?'

'I will not tell till it is claimed. I will not be the man to shame my own nation and the blood of the gods. But if that drunken Praetor recollects it—why let him recollect it. And what is more, the monk boy who was here to-night—'

'Ah, what a well-grown lad that is wasted!'

'More than suspects—and it is his story is true, I more than suspect too—that Pelagia is his sister.'

'His sister! But what of that?'

'He wants, of course, to carry her off and make a nun of her.'

'You would not let him do such a thing to the poor child?'

'If folks get in my way, Smid, they must go down. So much the worse for them! but old Wulf was never turned back yet by man or beast, and he will not be now.'

'After all, it will serve the hussy right. But Amalric?'

'Out of sight, out of mind.'

'But they say the prefect means to marry the girl.'

'He? That scented ape? She would not be such a wretch.'

'But he does intend, and she intends too. It is the talk of the whole town. We should have to put him out of the way first.'

'Why not? Easy enough, and a good rid-dance for Alexandria. Yet if we made away with him we should be forced to take the city too, and I doubt whether we have hands enough for that.'

'The guards might join us. I will go down to the barracks and try them, if you choose, to-morrow. I am a boon-companion with a good many of them already. But after all, Prince Wulf—of course you are always right, we all know that—but what's the use of marrying this Hypatia to the Amal?'

'Use?' said Wulf, smiting down his goblet on the pavement. 'Use? you jaubind old hamster-rit, who think of nothing but filling your own cheek-pouches—to give him a wife worthy of a hero, as he is, in spite of all—a wife who will make him sober instead of drunk, wise instead of a fool, daring instead of a sluggard—a wife who can command the rich people for us, and give us a hold here, which if once we get, let us see who will break it! Why, with those two ruling in Alexandria, we might be masters of Africa in three months. We'd sail to Spain for the Wendels, to move on Carthage, we'd send up the Adriatic for the Longbeards to land in Pentapolis, we'd sweep the whole coast without losing a man, now it is drained of troops by that fool Heraclian's Roman expedition, make the Wendels and Longbeards shake hands here in Alexandria, draw lots for their shares of the coast, and then—'

'And then what?'

'Why, when we had settled Africa, I would call out a crew of picked heroes, and sail away south for Asgard—I'd try that Red Sea this time—and see Odin face to face, or the searching for him.'

'Oh!' groaned Smid. 'And I suppose you would expect me to come too, instead of letting me stop halfway, and settle there among the dragons and elephants. Well, well, wise men are like moorlands—ride as far as you will on the sound ground, you are sure to come upon a soft place at last. However, I will go down to the guards to-morrow, if my head don't ache.'

'And I will see the boy about Pelagia. Drink to our plot!'

And the two old iron-heads drank on, till the stars paled out and the eastward shadows of the cloister vanished in the blaze of dawn.

CHAPTER XIX

JEWS AGAINST CHRISTIANS

THE little porter, after having carried Arsenius's message to Miriam, had run back in search of Philammon and his foster-father, and not finding them, had spent the evening in such frantic rushings to and fro, as produced great doubts of his sanity among the people of the quarter. At last hunger sent him home to supper, at which meal he tried to find vent for his excited feelings in his favourite employment of beating his wife. Whereon Miriam's two Syrian slave-girls, attracted by her screams, came to the rescue, threw a pail of water over him, and turned him out of doors. He, nothing daunted, likened himself smilingly to Socrates conquered by Xanthippe, and, philosophically yielding to circumstances, hopped about like a tame magpie for a couple of hours at the entrance of the alley, pouring forth a stream of light railery on the passers-by, which several times endangered his personal safety, till at last Philammon, hurrying breathlessly home, rushed into his arms.

'Hush! Hither with me! Your star still prospers. She calls for you.'

'Who?'

'Miriam herself. Be secret as the grave. You she will see and speak with. The message of Arsenius she rejected in language which it is unnecessary for philosophic lips to repeat. Come, but give her good words—as are fit to an enchantress who can stay the stars in their courses, and command the spirits of the third heaven.'

Philammon hurried home with Eudamon. Little cared he now for Hypatia's warning against Miriam. Was he not in search of a sister?

'So, you wretch, you are back again!' cried one of the girls, as they knocked at the outer door of Miriam's apartments. 'What do you mean by bringing young men here at this time of night?'

'Better go down, and beg pardon of that poor wife of yours. She has been weeping and praying for you to her crucifix all the evening, you ungrateful little ape!'

'Female superstitions—but, I forgive her. . . . Peace, barbarian women! I bring this youthful philosopher hither by your mistress's own appointment.'

'He must wait, then, in the ante-room. There is a gentleman with my mistress at present.'

So Philammon waited in a dark, dingy ante-room, luxuriously furnished with faded tapestry, and divans which lined the walls; and fretted and fidgeted, while the two girls watched him over their embroidery out of the corners of their eyes, and agreed that he was a very stupid person for showing no inclination to return their languishing glances.

In the meanwhile, Miriam, within, was listening, with a smile of grim delight, to a swarthy and weather-beaten young Jew.

'I knew, mother in Israel, that all depended on my pace, and night and day I rode from Ostia toward Tarentum, but the messenger of the unencumbered was better mounted than I, I therefore bribed a certain slave to lame his horse, and passed him by a whole stage on the second day. Nevertheless, by night the Philistine had caught me up again, the evil angels helping him, and my soul was mad within me.'

'And what then, Jonathan Bar-Zabudah?'

'I bethought me of Ehud, and of Joah also, when he was pursued by Asahel, and considered much of the lawfulness of the deed, not being a man of blood. Nevertheless, we were together in the darkness, and I smote him.'

Miriam clapped her hands.

'Then putting on his clothes, and taking his letters and credentials, as was but reasonable, I passed myself off for the messenger of the emperor, and so rode the rest of that journey at the expense of the heathen, and I hereby return you the balance saved.'

'Never mind the balance. Keep it, thou worthy son of Jacob. What next?'

'When I came to Tarentum, I sailed in the galley which I had chartered from certain sea robbers. Valiant men they were, nevertheless, and kept true faith with me. For when we had come halfway, rowing with all our might, behold another galley coming in our wake and about to pass us by, which I knew for an Alexandrian, as did the captain also, who assured me that she had come from hence to Brundisium with letters from Orestes.'

'Well?'

'It seemed to me both base to be passed, and more base to waste all the expense wherewith you and our elders had charged themselves, so I took counsel with the man of blood, offering him over and above our bargain, two hundred gold pieces of my own, which please to pay to my account with Rabbi Ezekiel, who lives by the watergate in Pelusium. Thru the pirates, taking counsel, agreed to run down the enemy, for our galley was a sharp-beaked Liburnian, while theirs was only a messenger trireme.'

'And you did it?'

'Else had I not been here. They were delivered into our hands, so that we struck them full in mid-length, and they sank like Pharaoh and his host.'

'So perish all the enemies of the nation,' cried Miriam. 'And now it is impossible, you say, for fresh news to arrive for these ten days?'

'Impossible, the captain assured me, owing to the rising of the wind, and the signs of southerly storm.'

'Here, take this letter for the Chief Rabbi, and the blessing of a mother in Israel. Thou hast played the man for thy people, and thou shalt go to the grave full of years and honours, with men-servants and maid-servants, gold and

silver, children and children's children, with thy foot on the necks of heathens, and the blessing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to eat of the goose which is fattening in the desert, and the Leviathan which beth in the great sea, to be meat for all true Israelites at the last day.'

And the Jew turned and went out, perhaps, in his simple fanaticism, the happiest man in Egypt at that moment.

He passed out through the ante-chamber, leering at the slave-girls, and scowling at Philammon; and the youth was ushered into the presence of Miriam.

She sat, coiled up like a snake on a divan writing busily in a tablet upon her knees, while on the cushions beside her glittered splendid jewels, which she had been fidgeting over as a child might its toys. She did not look up for a few minutes, and Philammon could not help, in spite of his impatience, looking round the little room and contrasting its dirty splendour, and heavy odour of wine, and food, and perfumes, with the sunny grace and cleanliness of Greek houses. Against the wall stood presses and chests fretted with fantastic Oriental carving, illuminated rolls of parchment lay in heaps in a corner, a lamp of strange form hung from the ceiling, and shed a dim and hazy light upon an object which chilled the youth's blood for a moment—a bracket against the wall, on which, in a plate of gold engraved with mystic signs, stood the mummy of an infant's head, one of those scaphim, from which, as Philammon knew, the sorcerers of the East professed to evoke marvellous responses.

At last she looked up, and spoke in a shrill, harsh voice.

'Well, my fair boy, and what do you want with the poor old proscribed Jewess? Have you coveted yet any of the pretty things which she has had the wit to make her slave demons save from the Christian robbers?'

Philammon's tale was soon told. The old woman listened, watching him intently with her burning eye, and then answered slowly—

'Well, and what if you are a slave?'

'Am I one, then? Am I?'

'Of course you are. Arsenius spoke truth. I saw him buy you at Ravenna, just fifteen years ago. I bought your sister at the same time. She is two-and-twenty now. You were four years younger than her, I should say.'

'Oh heavens! and you know my sister still? Is she Pelagia?'

'You were a pretty boy,' went on the hag, apparently not hearing him. 'If I had thought you were going to grow up as beautiful and as clever as you are, I would have bought you myself. The Goths were just marching, and Arsenius gave only eighteen gold pieces for you—or twenty. I am growing old, and forget everything, I think. But there would have been the expense of your education, and your sister cost me in training—oh what sums? Not that she was not worth the money—no, no, the darling!'

'And you know where she is? Oh tell me—in the name of mercy tell me!'

'Why, then?'

'Why, then? Have you not the heart of a human being in you? Is she not my sister?'

'Well? You have done very well for fifteen years without your sister—why can you not do as well now? You don't recollect her—you don't love her?'

'Not love her? I would die for her—die for you if you will but help me to see her!'

'You would, would you? And if I brought you to her, what then? What if she were Pelagia herself, what then? She is happy enough now, and rich enough. Could you make her happier or richer?'

Can you ask? I must—I will reclaim her from the infamy in which I am sure she lives.'

'Ah ha, sir monk! I expected as much. I know, none knows better, what those fine words mean. The burnt child dreads the fire, but the burnt old woman quenches it, you will find. Now listen. I do not say that ~~you~~ shall not see her. I do not say that Pelagia herself is not the woman whom you seek—but—you are in my power. Don't frown and pout. I can deliver you as a slave to Aisenius when I choose. One word from me to Orestes, and you are in fetters as a fugitive.'

'I will escape,' cried he fiercely.

'Escape me?' She laughed, pointing to the tower. 'Me, who, if you fled beyond Kit on dived to the depths of the ocean, could make those dead lips confess where you were, and command demons to bear you back to me upon their wings? Escape me? Better to obey me, and see your sister.'

Philammon shuddered, and submitted. 'The spell of the woman's eye, the terror of her words, which he half believed, and the agony of longing, conquered him, and he gasped out—'

'I will obey you—only—only—'

'Only you are not quite a man yet but half a monk still, eh? I must know that before I help you, my pretty boy. Are you a monk still or a man?'

'What do you mean?'

'Ah, ha, ha!' laughed she shrilly. 'And these Christian dogs don't know what a man means? Are you a monk, then? leaving the man alone, as above your understanding?'

'I—I am a student of philosophy.'

'But no man?'

'I am a man, I suppose.'

'I don't, if you had been, you would have been making love like a man to that heathen woman many a month ago.'

'I—to her?'

'Yes, I—to her!' said Miriam, coarsely imitating his tone of shocked humility. 'I, the poor penniless boy-scholar, to her, the great, rich, wise, worshipped she-philosopher, who holds the sacred keys of the inner shrine of the east wind—and just because I am a man, and the handsomest man in Alexandria, and she a

woman, and the varnest woman in Alexandria, and therefore I am stronger than she, and can twist her round my finger, and bring her to her knees at my feet when I like, as soon I open my eyes, and discover that I am a man. Eh, boy? Did she ever teach you that among her mathematics and metaphysics, and goddess and goddesses?'

Philammon stood blushing scarlet. The sweet poison had entered, and every vein glowed with it for the first time in his life. Miriam saw her advantage.

'There, there, don't be frightened at your new lesson. After all, I liked you from the first moment I saw you, and asked the truth about you, and I got an answer—such an answer! You shall know it some day. At all events, it set the poor old soft-hearted Jewess on throwing away her money. Did you ever guess from whom your monthly gold piece came?'

Philammon stifled, and Miriam burst into loud, shrill laughter.

'From Hypatia? I'll warrant! From the fine Greek woman of course. You shall find that you are never thinking of the poor old Jewess.'

'And did you? did you?' gasped Philammon.

'Have I to thank you, then, for that strange necessity?'

'Not to thank me, but to obey me, for mind, I can prove your debt to me, every shill, and claim it if I choose. But don't ban. I won't be hard on you, just because you are in my power. I hate every one who is not so. As soon as I have a hold on them, I begin to love them. Old folks like children, are fond of their own playthings.'

And I am yours, then?' said Philammon weakly.

'You are indeed, my beautiful boy,' answered she, looking up with so insinuating a smile that he could not be angry. 'After all, I know how to toss my balls gently—and for these forty years I have only lived to make young folks happy, so you need not be afraid of the poor soft-hearted old woman. Now you saved Orestes's life yesterday.'

'How did you find out that?'

'I? I know everything. I know what the swallows say when they pass each other on the wing, and what the fishes think of in the summer sea. You, too, will be able to guess some day, without the tripod's help. But in the meantime you must enter Orestes's service. Why?—What are you hesitating about? Do you not know that you are high in his favour? He will make you secretary, raise you to be chamberlain some day, if you know how to make good use of your talent.'

Philammon stood in astonished silence, and at last

'Servant to that man? What care I for him in his honours? Why do you tantalise me thus? I have no wish on earth but to see my sister.'

'You will be far more likely to see her if you belong to the court of a great officer—perhaps more than an officer—than if you remain a penniless monk. Not that I believe you. You

only wish on earth, eh? Do you not care, then, over to see the fair Hypatia again?'

'I? Why should I not see her? Am I not her pupil?'

'She will not have pupils much longer, my child. If you wish to hear her wisdom—and much good may it do you—you must go for it henceforth somewhat nearer, to Orestes's palace than the lecture-room is. And you start. Have I found you an argument now? No—ask no questions. I explain nothing to monks. But take these letters, to-morrow morning at the third hour go to Orestes's palace, and ask for his secretary, P than the Chidder. Say boldly that you bring important news of state, and then follow your star—it is a fairer one than you fancy. Go! obey me, or you see no sister.'

Philostratus felt himself trapped, but, after all, what might not this strange woman do for him? It seemed, if not his only path, still his nearest path to Pelagia, and in the meanwhile he was in the hog's power, so he must submit to his fate, so he took the letters and went out.

'And so you think that you are going to have her?' chuckled Minus to himself, when Philostratus went out. 'To make a point of her, eh? a nun, or a she hermit, to set her to oppose your God by crowding on all points among the nuns for twenty years, with a chain round her neck and a bag of her milk, turning herself all the while the brute of the Nazarene? And you think that old Minus is going to give her up to you for this? No, no, sir monk! Better she were dead! Follow your duny, but—follow it, is the donkey does the grass which his driver offers him, always an inch from his nose. You in my power! and Orestes in my power! I must negotiate that new loan to-morrow, I suppose. I shall never be paid. The dog will turn me, after all! How much is it, now? Let me see.' And she began humming in her ear more, over lands and notes of hand. 'I shall never be paid, but power—oh, power! To see those heathen slaves and Christian hounds plotting and quarrelling, and fancying themselves the masters of the world, and never dreaming that we are pulling the strings, and that they are our puppets! We, the children of the promises—'we, The Nation—we, the seed of Abraham! Poor fools! I could almost pity them, as I think of their times when Messiah came, and they had out who were the true lords of the world, after all! He must be the Emperor of the South, though, that Orestes, he must, though I have to lend him Raphael's jewels to make him so. For he must marry the Greek woman. He shall. She hates him, of course. So much the deeper revenge for me. And she loves that monk. I saw it in her eyes there in the garden. So much the better for my, too. He will dangle willingly enough at Orestes's heels for the sake of being near her—poor fool! We will make him secretary, or chamberlain. He is wit enough for it, they say, or for anything. So Orestes

and he shall be the two jaws of my pincers, to squeeze what I want out of that Greek Jezebel.

And then, then for the black agate!'

Was the end of her speech a bathos? Perhaps not, for as she spoke the last word, she drew from her bosom, where it hung round her neck by a chain, a broken talisman, exactly similar to the one which she coveted so fiercely, and looked at it long and lovingly. Kissed it—wep over it—spoke to it—fooded it in her arms as a mother would a child—murmured over it smatches of lullabies, and her grim, withered features grew softer, purer, grainer, and rose cannibled, for a moment, to their long lost might have been, to that personal ideal which every soul brings with it into the world, which shines, dim and potential, in the face of every sleeping babe, before it has been scarred, and distorted, and entrusted in the long tragedy of life. Soberly she was, ponder, and slave dealer, stepped to the lips in falsehood, treachery, and variance, yet that paltry stone brought home to her some thought, true, spiritual, unpalpable, unmeasurable, before which all her treasures and all her ambition were as worthless in her own eyes as they were in the eyes of the angels of God.

But little did Minus think that at the same moment a heavy, clownish monk was standing in Cyril's private chamber, and, indulged with the special honour of a cup of good wine in the patriarch's very presence, was telling to him and Arsennus the following history.

'So I, finding that the laws had chartered this private snip, went to the master thereof, and finding favour in his eyes hired myself to teach him, being sure, from what I had overheard from the Jews, that she was destined to bring the news to Alexandria as quickly as possible. Therefore fulfilling the work which his Holiness had entrusted to my incapacity, I endeavoured, and toiled continually among the Jews, and being muckilled in such libelous received many curses and stripes in the course of the church, the which I must now add to my account hereafter. Moreover, Satan entered into me, desiring to slay me, and almost tore me asunder, so that I vomited much and belched all manner of mud. Nevertheless, I toiled on valiantly, being such as I am vomiting continually, till the heathens were moved with wonder, and forbore to beat me, giving me strong liquors in pity. Whetore I rowed all the more valiantly day and night, trusting that by my unworthiness the cause of the Catholic Church might be in some slight wise assisted.'

'And so it is, quoth Cyril. 'Why do you not sit down, man?'

'Pardon me,' quoth the monk, with a piteous gesture, 'of sitting as of all carnal pleasure, cometh satiety at the last.'

'And now,' said Cyril, 'what reward am I to give you for your good service?'

'It is reward enough to know that I have done good service. Nevertheless if the holy patriarch be so inclined without reason, there

is an ancient Christian, my mother according to the flesh——'

'Come to me to-morrow, and she shall be well seen to. And mind—look to it, if I make you not a deacon of the city when I promote Peter.'

The monk kissed his superior's hand and withdrew. Cyril turned to Argemius, betrayed for once into gentility by his delight, and smiting his thigh—

'We have beaten the heathen for once, eh?' And then, in the usual artificial tone of an ecclesiastic—'And what would my father recommend in furtherance of the advantage so mercifully thrown into our hand?'

Argemius was silent.

'I,' went on Cyril, 'should be inclined to announce the news this very night, in my sermon.'

Argemius shook his head.

'Why not? why not?' asked Cyril impatiently.

'Better to keep it secret till others tell it. Reserved knowledge is always reserved strength, and if the man, as I hope he does, not, intends evil to the Church, let him commit himself before you use your knowledge against him. True, you may have a scruple of conscience as to the lawfulness of allowing a sin which you might prevent. To me it seems that the sin lies in the will rather than in the deed, and that sometimes—I only say sometimes—it may be a means of saving the sinner to allow his root of iniquity to bear fruit, and fill him with his own devices.'

'Dangerous doctrine, my father.'

'Take all sound doctrine—a saviour of life or of death, according as it is received. I have not said it to the multitude, but to a discerning brother. And even politically speaking let him commit himself, if he be really plotting rebellion, and then speak, and smite his Babel tower.'

'You think, then, that he does not know of Herachian's detestable deed?'

'If he does, he will keep it secret from the people, and our chances of turning them suddenly will be nearly the same.'

'Good. After all, the existence of the Catholic Church in Alexandria depends on this struggle, and it is well to be wary. Be it so. It is well for me that I have you for an adviser.'

And thus Cyril, usually the most impatient and intractable of plotters, gave in, as wise men should, to a wiser man than himself, and made up his mind to keep the secret, and to command the monk to keep it also.

Philammon, after a sleepless night, and a welcome visit to the public baths, which the Roman tyranny, wiser in its generation than modern liberty, provided so liberally for its victims, set forth to the Prefect's palace, and gave his message, but Orestes, who had been of late astonishing the Alexandrian public by an unwonted display of alacrity, was already in the adjoining Basilica. Thither the youth was conducted by an attendant, and led up the

centre of the enormous hall, gorgeous with frescoes and coloured marbles, and surrounded by aisles and galleries, in which the inferior magistrates were hearing causes, and doing such justice as the complicated technicalities of Roman law chose to mete out. Through a crowd of anxious loungers the youth passed to the apex of the upper end, to which the Prefect's throne stood empty, and then turned into a side chamber, where he found himself alone with the secretary, a portly Claudius emmich, with a sleek pale face, small pug's eyes, and an enormous turban. The man of pen and paper took the letter, opened it with solemn deliberation, and then, springing to his feet, darted out of the room in most undignified haste, leaving Philammon to wait and wonder. In half an hour he returned, his little eyes growing big with some great idea.

'Youth! your star is in the ascendant, you are the fortunate bearer of fortunate news! His Excellency himself commands your presence. And the two went on.'

In another chamber, the door of which was guarded by armed men, Orestes was walking up and down in high excitement, looking somewhat the worse for the events of the past night, and making occasional appeals to a gold goblet which stood on the table.

'Ha! No other than my preserver himself! Boy, I will make your fortune. Miriam says that you wish to enter my service.'

Philammon, not knowing what to say, thought the best answer would be to bow as low as he could.

'Ah, ha! Graceful, but not quite according to etiquette. You will soon teach him, eh, Secretary? Now to business. Hand me the notes to sign and seal. To the Prefect of the Stationeries—'

'Here, your Excellency.'

'To the Prefect of the Corn market—how many wheat ships have you ordered to be unladen?'

'Two, your Excellency.'

'Well, that will be large enough for the time being. To the Defender of the Plebs—the devil break his neck!'

'He may be trusted, most noble, he is intensely jealous of Cyril's influence. And moreover, he owes my insignificance much money.'

'Good! Now the notes to the Gaol-masters, about the gladiators.'

'Here, your Excellency.'

'To Hypatia. No! I will honour my bride elect with my own illustrious presence. As I live, here is a morning's work for a man with a racking headache!'

'Your Excellency has the strength of seven. May you live for ever!'

And really, Orestes's power of getting through business, when he chose, was surprising enough. A cold head and a colder heart make many things easy.

But Philammon's whole soul was fired on those words. 'His humble elect!'. Was it that Miriam's hints of the day before had raised

some selfish vision, or was it pity and horror at such a fate for her—for his idol!—But he passed five minutes in a dream, from which he was awakened by the sound of another and still dearer name.

'And now, for Pelagia. We can but try.'

'Your Excellency might offend the Goth.'

'Curse the Goth! If he will have his choice of all the beauties in Alexandria, and be count of Pentapolis if he likes. But a spectacle I must have, and no one but Pelagia can dance Venus Anadyomene.'

Philammon's blood rushed to his heart, and then back again to his brow, as he reeled with horror and shame.

'The people will be mad with joy to see her on the stage once more. Little they thought, the brutes, how I was plotting for their amusement, even when as drunk as Silenus.'

'Your nobility only lives for the good of your slaves.'

'Here, boy! So fair a lady requires a fair messenger. You shall enter on my service at once, and carry this letter to Pelagia. Why—why do you not come and take it?'

'To Pelagia?' gasped the youth. 'In the theatre? Publicly? Venus Anadyomene?'

'Yes, fool! Were you, too, drunk last night after all?'

'She is my sister!'

'Well, and what of that? Not that I believe you, you villain! So!' said Orestes, who comprehended the matter in an instant. 'Appear here!'

The door opened, and the guard appeared.

'Here is a good boy who is inclined to make a fool of himself. Keep him out of harm's way for a few days. But don't hurt him, for, after all, he saved my life yesterday, when you would have run away.'

And, without further ado, the hapless youth was collared, and led down a vaulted passage into the guard room, amid the jeers of the guard, who seemed only to owe him a grudge by his yesterday's prowess, and showed great alarm in fitting him with a heavy set of manacles, which done, he was thrust head foremost into a cell of the prison, locked in, and left to his meditations.

CHAPTER XX

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

'Oh, fairest Hypatia, conceive yourself struck in the face by a great stone, several hundred howling wretches leaping up at you like wild beasts—two minutes more, and you are torn limb from limb. What would even you do in such a case?'

'Let them tear me limb from limb, and die as I have lived.'

'Ah, but—When it came to fact, and death was staring you in the face?'

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'And why should man fear death?'

'Ahem! No, not death, of course, but the act of dying. That may be, surely, under such circumstances, to say the least, disagreeable. If our ideal, Julian the Great, found a little dissimulation necessary, and was even a better Christian than I have ever pretended to be, till he found himself able to throw off the mask, why should not I? Consider me as a lower being than yourself—one of the herd, if you will, but a penitent member thereof, who comes to make the fullest possible reparation by doing any desperate deed on which you may choose to put him, and prove myself as able and willing, if once I have the power, as Julian himself.'

Such was the conversation which passed between Hypatia and Orestes half an hour after Philammon had taken possession of his new abode.

Hypatia looked at the Prefect with calm purification, not unmixed with scorn and fear.

'And pray what has produced this sudden change in your Excellency's earnestness? For four months your promises have been lying fallow.' She did not confess how glad she would have been at heart to see them lying fallow still.

'Because—This morning I have news, which I tell to you the first as a complacent. We will take care that all Alexandria knows it before sundown. Heretician has conquered!'

'Conquered!' cried Hypatia, springing from her seat.

'Conquered, and utterly destroyed—the emperor's forces at Ostia. So says a messenger on whom I can depend. And even if the news should prove false, I can prevent the contrary report from spreading, or what is the use of being perfect? You demand? Do you not see that if we can keep the notion alive but a week our cause is won?'

'How so?'

'I have treated already with all the officers of the city, and every one of them has acted like a wise man, and given me a promise of help, conditional of course on Heretician's success, being as tired as I am of that priest-ridden court at Byzantium. Moreover, the stationaries are mine already. So are the soldiers all the way up the Nile. Ah! you have been fancying me idle for these four months, but—You forget that you yourself were the prize of my toil. Could I be a sluggard with that goal in sight?'

Hypatia shuddered, but was silent, and Orestes went on—

'I have laden several of the wheat ships for enormous cargoes of bread, though those rascally monks of Tiberne had nearly forestalled my benevolence, and I was forced to take a deacon or two, buy up the stock they had sent down, and retail it again as my own. It is really most officious of them to persist in feeding gratuitously half the poor of the city! What possible business have they with Alexandria?'

'The wish for popularity, I presume.'

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'Just so, and then what hudd can the government have on a set of rogues whose stomachs are filled without our help?'

'Julian made the same complaint to the high priest of Galatia, in that priceless letter of his.'

'Ah, you will set that all right, you know, shortly. Then again, I do not fear Cyril's power just now. He has injured himself deeply, I am happy to say, in the opinion of the wealthy and educated, by expelling the Jews. And as for his mob, exactly at the right moment, the deities—there are no monks here, so I can attribute my blessings to the right source—have sent us such a boon as my putting them into as good a humour as we need.'

'And what is that?' asked Hypatia.

'A white elephant.'

'A white elephant?'

'Yes,' he answered, mistaking or ignoring the tone of her answer. 'A real, live, white elephant, a thing which has not been seen in Alexandria for a hundred years.' It was passing through with two tame tigers, as a present to the boy at Byzantium, from some red-winded knight of the Hyperborean Taprobane, or other no man's land in the far East. I took the liberty of lying an embargo on them, and after a little argumentation and a few hundred talents elephant and tigers are at our service.'

'And of what service are they to be?'

'My dearest madam—Conceive. How can we win the mob without a show?'

When were there more than two ways of gaining either the whole or part of the Roman Empire—by force of arms or force of timidity? Can even you invent a third? The former is unpleasantly existing, and hardly practicable just now. The latter remains, and, thanks to the white elephant, may be triumphantly successful. I have to exhibit something every week. The people are getting tired of that pantomime, and since the Jews were driven out, the fellow has grown stupid and lazy, having lost the more enthusiastic hall of his spectators. As for horse racing, they are sick of it. Now,

suppose we announce, for the earliest possible day—a spectacle—such a spectacle as never was seen before in this generation. You and I, I as exhibitor, you as representative—for the time being only—of the Vestals of old—sit side by side.

Some worthy friend has his instructions, when the people are beside themselves with rapture, to cry, "Long live Orestes Caesar!"

Another reminds them of Heracleus's victory—another compares your name with mine the people applaud. Some Mark Antony steps forward, salutes me as Imperator, Augustus—what you will—the cry is taken up—I refuse as mockly as Julius Caesar himself—I am compelled, blushing, to accept the honour—I rise, make an oration about the future independence of the southern continent—union of Africa and Egypt—the empire no longer to be divided into Eastern and Western, but Northern and Southern. Shouts of applause, at two drachmas per man, shake the skies. Everybody believes

that everybody else approves, and follows the lead. And the thing is won.'

'And pray,' asked Hypatia, crushing down her contempt and despair, 'how is this to bear on the worship of the gods?'

'Why?—why?—if you thought that people's minds were sufficiently prepared, you might rise in your turn, and make an oration—you can conceive one. Set forth how these spectacles, formerly the glory of the empire, had withered under Galilean superstition. Show the only path toward the full enjoyment of eye and ear was a frank return to those deities, from whose worship they originally sprang, and connected with which they could alone be enjoyed in their perfection.'

But I need not teach you how to do that which you have so often taught me. So now to consider our spectacle, which, next to the largess, is the most important part of our plans. I ought to have exhibited to them the monk who so nearly killed me yesterday. That would indeed have been a triumph of the laws over Christianity. He and the wild beasts might have given the people ten minutes' amusement. But wrath corrupted judgment, and the fellow has been crucified these two hours. Suppose, then, we had a little exhibition of gladiators. They are forbidden by law, certainly.

'Thank Heaven, they are.'

'But do you not see that is the very reason why we, to assert our own independence, should employ them?'

'No! they are gone. Let them never reappear to disgrace the earth.'

'My dear lady, you must not in your present character say that in public, lest Cyril should be importunate enough to remind you that Christian emperors and bishops put them down.'

Hypatia bit her lip, and was silent.

'Well, I do not wish to urge anything unpleasant to you. If we could but contrive a few martyrdoms! But I really fear we must wait a year or two longer, in the present state of public opinion, before we can attempt that.'

'Wait? wait for ever? Did not Julian and he must be our model—forbid the persecution of the Galileans, considering them sufficiently punished by their own atheism and self-tormenting superstition?'

Another small error of that great man. He should have remembered that for three hundred years nothing, not even the gladiators themselves, had been found to put the mob in such good humour as to see a few Christians, especially young and handsome women, burned alive, or thrown to the lions.'

Hypatia bit her lip once more. 'I can hear no more of this, sir. You forget that you are speaking to a woman.'

'Most supreme wisdom,' answered Orestes, in his blandest tone, 'you cannot suppose that I wish to pain your ears. But allow me to observe, as a general theorem, that if one wishes to effect any purpose, it is necessary to use the means, and on the whole, those which have been tested

by four hundred years' experience will be the safest. I speak as a plain practical statesman—but surely your philosophy will not dissent!

Hypatia looked down in painful thought. What could she answer? Was it not too true? and had not Orestes fast and experienced on his side?

'Well, if you must, but I cannot have gladiators. Why not a—one of those battles with wild beasts? They are disgusting enough, but still they are less inhuman than the others, and you might surely take precautions to prevent the men being hurt.'

'Ah! that would indeed be a scentless rose! If there is neither danger nor bloodshed, the charm is gone. But really wild beasts are too expensive just now, and if I kill down my present menagerie, I can afford no more. Why not have something which costs no money, like prisoners?'

'What! do you rank human beings below brutes?'

'Heaven forbid! But they are practically less expensive. Remember, that without money we are powerless, we must husband our resources for the cause of the gods.'

Hypatia was silent.

'Now, there are fifty or sixty Libyan prisoners just brought in from the desert. Why not let them fight an equal number of soldiers? They are rebels to the empire, taken in war.'

'Ah, then,' said Hypatia, catching at any thread of self-justification, 'then lives are forfeit in any case.'

'Of course. So the Christians could not complain of us for that. Did not the most Christian Emperor Constantine set some three hundred German prisoners to butcher each other in the amphitheatre of Treves?'

'But they refused, and died like heroes, each falling on his own sword.'

'Ah! those Germans are always unmanageable. My guards, now, are just as stiff-necked. To tell you the truth, I have asked them already to exhibit their prowess on these Libyans, and what do you suppose they answered?'

'They refused, I hope.'

'They told me in the most insolent tone that they were men, and not stage-players, and hired to fight, and not to butcher. I expected a Socratic dialogue after such a display of dialectic, and bowed myself out.'

'They were right.'

'Not a doubt of it, from a philosophic point of view, from a practical one they were great pelants, and I an ill-used master. However, I can find unfortunate and misunderstood heroes enough in the prisons, who, for the chance of their liberty, will acquit themselves valiantly enough; and I know of a few old gladiators still lingering about the wire-shops, who will be proud enough to give them a week's training. So that may pass. Now for some lighter species of representation to follow—something more or less dramatic.'

'You forget that you speak to one who trusts

to be, as soon as she has the power, the high-priestess of Athens, and who in the meanwhile is bound to obey her tutor Julian's commands to the priests of his day, and imitate the Galileans as much in their abhorrence for the theatre as she hopes hereafter to do in their care for the widow and the stranger.'

'Far be it from me to impugn that great man's wisdom. But allow me to remark, that to judge by the present state of the empire, one has a right to say that he failed.'

'The Sun-God whom he loved took him to himself, too early, by a hero's death.'

'And the monument he was removed, the wave of Christian barbarism rolled back again into its old channel.'

'Ah! had he but lived twenty years longer!'

'The Sun-God, perhaps, was not so solicitous as we are for the success of his high-priest's project.'

Hypatia reddened—was Orestes, after all, laughing in his sleeve at her and her hopes?

'Do not blaspheme!' she said solemnly.

'Heaven send! I only offer one possible explanation of a plain fact. The other is, that as Julian was not going quite the right way to work to restore the worship of the Olympians, the Sun-God found it expedient to withdraw him from his post, and now sits in his place Hypatia the philosopher, who will be wise enough to avoid Julian's error, and not copy the Galileans too closely, by imitating a severity of morals at which they are the only true and natural adepts.'

'So Julian's error was that of being too virtuous? If it be so, let me copy him, and fail like him. The fault will then not be mine, but fate's.'

'Not in being too virtuous himself, nor at needless likeness of Athens, but in trying to make others so. He forgot one half of Juvenal's great dictum about "Panem et Circenses" as the absolute and overruling necessities of rulers. He tried to give the people the bread without the games. And what thanks he received for his enormous munificence, let himself and the good folks of Antioch tell—you just quoted his Misopogon—'

'Ay—the lament of a man too pure for his age.'

'Exactly so. He should rather have been content to keep his purity to himself, and have gone to Antioch not merely as a philosophic high priest, with a beard of questionable whiteness, to offer sacrifices to a god in whom—forgive me—nobody in Antioch had believed for many a year. If he had made his entrance with ten thousand gladiators, and an white elephant, lent a theatre of ivory and glass in Daphnia, and proclaimed games in honour of the Sun, or of any other member of the Pantheon—'

'He would have acted unworthily of a philosopher.'

'But instead of that one priest dragging up, poor devil, through the wet grass to the deserted altar with his solitary goose under his arm, I o

would have had every goose in Antioch—forgive me stealing a pun from Aristodanus—running open-mouthed to worship any god, known or unknown—and to see the sights.

'Well,' said Hypatia, yielding perforce to Orestes's cutting arguments. 'Let us then restore the ancient glories of the Greek drama—let us give them a trilogy of *Æschylus* or *Sophocles*.'

'Too calm, my dear madam. The *Eumenides* might do certainly, or *Philoctetes*, if we could but put *Philoctetes* to real pain, and make the spectators sure that he was yelling in good earnest.'

'Disgusting!'

'But necessary, like many disgusting things.'

'Why not try the *Prometheus*?'

'A magnificent field for stage effect, certainly. What with those ocean nymphs in their winged chariot, and *Ocean* on his griffin. But I should hardly think it safe to reintroduce *Zeus* and *Hermes* to the people under the somewhat ugly light in which *Æschylus* exhibits them.'

'I forgot that,' said Hypatia. 'As Orestes's trilogy will be best, after all.'

'Best? perfect—divine! Ah, that it were to be my fate to go down to posterity as the happy man who once more revived *Æschylus*'s masterpieces on a Hecatan stage! But—Is there not, begging the pardon of the great tragedian, too much reserve in the *Agamemnon* for our modern taste?—if we could have the birth scene represented on the stage, and an *Agamemnon* who could be really killed—though I would not insist on that, because a good actor might make it a reason for refusing the part—but still the murder ought to take place in public.'

'Shocking! an outrage on all the laws of the drama. Does not even the Roman *Horæ* lay down as a rule this—*Ver pugna coram populo Mædæ trucidat*?'

'Fairest and wisest, I am as willing a pupil of the dear old *Æquean* as any man living—even to the furnishing of my chamber, of which fact the Empress of Africa may some day assume herself. But we are not now discussing the art of poetry, but the art of reigning, and, after all, while *Horæ* was sitting in his easy chair, giving his countrymen good advice, a parvenu, who knew somewhat better than his whit teeth admitted, was exulting forty thousand gladiators at his mother's funeral.'

'But the canon has its foundation in the eternal laws of beauty. It has been accepted and observed.'

'Not by the people for whom it was written. The learned Hypatia has surely not forgotten, that within sixty years after the *Art Poetica* was written, *Annaus Seneca*, or whosoever wrote that very bad tragedy called the *Mædæ*, found it so necessary that she should, in despite of *Horæ*, kill her children before the people, that he actually made her do it!'

Hypatia was still silent—foiled at every point, while Orestes ran on with provoking glibness.

'And consider, too, even if we dare alter

Æschylus a little, we could find no one to act him.'

'Ah, true! fallen, fallen days!'

'And really, after all, omitting the questionable compliment to me, as candidate for a certain dignity, of having my namesake kill his mother, and then be hunted over the stage by furies—'

'But *Apollo* vindicates and punishes him at last. What a noble occasion that last scene would give for winning them back to their old gods for the good!'

'True, but at present the majority of spectators will believe more strongly in the horrors of matricide and incest than in *Apollo*'s power to dispense therewith. So that I fear must be one of your labours of the future.'

'And it shall be,' said Hypatia. But she did not speak cheerfully.

'Do you not think, moreover,' went on the tempter, 'that those old tragedies might give somewhat too gloomy a notion of those deities whom we wish to reintroduce—I beg pardon, to honour? The history of the house of Athens is hardly more cheerful, in spite of its beauty, than one of *Cyril*'s sermons on the day of judgment, and the *Pantans* prepared for happier rich people.'

'Well,' said Hypatia, more and more listlessly, 'it might be more prudent to show them just the finer and more grateful side of the old *Myths*. Certainly the great age of Athenian tragedy had its playful reverse in the old comedy.'

'And in certain *Dionysæ* sports and processions which—' '—in order to awaken a proper devotion for the gods in those who might not be able to appreciate *Æschylus* and *Sophocles*.'

'You would not introduce them?'

'I have feared to—give us but a substitute for them as we can.'

'And are we to degrade ourselves because the masses are degraded?'

'Not in the least. For my own part, the whole business, like the catering for the weekly pantomimes, is as good a bore to me as it could have been to *Julian* himself. But, my dearest madam—"Pantom and Circuses" they must be put into good humour, and there is but one way—by "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," as a certain *Christian* correctly defines the time-honoured Roman method.'

'Put them into good humour? I wish to frustrate them wretch for the service of the god. If we must have comic representations, we can only have them conjoined to tragedy, which, as Aristotle defines it, will justify their allusions by pity and terror.'

Orestes smiled.

'I certainly can have no objection to so good a purpose. But do you not think that the battle between the gladiators and the *Lalæ* will have done that sufficiently beforehand? I can conceive nothing more fit for that end,

unless it be Nero's method of scolding his guards among the spectators themselves, and throwing them down to the wild beasts in the arena. How thoroughly punished by pity and terror must every worthy shopkeeper have been, when he sat musing whether he might not follow his fat wife into the claws of the nearest lion!

'You are pleased to be?' 'My, sir,' said Hypatia, hardly able to conceal her disgust.

'My dearest bride elect, I only meant the most harmless of *reductioes ad absurdum* of an abstract canon of Aristotle, with which I, who am a Platonist after my mistress's model, do not happen to agree. But do, I beseech you, I implore, not by me, but by your own wisdom. You cannot bring the people to appreciate your designs at the first sight. You are too wise, too pure, too lofty, too far-sighted for them. And therefore you must get power to compel them to listen, after all, found it necessary to compel it he had lived seven years more he would have found it necessary to persecute.'

'The gods forbid that! that such a necessity should ever arise here!'

'The only way to ward it, believe me, is to diminish its tendency. After all, it is too then good.'

'True,' sighed Hypatia. 'Have your way, sir.'

'Believe me, you shall have yours in turn. I ask you to be ruled by me now, only that you may be in a position to rule me and Africa hereafter.'

'And such an Africa! Well, if they be born low and earthly, they must, I suppose, be treated as such, and the fault of such a necessity is Nature's, and not ours. Yet it is most degrading!—But still, if the only method by which the philosophic few can assume their rights, is the divinely appointed rulers of the world is by indulging those lower beings whom they govern for their good—why be it so? It is no worse necessary than many another which the servant of the gods must endure in days like these.'

'Ah,' said Orestes, refusing to hear the sigh, or to see the bitterness of the lip which welcomed the speech—now Hypatia is herself again, and my counsellor, and giver of deep and celestial reasons for all things it which poor I can only snatch and guess by vulgar cunning. So now for our lighter entertainment. What shall it be?'

'What you will, provided it be not, as most sad are, unfit for the eyes of modest women. I have no skill in catering for folly.'

'A pantomime, then? We may make that as grand and as significant as we will, and expend too on it all our treasures in the way of gawds and wild beasts.'

'As you like.'

'Just consider, too, what a scope for mythologic learning a pantomime affords. Why not have a triumph of some deity? Could I commit myself more boldly to the service of the gods! Now—who shall it be?'

'Pallas—unless, as I suppose, she is too modest and too sober for your Alexandrians?'

'Yes—it does not seem to me that she would be appreciated—it all events for the present. Why not try Aphrodite? Christians as well as Pagans will thoroughly understand her, and I know no one who would not degrade the virgin goddess by representing her, except a certain lady, who has already, I hope, consented to sit in that very character, by the side of her too much honoured slave, and one Pills is enough at a time in any theatre.'

Hypatia shuddered. He took it all for granted, 'then—and claimed her conditional promise to the uttermost. Was there no escape? She begged to spring up and rush away, into the streets, into the desert—anything to break the hideous net which she had wound around herself. And yet—was it not the cause of the gods—the one object of her? And after all, it be the intent was to be her emperor, she at least was to be an empress—and do what she would—and half in money, and half in the attempt to land herself perfectly into that which she knew that she must go through, and forget herself in activity, she answered cheerfully as she could.

'Then, my goddess, thou must wait the pleasure of these base ones.' At least the young Apollo will have them as even for them.'

'Ah, but who will represent him? This puny generation does not produce such lights as Pyllades and Bathyllus—except among the Goths. Besides, Apollo must have grandeur, and our Greek race has unlearned itself so shamefully with these Egyptians, that our great troops is as dark as Andromeda, and we should have to apply again to those cursed Goths, who have nearly, with a low 'all the honour, and nearly all the money and the power, as I will, I suspect have the rest of it before I can shake out of this wicked world, because they have not in my, but quite, all the courage. No—shall we ask a Goth to dance Apollo? for we can get none else.'

Hypatia smiled in spite of herself at the notion. That would be too shameful. I must forego the god of light himself if I am to see him in the person of a clumsy German.'

'Then why not try my despatch and report of Aphrodite? Suppose we had her triumph—dancing with a dance of Venus Anadyomene. Surely that is a graceful myth enough.'

'As a myth, but on the stage in reality.'

'Not worse than what this Christian era has been looking at for many a year. We shall incur any danger of corrupting morality, be sure.'

Hypatia blushed.

'Then you must not ask for my help.'

'Or for your presence at the spectacle? For that be sure is a necessary point. You are too great a person, my dearest madam, in the eyes of these good folks to be allowed to absent yourself on such an occasion. If my little stratagem succeeds, it will be half owing to the fact of the people knowing that in crowning me, they crown Hypatia. Come now—do you

not see that as you must needs be present at their harmless scrip of mythology, taken from the authentic and undoubted histories of those very gods whose worship we intend to restore, you will consult your own comfort most in agreeing to it cheerfully, and in lending me your wisdom towards arranging it? Just conceive now, a triumph of Aphrodite, entering preceded by wild beasts led in chains by Cupids, the white elephant and all—what a held for the plastic art! You might have a thousand groupings, dispersals, regroupings, in as perfect fest-relief style as those of any Sophoclean drama. Allow me only to take this paper and pen—

And he began sketching rapidly group after group.

'Not so ugly, surely?'

'They are very beautiful, I cannot deny,' said poor Hypatia.

'Ah, sweetest Empress! you forget sometimes that I, too, world worn as I am, on a Greek, with as intense a love of the beautiful as even you yourself have. Do not fancy that every violation of correct taste does not torture me as keenly as it does you. Some day, I hope, you will have learned to pity and to excuse the wretched compromise between that which ought to be and that which can be, in which we helpless statesmen must struggle on, half-stunted, and wholly misunderstood—Ah, well! Look, now, at these fawns and dryads among the shrubs upon the stage, pausing in startled wonder at the first blast of music which proclaims the exit of the goddess from her temple.'

'The temple? Why, where are you going to exhibit?'

'In the Theatre, of course. Where else pantomimes?'

'But will the spectators have time to move all the way from the Amphitheatre after that—there—'

'The Amphitheatre? We shall exhibit the Labyrinth, too, in the Theatre.'

'Combats in the Theatre sacred to Dionysos?'

'My dear lady'—penitently—'I know it is an offence against all the laws of the drama.'

'Oh, worse than that! Consider what an impiety toward the god, to desecrate his altar with bloodshed?'

'Fairrest devotee, recollect that, after all, I may fairly borrow Dionysos's altar in this my extreme need, so I saved its very existence for him, by preventing the magistrates from filling up the whole orchestra with benches for the patricians, after the barbarous Roman fashion. And besides, what possible sort of representation, or misrepresentation, has not been exhibited in every theatre of the empire for the last four hundred years? Have we not had tumblers, conjurers, allegories, martyrdoms, marriages, elephants on the tight-rope, learned horses, and learned asses too, if we may trust Apuleius of Madaura, with a good many other spectacles of which we must not speak in the

presence of a vestal? It is an age of execrable taste, and we must act accordingly.'

'Ah!' answered Hypatia, 'the first step in the downward career of the drama began when the successors of Alexander dared to profane theatres which had re-echoed the choruses of Sophocles and Euripides by degrading the altar of Dionysos into a stage for pantomimes!'

'Which your pure mind must, doubtless, consider not so very much better than a little fighting. But, after all, the Ptolemies could not do otherwise. You can only have Sophoclean dramas in a Sophoclean age, and thus was no more of one than ours is, and so the drama died a natural death, and when that happens to man or thing, you may weep over it if you will, but you must, after all, bury it, and get something else in its place—except, of course, the worship of the gods.'

'I am glad that you except that, at least,' said Hypatia, somewhat bitterly. 'But why not use the Amphitheatre for both spectacles?'

'What can I do? I am over head and ears in debt already, and the Amphitheatre is half in ruins, thanks to that fanatic edict of the late emperor against gladiators. There is no time or money for repairing it, and besides, how pitiful a poor hundred of combatants will look in an arena built to hold two thousand! Consider, my dearest lady, in what fallen times we live!'

'I do, indeed!' said Hypatia. 'But I will not see the altar polluted by blood. It is the desecration which it has undergone already which has provoked the god to withdraw the poetic inspiration.'

'I do not doubt the fact. Some curse from Heaven, certainly, has fallen on our poets, to judge by their exceeding badness. Indeed, I am inclined to attribute the same vagaries of the water-drinking monks and nuns, like those of the Atrive women, to the same celestial anger. But I will see that the sanctity of the altar is preserved, by confining the combat to the stage. And as for the pantomime which will follow, if you would only fall in with my fancy of the triumph of Aphrodite, Dionysos would hardly refuse his altar for the glorification of his own lady's love.'

'Ah! that myth is a lie, and in my opinion a degraded one.'

'Be it so, but recollect, that another myth makes her, and not without reason, the mother of all living beings. Be sure that Dionysos will have no objection, or any other god either, to allow her to make her children feel her conquering might, for they all know well enough, that if we can once get her well worshipped here, all Olympus will follow in her train.'

'That was spoken of the celestial Aphrodite whose symbol is the tortoise, the emblem of domestic modesty and chastity, not of that baser Pandemic one.'

'Then we will take care to make the people aware of whom they are admiring by exhibiting in the triumph whole legions of tortoises, and you yourself shall write the chant, while I will

see that the chorus is worthy of what it has to sing. No more squeaking double flute and a pair of boys—but a whole army of cyclops and graces, with such troubles and such bass-voices! It shall make Cyril's ears tingle in his palace!

'The chant! A noble office for me, truly! That is the very part of the absurd spectacle to which you used to say the people never dreamed of attending. All which is worth settling you seemed to have settled for yourself before you deigned to consult me.'

'I said so? Surely you must mistake. But if any hired poetaster's chant do pass unheeded, what has that to do with Hypatia's eloquence and science, glowing with the fields inspiration of Athene, Phoebus, and Dionysos? And as for having arranged beforehand—my adorable mistress, what more delicate compliment could I have paid you!'

'I cannot say that it seems to me to be one.'

'How? After saying you were trouble which I could, and racking my overburdened wit for stage effects and practicals, have I not brought hither the darling children of my own brain, and laid them down ruthlessly, for life or death, before the judgment-seat of your lofty and unsparring criticism?'

Hypatia felt herself tricked—but there was no escape now.

'And who, pray, is to disengage herself and me, as Venus Anadyomene?'

'Ah! that is the most exquisite article in all my bill of fare! What if the kind gods have punished me to exact a promise from—whom, think you?'

'What care I? How can I tell?' asked Hypatia, who suspected and decided that she could tell.

'Pelagia herself!'

Hypatia rose angrily.

'This, sir, at least, is too much! It was not enough for you, it seems, to claim, or rather to take for granted, so imperiously, so imperiously, a conditional promise—weakly, weakly made, in the vain hope that you would help forward aspirations of mine which you have let lie fallow for months—in which I do not believe that you sympathise now!—It was not enough for you to declare yourself publicly yesterday a Christian, and to come hither this morning to flatter me into the belief that you will do so ten days hence, to restore the worship of the gods whom you have abjured! It was not enough to plan without me all those movements in which you told me I was to be your fellow-counsellor—the very condition which you yourself offered!—It was not enough for you to command me to sit in that theatre, as your host, your jester, your victim, blushing and shuddering at sights unfit for the eyes of gods and men—but, over and above all this, I must assist in the renewed triumph of a woman who has laughed down my teaching, scolded away my scholars, braved me in my very lecture-room—who for four years has done more than even Cyril himself to destroy all the virtue and truth which I have toiled to sow—and toiled in vain!

Oh, beloved gods! where will end the tortures through which your worthy must witness for you to a fallen man?'

And, in spite of all her pain, and of Orestes's presence, her eyes blid with scolding tears.

Orestes's eyes had sunk before the vehemence of her just passion, but as she added the last sentence in a softer and sadder tone, he raised them again, with a look of sorrow and entreaty, as his heart whispered.

'Fool!—fanatic! But she is too beautiful! Wm her I must and will!'

'Ah! dearest, noblest Hypatia! What have I done? Unthinking fool that I was! In the wish to save you trouble. In the hope that I could show you, by the aptness of my own plans, that my political statesmanship was not altogether an unworthy helpmate for your loftier wisdom—with that I am, I have offended you, and I have ruined the cause of those very gods for whom, I swear, I am ready to sacrifice myself as ever you can be!'

The last sentence had the effect which it was meant to have.

'Ruined the cause of the gods?' asked she, in a startled tone.

'Is it not ruined without your help? And what am I to understand from your words but that, hapless man that I am! you leave me and then leave me forth to our own unassisted strength?'

The unassisted strength of the gods is omnipotence.

'Be it so. But—why is Cyril, and not Hypatia, master of the masses of Alexandria this day? Why but because he and his have fought, and suffered, and died too, many a hundred of them, for their god, omnipotent as they believe him to be? Why are the old gods forgotten in my quest for truth? for forgotten they are!'

Hypatia trembled from head to foot, and Orestes went on more blindly than ever.

'I will not ask in answer to that question of mine. All I entreat is forgiveness for—what for I know not—but I have sinned, and that is enough for me. What if I have been too impatient, too hasty? Are you not the prize for which I strive? And will not the preciousness of the victor's wreath excuse some impatience in the struggle for it? Hypatia has forgotten who and what the gods have made her—she has not even consulted her own mirror when she blames one of her numerous admirers for a forwardness which ought to be rather imputed to him as a virtue!'

And Orestes stole meekly such a glance of adoration, that Hypatia blushed, and turned her face away.

After all, she was woman. And she was a fanatic.

And Orestes's voice was as melodious, and his manner as graceful as ever charmed the heart of woman.

'But Pelagia?' she said, at last, recovering herself.

'Would that I had never seen the creature!'

But, after all, I really fancied that in doing what I have done I should gratify you'

'Me?'

'Surely if revenge be sweet, as they say, it could hardly find a more delicate satisfaction than in degradation of one who——'

'Revenge, sir? Do you dream that I am capable of so base a passion?'

'I? Pallas forbid!' said Orestes, finding himself on the wrong path again. 'But recollect that the allowing this spectacle to take place might rid you for ever of an unpleasant—I will not say rival.'

'How, then?'

'Will not her reappearance on the stage, after all her proud professions of contempt for it, do something towards reducing her in the eyes of this scandalous little town to her true and native level? She will hardly dare thenceforth to go about passing herself as the consort of a god-descended hero, or thrusting herself unbidden into Hypatia's presence, as if she were the daughter of a consul.'

'But I cannot—I cannot allow it even to her. After all, Orestes, she is a woman. And can I, philosopher as I am, help to degrade her even one step lower than she lies already?'

Hypatia had all but said 'a woman even as I am' but Neo-Platonic philosophy taught her better, and she checked the hasty assertion of anything like a common sex or common humanity between two beings so antipodal.

'Ah,' rejoined Orestes, 'that unlucky word degrade! Unthinking that I was, to use it, forgetting that she herself will be no more degraded in her own eyes, or any one's else, by hearing again the plaudits of those "dear Macclellans," on whose breath she has lived for years, than a peacock when he displays his train. Unbounded vanity and self-conceit are not unpleasant passions, after all, for their victim. After all, she is what she is, and her being so is no fault of yours. Oh, it must be! indeed it must!'

Poor Hypatia! The bait was too delicate, the tempter too wily, and yet she was ashamed to speak aloud the philosophic dogma which flashed a ray of comfort and resignation through her mind, and reminded her that after all there was no harm in allowing lower natures to develop themselves freely in that direction which Nature had appointed for them, and in which only they could fulfil the laws of their being, as necessary varieties in the manifold whole of the universe. So she cut the interview short with—

'If it must be, then I will now retire, and write the ode. Only, I refuse to have any communication whatsoever with—I am ashamed of even mentioning her name. I will send the ode to you, and she must adapt her dance to it as best she can. By her taste, or fancy rather, I will not be ruled.'

'And I,' said Orestes, with a profusion of thanks, 'will retire to rack my faculties over the "dispositions." On this day week we exhibit—and conquer! Farewell, queen of

wisdom! Your philosophy never shows to better advantage than when you thus wisely and gracefully subordinate that which is beautiful in itself to that which is beautiful relatively and practically.'

He departed, and Hypatia, half dreading her own thoughts, sat down at once to labour at the ode. Certainly it was a magnificent subject. What etymologies, cosmogonies, allegories, myths, symbolism, between all heaven and earth, might she not introduce—if she could but banish that figure of Pelagia dancing to it all, which would not be banished, but hovered, like a spectre, in the background of all her imaginations. She became quite angry, first with Pelagia, then with herself, for being weak enough to think of her. Was it not positive debilitation of her mind to be haunted by the image of so debilitated a being? She would purify her thoughts by prayer and meditation. But to whom of all the gods should she address herself? To her chosen favourite, Athena? She who had promised to be present at that spectacle? Oh, how weak she had been to yield! And yet she had been snared into it—snared—there was no doubt of it—by the very man whom she had fancied that she could guide and mould to her own purposes. He had guided and moulded her now against her self-respect, her compassion, her innate sense of right. Already she was sore toiled. True, she had submitted to be so for a great purpose. But suppose she had to submit again hereafter—always henceforth? And what mole the thought more poignant was, her knowledge that he was right, that he knew what to do, and how to do it. She could not help admiring him for his address, his quickness, his clear practical insight, and yet she despised, mistrusted, and hated him. But what if his were the very qualities which were destined to succeed? What if her power and loftiness, her resolutions—now, alas! broken—never to act but on the deepest and holiest principles and by the most sacred means, were destined never to exert themselves in practice, except conjointly with miserable stratagems and evasions such as these? What if sacrifices and not philosophy and religion, were the appointed rulers of mankind? Illudens thought! And yet—she who had all her life tried to be self-dependent, originaive, to face and crush the hostile mob of circumstance and custom, and do battle single-handed with Christianity and a fallen age—how was it that in her first important and critical opportunity of action she had been dumb, irresolute, passive, the victim, at last, of the very corruption which she was to exterminate? She did not know yet that those who have no other means for regenerating a corrupted time than dogmatic pedantries concerning the dead and unreturning past, must end, in practice, by borrowing insincerely, and using dishonestly, the very weapons of that novel age which they deprecate, and 'sewing new cloth into old garments,' till the rent become patent and

inmurable. But in the meanwhile, such meditations as these drove from her mind for that day both Athens, and the ode, and philosophy, and all things but—P'clagga the wanton.

In the meanwhile, Alexandrian politics flowed onward in their usual pure and quiet course. The public buildings were placarded with the news of Heracian's vic— and groups of loungers expressed, humbly enough, their utter indifference as to who might rule at Rome or even at Byzantium. Let Heracian or Honorius be emperor, the capitals must be fed, and while the Alexandrian wheat-trade was unimpaired, what matter who received the tribute? Certainly, as some friends of Orestes found means to suggest, it might not be a bad thing for Egypt, if she could keep the tribute in her own treasury, instead of sending it to Rome without any adequate return, save the presence of an expensive army. Alexandria had been once the metropolis of an independent empire. Why not again? Then came enormous largesses, at once, proving, more satisfactorily to the mob than to the shipowners, that Egyptian wheat was better employed at home than abroad. Nay, there were even rumours of a general amnesty for all prisoners, and as, of course, every evil-doer had a kind of friend who considered him an injured martyr, all parties were well content, on their own accounts, at least, with such a move.

And so Orestes's bubble swelled and grew, and glittered every day with fresh poetic splendour, while Hypatia sat at home, with a heavy heart, writing her ode to Venus Lament, and substituting to Orestes's daily visions.

One cloud, indeed, not without spirals of wind and rain, disfigured that sky which the Prefect had invested with such serenity by the simple expedient, well known to politicians, of painting it bright blue, since it would not assume that colour of its own accord. For, a day or two after Annonius's execution, the Prefect's guards informed him that the corpse of the crucified man, with the cross on which it hung, had vanished. The Nitrian monks had come down in a body, and carried them off before the very eyes of the sentinels. Orestes knew well enough that the fellows must have been bribed to allow the theft, but he dare not say so to men on whose good humour his very life might depend, so, stammering the affront as best he could, he vowed fresh vengeance against Cyril, and went on his way. But, behold!—within four-and-twenty hours of the theft, a procession of all the masculinity, followed by all the pety, of Alexandria, —monks from Nitria counted by the thousand, —priests, deacons, archdeacons, Cyril himself, in full pontificals, and borne aloft in the midst, upon a splendid bier, the missing corpse, its nail-pierced hands and feet left uncovered for the jutting gaze of the Church.

Under the very palace windows, from which Orestes found it expedient to retire for the time being, out upon the quays, and up the steps of the Casareum, debiled that new portent, and

in another half hour a servant entered, breathlessly, to inform the shepherd of people that his victim was lying in state in the centre of the nave, a martyr duly canonised, —Annonius now no more, but henceforth Theodosius the wonderful, on whose heroic virtues and more heroic faithfulness unto the death, Cyril was already deserting from the pulpit, amid thunders of applause at every allusion to his life at the brook Kishon, Sennacherib in the house of Nisroch, and the rest of the princes of this world who come to nought.

Here was a storm! To order a cohort to enter the church and bring away the body was easy enough to make them do it, in the face of certain death, not so easy. Besides, it was too early yet for so desperate a move as would be involved in the violation of a church. So Orestes added this fresh item to the long column of accounts which he intended to settle with the patriarch, raised for half an hour in the name of all divinities, saints, and martyrs, Christian and Pagan, and wrote off a lamentable history of his wrongs and sufferings to the very Byzantine court against which he was about to rebel, in the comfortable assurance that Cyril had sent, by the same post, a counter statement, contradicting it in every particular.

Never mind. In case he failed in settling it was as well to be able to prove his allegiance up to the latest possible date, and the more completely the two statements contradicted each other, the longer it would take to sift the truth out of them, and thus so much time was gained, and so much the more chance, meantime, of a new leaf being turned over in that sublime oracle of politicians—the Chapter of Accidents. And for the time being, he would make a pathetic appeal to respectability and moderation in general, of which Alexandria, when some hundred thousand tradesmen and merchants had property to lose, possessed a goodly share.

Respectability responded promptly to the appeal, and loyal addresses and deputations of condolence flowed in from every quarter, expressing the extreme sorrow with which the citizens had beheld the late disturbances of civil order, and the contempt which had been so unfortunately evinced for the constituted authorities—but taking, nevertheless, the liberty to remark, that while the extreme danger to property which might ensue from the further exasperation of certain classes, prevented their taking those active steps on the side of tranquillity to which their feelings inclined them, the known piety and wisdom of their esteemed patriarch made it presumptuous in them to offer any opinion on his present conduct, beyond the expression of their firm belief that he had been unfortunately misinformed as to those sentiments of affection and respect which his excellency the Prefect was well known to entertain towards him. They ventured, therefore, to express a humble hope that, by some mutual compromise, to define which would be an unwarrantable intrusion on their part, a happy

reconciliation would be effected, and the staltnity of law, property, and the Catholic Faith ensured. All which Orestes heard with blandest smiles, while his heart was black with curses, and Cyril answered by a very violent though a very true and practical harangue on the text, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

So respectability and moderation met with their usual hapless fate, and, soundly cursed by both parties, in the vain attempt to please both, wisely left the higher powers to settle their own affairs, and went home to their desks and counters, and did a very brisk business all that week on the strength of the approaching festival. One hapless innkeeper only tried to carry out in practice the principles which the disputation from his guild had so eloquently advocated, and being convicted of giving away bread in the morning to the Nitrian monks, and wine in the evening to the Prefect's guards, had his tavern gutted, and his head broken by a joint plebeianism of both the parties whom he had conciliated, who afterwards fought a little together, and then, luckily for the general peace, mutually ran away from each other.

Cyril in the meanwhile, though he was doing a foolish thing, was doing it wisely enough. Thence might arise, and respectability might deplore, those nightly sermons, which shook the mighty arcades of the Cæsareum, but they could not answer them. Cyril was right and knew that he was right. Orestes was a scoundrel, hateful to God, and to the enemies of God. The middle classes were lukewarm covetous towards the whole system of government was a swindle and an injustice, although his words were read with crying, 'Lord, how long?' The fierce bishop had only to thunder forth text on text, from every book of scripture, old and new, in order to array on his side not merely the common sense and right feeling, but the bigotry and ferocity of the masses.

In vain did the good Arsenius represent to him not only the scandal but the unrighteousness of his now canonisation. 'I must have fiol, my good father,' was his answer, 'where-with to keep alight the flame of zeal. If I am to be silent as to Horem's defeat, I must give them some other irritant, which will put them in a proper temper to act on that defeat, when they are told of it. If they hate Orestes, does he not deserve it? Even if he is not altogether as much in the wrong in this particular case as they fancy he is, are there not a thousand other crimes of his which deserve their abhorrence even more? At all events, he must proclaim the empire, as you yourself say, or we shall have no handle against him. He will not dare to proclaim it if he knows that we are aware of the truth. And if we are to proclaim the truth in reserve, we must have something else to serve meanwhile as a substitute for it.'

And poor Arsenius submitted with a sigh, as he saw Cyril making a fresh step in that alluring path of evil-doing that good might come, which

led him in after years into many a fearful sin, and left his name disgraced, perhaps for ever, in the judgment of generations, who know as little of the pandemonium against which he fought, as they do of the intense belief which sustained him in his warfare; and who have therefore neither understanding nor pardon for the occasional outbursts and errors of a man no worse, even if no better, than themselves.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SQUIRREL-MONK

IN a small and ill-furnished upper room of a battiled country house, sat Synesius, the Bishop of Cyrene.

A goblet of wine stood beside him, on the table, but it was untasted. Slowly and sadly, by the light of a tiny lamp, he went on writing a verse or two, and then burying his face in his hand, while hot tears dropped between his fingers on the paper, till a servant entering, announced Raphael Alan-bura.

Synesius rose, with a gesture of surprise, and hurried towards the door. 'No, ask him to come hither to me. To pass through those deserted rooms at night is more than I can bear.' And he waited for his guest at the chamber door, and as he entered, caught both his hands in his, and tried to speak, but his voice was choked within him.

'Do not speak,' said Raphael gently, leading him to his chair again. 'I know all.'

'You know all? And are you, then, so unlike the rest of the world, that you alone have come to visit the bereaved and the desolate in his misery?'

'I am like the rest of the world, after all, for I came to you on my own selfish errand to seek comfort. Would that I could give it myself! But the servants told me all, below.'

And yet you persisted in seeing me, as if I could help you? Alas! I can help no one now. Here I am at last, utterly alone, utterly helpless. As I came from my mother's womb, so shall I return again. My last child—my last and furthest gone after the rest—Thank God, that I have had even a day's peace wherein to lay him by his mother and his brothers, though He alone knows how long the beloved graves may remain unruled. Let it have been shame enough to sit here in my lonely tower and watch the ashes of my Spartan ancestors, the sons of Heracles himself, my glory and my pride, smouldering that I was I cast to the winds by barbarian plunderers. When wilt thou make an evil, O Lord, and slay me?'

'And how did the poor boy die?' asked Raphael, in hope of soothing sorrow by enticing it to vent itself in words.

'The pestilence—What other fate can we expect, who breathe an air tainted with corpses, and sit under a sky darkened with carrion birds?'

But I could endure even that, if I could work, if I could help. But to sit here, imprisoned now for months between these hateful towers, night after night to watch the sky, reel with burning homesteads, day after day to have my ears ring with thunders of the dying and the captives—for they have begun now to murder every male down to the baby at the breast—and to feel myself utterly fettered, impotent, sitting here like some palsied idiot, waiting for my end! I long to rush out, and fall fighting, sword in hand—but I am their last, their only hope. The governors can nothing for our supplications. In vain hate I memorised Cæcilius and Innocent, with what little eloquence my misery has not stunted in me. But there is no resolution, no humanity left in the land. The soldiery are scattered in small garrisons, employed entirely in protecting the private property of their officers. The Ausonians defy them piecemeal, and, armed with their spears, actually have begun to chastise fortified towns, and now there is nothing left for us, but to pray that, like Ilysses we may be discovered the last. What am I doing? I am selfishly pouring out my own sorrows, instead of listening to yours.

'Ay, friend, you are talking of the sorrows of your country, not of your own. As for me, I have no sorrow—only an despair which, being unmedicable, may well wait. But you—oh, you must not stay here. Why not escape to Alexandria?'

'I will die at my post as I have lived, the father of my people. When the last man comes, and Cyrene itself is besieged, I shall return thither from my present outpost and the conquerors shall find the bishop in his place before the altar. There I have offered for years the unbloody sacrifice to him, who will perhaps require of me a bloody one, that so the sight of an altar polluted by the murder of his priest, may end the sin of Ptolemy in woe and arouse him to avenge his slaughtered sheep. There, we will talk no more of it. This, at least, I have left in my power, to make you welcome. And after supper you shall tell me what brings you hither.'

And the good bishop, calling his servant, set to work to show his guest such hospitality as the invaders had left in his power.

Raphael's useful insight had not deserted him when, in his utter perplexity, he went, almost instinctively, straight to Symonius. The Bishop of Cyrene, in judge from the charming private letters which he has left, was one of those many-sided, volatile, restless men, who taste joy and sorrow, if not deeply or permanently, yet abundantly and passionately. He lived, as Raphael had told Orestes, in a whirlwind of good deeds, meddling and toiling for the mere pleasure of action, and as soon as there was nothing to be done, which, till lately, had happened seldom enough with him, paid the penalty for past excitement in fits of melancholy. A man of magniloquent and flowery style, not

without a vein of self-conceit, yet withal of overflowing kindness, ray humour, and unflinching courage, both physical and moral, with a very clear practical faculty, and a very muddy speculative one—though, of course, like the rest of the world, he was especially proud of his own weakest side, and professed the most passionate affection for philosophic meditation, while his detractors hinted, not without a show of reason, that he was far more of an adept in soldiering and dog-breaking than in the mysteries of the unseen world.

To him Raphael betook himself, he hardly knew why, certainly not for philosophic consolation, perhaps because Symonius was, as Raphael used to say, the only Christian from whom he had ever heard a hearty laugh, perhaps because he had some wayward hope, unconfessed even to himself, that he might meet it Symonius's house the very companion from whom he had just fled. He was fluttering round Victoria's new and strange ballroom like a moth round the candle, as he confessed, after supper, to himself, and now he was comforted, on the chance of being able to sing his wings once more.

Not that his confession was extracted without much trouble to the good old man, who, seeing it mine that Raphael had some weight upon his mind, which he longed to tell, and yet was either too suspicious or too proud to tell, set himself to ferret out the secret, and forgot all his sorrows for the time, as soon as he found a human being to whom he might do good. But Raphael was inexplicably wayward and unlike himself. All his smooth and shallow personage, even his shallow satiric humour, had vanished. He seemed parched by some inward fever, restless, moody, abrupt, even peevish, and Symonius's curiosity rose with his disappointment, as Raphael went on obstinately declining to consult the very physician before whom he presented himself as patient.

'And what can you do for me, if I did tell you?'

'Then allow me, my very dear friend, to ask this. As you deny having visited me on my own account, on what account did you visit me?'

'Can you ask? To enjoy the society of the most finished gentleman of Ptolemais.'

'And was that worth a week's journey in perpetual danger of death?'

As for danger of death, that weighs little with a man who is careless of life. And as for the week's journey, I did a dream one night, on my way, which made me question whether I were wise in troubling a Christian bishop with any thoughts or questions which relate merely to poor human beings like myself, who marry and are given in marriage.'

'You forget, friend, that you are speaking to one who has married, and loved—and lost.'

'I did not. But you see how rude I am growing. I am no fit company for you, or any man. I believe I shall end by turning

robber-chief, and heading a party of Anshurians.

'But,' said the patient Synesius, 'you have forgotten your dream all this while.'

'Forgotten?—I did not promise to tell it you—did I?'

'No, but as it seems to have contained some sort of accusation against my capacity, do you not think it but fair to tell the accused what it was?'

Raphael smiled.

'Well then, Suppose I had dreamt this. That a philosopher, an academic, and a believer in nothing and in no man, had met at Hermonce certain rabbis of the Jews, and heard them reading and expounding a certain book of Solomon—the Song of Songs. You, as a learned man, know into what sort of trumpery allegory they would contrive to twist it, how the lede's eyes were to mean the scribes who were full of wisdom, as the pools of Heshbon were of water, and her stature spreading like a palm-tree, the priests who spread out their hands when blessing the people, and the left hand ~~of the Jews~~ should be under her head, the Tephilin which these old pearls wore on their Mit wrists, and the right hand which should hold her, the Mezuzah which they fixed in the right side of their doors to keep off devils, and so forth.'

'I have heard such silly Cabbalisms, certainly.'

'You have? Then suppose that I went on, and saw in my dream how this same academic and unbeliever, being himself also a Hebrew of the Hebrews, snatched the roll out of the rabbis' hands, and told them that they were a party of fools for trying to set forth what the book might possibly mean, before they had found out what it really did mean, and that they could only find out that by looking honestly at the plain words to see what Solomon meant by it. And then, suppose that this same apostate Jew, this member of the synagogue of Satan, in his carnal and lawless imaginations, had waxed eloquent with the eloquence of devils, and told them that the book set forth, to those who had eyes to see, how Solomon the great king, with his threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number, forgets all his seraglio and his luxury in pure and noble love for the unweild, who is but one, and how as his eyes are opened to see that God made the one man for the one woman, and the one woman in the one man, even as it was in the garden of Eden, so all his heart and thoughts become pure, and gentle, and simple, how the song of the birds, and the scent of the grapes, and the spicy southern gales, and all the simple country pleasures of the glens of Lebanon, which he shares with his own vine-dressers and slaves, become more precious in his eyes than all his palaces and artificial pomp, and the man feels that he is in harmony, for the first time in his life, with the universe of God, and with the mystery of the seasons, that within him, as well as without him, the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the

earth, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. And suppose I saw in my dream how the rabbis, when they heard those wicked words, stopped their ears with one accord, and ran upon that son of Belial and cast him out, because he blasphemed their sacred books by his evil interpretations. And suppose—I only say suppose—that I saw in my dream how the poor man said in his heart, "I will go to the Christians, they acknowledge the sacredness of this same book, and they say that then God taught them that 'in the beginning God made man, male and female.' Perhaps they will tell me whether this Song of Songs does not, as it seems to me to do, show the passage upwards from brutal polygamy to that monogamy which they so sedulously commend, and agree with me, that it is because the song preaches this that it has a right to take its place among the holy writings?" You, as a Christian bishop, should know what answer such a man would receive.

You are silent? Then I will tell you what answer he would receive in my dream. "O blasphemous and a mad man, who pervertest Holy Scripture into a cloak for thine own licentiousness, as if it spoke of man's base and sensual affections, know that this book is to be spiritually interpreted of the marriage between the soul and its Creator, and that it is from this very book that the Catholic Church derives her strongest arguments in favour of holy virginity, and the glories of a celibate life."

Synesius was still silent.

'And what do you think I saw in my dream that that man did when he found these Christians enforcing, as a necessary article of practice, as well as of faith, a lawless and bawdy bishp metried, borrowed from that very Neo-Platonism out of which he had just fled for his life? He cursed the day he was born, and the hour in which his father was told, "Thou hast gotten a man-child," and said, "Philosophers, Jews, and Christians, farewell for ever and a day! The coarsest words of your most sacred books mean anything or nothing, as the wind may suit your fancies, and there is neither truth nor reason under the sun. What better is there for a man, than to follow the example of his people, and to turn farmer, and money-gather, and exposer of seeds in his turn, even as his father was before him?"'

Synesius remained a while in deep thought, and at last—

'And yet you came to me?'

'I did, because you have loved and married; because you have stood out manfully against this strange modern insanity, and refused to give up, when you were made a bishop, the wife whom God had given you. You, I thought, could solve the riddle for me, if any man could.'

'Alas, friend! I have begun to distrust, of late, my power of solving riddles. After all, why should they be solved? What matters one more mystery in a world of mysteries? "If thou marry, thou hast not sinned," are St. Paul's own words, and let them be enough for us.

Do not ask me to argue with you, but to help you. Instead of puzzling me with deep questions, and tempting me to set up my private judgment, as I have done too often already, against the opinion of the Church, tell me your story, and test my sympathy rather than my intellect. I shall feel with you and work for you, doubt not, even though I am unable to explain to myself why I do it.

'Then you cannot solve my riddle?'

'Let me help you,' said Synesius with a sweet smile, 'to solve it for yourself. You need not try to deceive me. You have a love, an undivided, who is but one. When you possess her, you will be able to judge better whether your interpretation of the Song is the true one, and if you still think that it is, Synesius, at least, will have no quarrel against you. He has always claimed for himself the right of philosophising in private, and he will allow the same liberty to you, whether the mule do or not.'

'Then you agree with me? Of course you do!'

'Is it fair to ask me whether I accept a novel interpretation, which I have only heard five minutes ago, delivered in a somewhat hasty and rhetorical form?'

'You are shirking the question,' said Raphael peevishly.

'And what if I am? Tell me, don't think most self-tormenting or men. Can I help you in practice even though I choose to leave you to yourself in speculation?'

'Well, then, if you will have my story told, and judge for yourself of Christian common-

sense hurriedly, as if ashamed of his own confession, and yet compelled, in spite of himself, to pronounce it, he told Synesius all, from his first meeting with Victoria to his escape from her at Berenice.

The good bishop, to Aben Ezra's surprise, seemed to treat the whole matter as infinitely amusing. He chuckled, smote his hand on his thigh, and nodded approval at every passage—perhaps to give the speaker courage—perhaps because he really thought that Raphael's prospects were considerably less desperate than he imagined.

'If you laugh at me Synesius I am silent. It is quite enough to endure the humiliation of telling you that I am confounded it'—like any boy of sixteen.

'Laugh at you? with you, you mean. A coward? Fool, fool! The old Prefect has enough sense, I will warrant him, not to refuse a good match for his child.'

'You forget that I have not the honour of being a Christian.'

'Then we'll make you one. You won't let me convert you, I know, you always used to gibe and jeer at my philosophy. But Augustine comes to-morrow.'

'Augustine?'

'He does indeed; and we must be off by day-break, with all the armed men we can muster, to

meet and escort him, and to hunt, of course, going and coming, for we have had no food this fortnight, but what our own dogs and hounds have furnished us. He shall take you in hand, and cure you of all your Judaism in a week, and then just leave the rest to me, I will manage it somehow or other. It is sure to come right. No, do not be hushful. It will be real amusement to a poor wretch who can find nothing else to do—Hugho! And as for lying under an obligation to me, why we can square that by your lending me three or four thousand gold pieces—Heaven knows I want them!—on the certainty of never seeing them again.'

Raphael could not help laughing in his turn.

'Synesius is himself still, I see, and not unworthy of his ancestor Hercules. And though he shrinks from cleansing the Argive stable of my soul, paws like the war horse in the valley at the hope of undertaking any lesser labours in my behalf. But, my dear generous bishop, this matter is more serious, and I, the subject of it, have become more serious also, than you fancy. Consider by the uncorrupt honour of your Spartan forefathers, Agas, Brasidas, and the rest of them, don't you think that you are, in your hasty kindness, tempting me to behave in a way which they would have called somewhat cowardly?'

'How then, my dear man? You have a very honourable and praiseworthy desire, and I am willing to help you to compass it.'

'Do you think that I have not cast about before now for more than one method of compassing it for myself? My good man, I have been tempted a dozen times already to turn Christian—but there has risen up in me the strangest fancy about conscience and honour.'

'I never was scrupulous before, Heaven knows—I am not ~~scrupulous~~ now—except about her. I cannot disavow before her. I dare not look in her face when I had a lie in my tight hand. She looks through me—like clear-eyed awful goddess. I never was ashamed in my life till my eyes met hers.'

'But if you really became a Christian?'

'I cannot. I should suspect my own motives. Here is another of these absurd self-anatomising scruples which have risen up in me. I should suspect that I had changed my creed because I wished to change it—that if I was not deceiving her I was deceiving myself. If I had not loved her it might have been different—but now—just because I do love her, I will not, I dare not listen to Augustine's arguments, or my own thoughts on the matter?'

'Most wayward of men!' cried Synesius, half peevishly. 'You seem to take some perverse pleasure in throwing yourself into the waves again, the instant you have climbed a rock of refuge.'

'Pleasure! Is there any pleasure in feeling oneself at death-grips with the devil? I had given up believing in him for many a year. . . . And behold, the moment that I awaken to any

thing noble and right, I find the old serpent alive and strong at my throat! No wonder that I suspect him, you, myself—I, who have been tempted, every hour in the last week, temptations to become a devil. Ay, he went on, raising his voice, as all the fire of his intense Eastern nature flashed from his black eyes, 'to be a devil! From my childhood till now never have I known what it was to desire and not to possess. It is not often that I have had to trouble any poor Naboth for his vineyard—but when I have taken a fancy to it, Naboth has always found it wiser to give way. And now—Do you fancy that I have not had a dozen hellish plots flashing across me in the last week? Look here! This is the mortgage of her father's whole estate I bought if—whether by the instigation of Satan or of God—a banker in Bereuce, the very day I left them, and now they, and every straw which they possess, are in my power. I can run them—sell them as slaves—betray them to death as rebels—and last, but not least, cannot I hire a dozen worthy men to carry her off, and cut the Gordian knot most simply and summarily? And yet I dare not! I must be pure to approach the pure, and righteous, to kiss the feet of the righteous. Whence came this new conscience to me I know not—but come it has, and I dare no more do a base thing toward her, than I dare toward a God, if there be one. This very mortgage—I hate it, curse it, now that I possess it—the tempting devil!

'Burn it,' said Synesius quietly.

'Perhaps I may. At least, used it never shall be. Compel her? I am too proud, or too honourable, or something or other, even to solicit her. She must come to me, till me with her own lips that she loves me, that she will take me, and make me worthy of her. She must have mercy on me, of her own free will, or—let her pine and die in that accursed prison, and then a scratch with the trusty old dagger for her father, and another for myself, will save him from any more superstitions, and me from any more philosophic doubts, for a few sons of ages, till we start again in new lives—he, I suppose, as a jackass, and I as a baboon. What matter? but unless I possess her by fair means, God do so to me, and more also, if I attempt base ones!'

'God be with you, my son, in the noble warfare!' said Synesius, his eyes shining with kindly tears.

'It is no noble warfare at all. It is a base coward fear, in one who never before feared man or devil, and is now fallen low enough to be afraid of a helpless girl!'

'Not so,' cried Synesius, in his turn, 'it is a noble and a holy fear. You fear her goodness. Could you see her goodness, much less fear it, were there not a Divine Light within you which showed you what, and how awful, goodness was? Tell me no more, Raphael Aben-Ezia, that you do not fear God, for he who fears Virtue, fears Him whose likeness Virtue is. Go on—go on. Be brave, and His strength will be made manifest in your weakness.'

It was late that night before Synesius compelled his guest to retire, after having warned him not to disturb himself if he heard the alarm-bell ring, as the house was well garrisoned, and having set the water-clock by which he and his servants measured their respective watches. And then the good bishop, having disposed his sentinels, took his station on the top of his tower, close by the warning bell, and as he looked out over the broad lands of his forefathers, and prayed that their dissolution might come to an end at last, he did not forget to pray for the dissolution of the guest who slept below, a happier and more healthy slumber than he had known for many a week. For before Raphael lay down that night, he had torn to shreds Majorinus's mortgage, and left a lighter and a better man as he saw the running temptation consuming scrap by scrap in the lamp flame. And then, wearied out with fatigue of body and mind, he forgot Synesius, Victoria, and the rest, and seemed to himself to wander all night among the vine-clad glens of Lebanon, amid the gardens of Idus, and the beds of spices, while shepherds' music lured him on and on, and gushy voices, chanting the mystic hymn of his mighty ancestor, rang soft and hushed through his weary brain.

Before sunrise the next morning, Raphael was facing forth gallantly, well armed and mounted, by Synesius's side, followed by four or five brace of tall brush-tailed greyhounds, and by the faithful Brian, whose lup ears and howl-jaws, unique in that kind of prick-ears and fox-noses, formed the absorbing subject of conversation among some twenty smart retainers, who, aimed to the teeth for chess and war, rode behind the bishop on half-starved, raw-boned horses, mired by desert training and bad times to do the minimum of work upon the minimum of food.

For the first few miles they rode in silence, through ruined villages and desolated farms, from which here and there a single inhabitant peeped forth tentatively, to pour his tale of woe into the ears of the hapless bishop, and then, instead of asking alms from him, to exhibit his acceptance of some poultry remnant of grain or poultry, which had escaped the hands of the marauders, and as they clung to his hands, and blessed him as their only hope and stay, poor Synesius heard patiently again and again the same purposeless tale of woe, and mingled his tears with theirs, and then spurred his horse on impatiently, as if to escape from the sight of misery which he could not relieve, while a voice in Raphael's heart seemed to ask him—'Why was thy wealth given to thee, but that thou mightest dry, if but for a day, such tears as these?'

And he fell into a meditation which was not without its fruit in due season, but which lasted till they had left the enclosed country, and were climbing the slopes of the low rolling hills,

over which lay the road from the distant sea. But as they left the signs of war behind them, the volatile temper of the good bishop began to rise. He patted his hounds, chatted to his men, discoursed on the most probable quarter for finding game, and exhorted them cheerfully enough to play the man, as their chance of having anything to eat at night depended entirely on their prowess during the day.

'Ah!' said Raphael at last, glad of a pretext for breaking his own chain of painful thought, 'there is a vein of your land-salt. I suspect that you were all at the bottom of the sea once, and that the old Earth-shaker Neptune, tired of your bad ways, gave you a lift one morning, and set you up as dry land, in order to be rid of you.'

'It may really be so. They say that the Argonauts returned back through this country from the Southern Ocean, which must have been therefore far nearer us than it is now, and that they carried their mystic vessel over these very hills to the Syrtis. However, I have forgotten all about the sea thoroughly enough since that time. I well remember my first astonishment at the side of a gully in Alexandria, and the roar of laughter with which my fellow students greeted my not unreasonable remark, that it looked very like a centipede.'

'And do you recollect, too, the argument which I had once with your steward about the pickled fish which I brought you from Egypt, and the way in which, when the jar was opened, the servants shrieked and ran right and left, declaring that the fish-bones were the spines of poisonous serpents?'

'The old fellow is as obstinate as ever, I assume you, in his dislike of salt water. He torments me continually by asking me to tell him the story of my shipwreck, and does not leave me after all, though he has heard it a dozen times. "Sir," he said to me solemnly, after you were gone, "will that strange gentleman pretend to persuade me that anything eatable can come out of his great pond there at Alexandria, when every one can see that the best fountain in the country never breeds anything but frogs and leeches?"'

As he spoke they left the last field behind them, and entered upon a vast sheet of breezy down, speckled with shrubs and copse, and split here and there by rocky glens ending in fertile valleys once thick with farms and homesteads.

'Here,' cried Synesius, 'are our hunting-grounds. And now for one hour's forgetfulness, and the joys of the noble art. What could old Homer have been thinking of when he forgot to number it among the pursuits which are glorious to heroes, and make men illustrious, and yet could land in those very words the foinn?'

'The foinn?' said Raphael. 'I never saw it yet make men anything but rascals.'

'Brazen-faced rascals, my friend. I detect the whole brood of lawyers, and never meet one

without turning him into ridicule; effeminate pettifoggers, who shudder at the very sight of roast venison, when they think of the dangers by which it has been procured. But it is a cowardly age, my friend—a cowardly age. Let us forget it, and ourselves.'

'And even philosophy and Hypatia?' said Raphael archly.

'I have done with philosophy. To fight like a Hercules, and to die like a bishop, is all I have left—except Hypatia, the perfect, the wise.' I tell you, friend, it is a comfort to me, even in my deepest misery, to recollect that the corrupt world yet holds one being so divine—'

And he was running on in one of his high-flown tirades of his old, when Raphael checked him.

'I fear our common sympathy on that subject is rather weakened. I have begun to doubt lately nearly as much as I doubt philosophy.'

'Not her virtue?'

'No, friend, nor her beauty, nor her wisdom, simply her power of making me a better man. A selfish cynicism, you will say. Be it so. What a noble horse that is of yours!'

'He has been—how long?—but worn out now, like his master and his master's fortunes.'

'Not so, certainly, the colt on which you have done me the honour to mount me.'

'Ah, my poor boy's pet! You are the first person who has crossed him since—'

'Is he of your own breeding?' asked Raphael, trying to turn the conversation.

'A cross between that white Nisera which you sent me, and one of my own mares.'

'Not a bad cross, though he keeps a little of the bull head and greyhound flank of your Africans.'

'So much the better, friend. Give me home-bone and endurance for this rough down country. Your delicate Niseras are all very well for a few minutes over those flat sands of Egypt, but here you need a horse who will go forty miles a day over rough and smooth, and dine thankfully off thistles at night. Ah, poor little man!—as a jerboa spring up from a tuft of bushes at his feet—' I fear you must help to fill our soup-kettle in these hard times.'

And with a dexterous sweep of his long whip, the worthy bishop entangled the jerboa's long legs, whisked him up to his saddle-bow, and delivered him to the groom and the game bag.

'Kill him at once. Don't let him squeak, boy!—he cries too like a child.'

'Poor little wretch!' said Raphael. 'What more right, now, have we to eat him than he to eat us?'

'Fh? If he can eat us, let him try. How long have you joined the Mammals?'

'Have no fears on that score. But, as I told you, since my wonderful conversion by Brim, the dog, I have begun to hold dumb animals in respect, as probably quite as good as myself.'

'Then you need a further conversion, friend Raphael, and to learn what is the dignity of man, and when that arrives, you will learn to

believe, with me, that the life of every beast upon the face of the earth would be a cheap price to pay in exchange for the life of the meanest human being.

'Yes, if they be required for food—but really, to kill them for our amusement!'

'Friend, when I was still a heathen, I recollect well how I used to haggle at that story of the cutting of the fig-tree, but when I learnt to know what man was, and that I had been all my life mistaking for a part of nature that race which was originally, and can be again, made in the likeness of God, then I began to see that it were well if every fig-tree upon earth were cursed, if the spirit of one man could be taught thereby a single lesson. And so I speak of these, my darling field-sports, on which I have not been ashamed, as you know, to write a book.'

'And a very charming one yet you were still a pagan, recollect, when you wrote it.'

'I was, and then I followed the chase by mere nature and inclination. But now I know I have a right to follow it, because it gives me endurance, promptness, courage, self-control, as well as health and cheerfulness; and therefore Ah! a fresh ostrich-track!'

And stopping short, Synesius began picking slowly up the hillside.

'Back!' whispered he, at last. 'Quietly and silently. Lie down on your horse's neck, as I do, or the long-necked rogues may see you. They must be close to us over the brow. I know that favourite grassy slope of old Round under you hill, or they will get wind of us, and then farewell to them!'

And Synesius and his groom entered on, hanging each to their horse's necks by an arm and a leg, in a way which Raphael endeavoured in vain to imitate.

Two or three minutes of breathless silence brought them to the edge of the hill, where Synesius halted, peered down a moment, and then turned to Raphael, his face and limbs quivering with delight, as he held up two fingers, to denote the number of the hinds.

'Out of arrow-range! Slip the dogs, Syzyx!'

And in another minute Raphael found himsself galloping headlong down the hill, while two magnificent ostriches, their outspread plumes waving in the bright breeze, their necks stooped almost to the ground, and their long legs flashing out behind them, were sweeping away before the grey hounds at a pace which no mortal horse could have held for ten minutes.

'Baby that I am still!' cried Synesius, tears of excitement glittering in his eyes, while Raphael gave himself up to the joy, and forgot even Victoria, in the breathless rush over rock and bush, sandhill and watercourse.

'Take care of that dry torrent-bed! Hold up, old horse! This will not last two minutes more. They cannot hold their pace against this breeze. Well tried, good dog, though you did miss him! Ah, that my boy were here! There—they double. Spread right and left, my children, and ride at them as they pass!'

And the ostriches, unable, as Synesius said, to keep their pace against the breeze, turned sharp on their runners, and beating the air with outspread wings, came down the wind again, at a rate even more wonderful than before.

'Ride at him, Raphael—ride at him, and turn him into those bushes!' cried Synesius, sitting an arrow to his bow.

Raphael obeyed, and the bird swerved into the low scrub, the well-trained horse leapt at him like a cat; and Raphael, who dare not trust his skill in archery, struck with his whip at the long neck as it struggled past him, and felled the noble quarry to the ground. He was in the act of springing down to secure his prize, when a shout from Synesius stopped him.

'Are you mad? He will kick out your heart! Let the dogs hold him!'

'Where is the other?' asked Raphael, pointing.

'Where he ought to be. I have not missed; running shot for years a month!'

'Really, you rival the Emperor Commodus himself.'

'Ah! I tried his fancy of crescent-headed arrows once, and decapitated an ostrich or two tolerably—but they are only fit for the amputation—they will not lie safely in the quiver on horseback, I find. But what is that?' And he pointed to a cloud of white dust, about a mile down the valley. 'A herd of antelope! If so, God is indeed gracious to us! Come down—whichever they are, we have no time to lose!'

And collecting his scattered forces, Synesius pushed on rapidly towards the object which had attracted his attention.

'Antelopes!' cried one.

'Wild horses!' cried another.

'Fame ones, rather!' cried Synesius, with a gesture of wrath. 'I saw the flesh of him!'

'The Anserinus!' And a yell of rage rang from the whole troop.

'Will you follow me, children?'

'To death!' shouted they.

'I know it. Oh that I had seven hundred of you, as Abraham had! We would see then whether these scoundrels did not share, within a week, the fate of Chedorbamer!'

'Happy man, who can actually trust your own slaves!' said Raphael, as the party galloped on, tightening their girths and getting ready their weapons.

'Slaves! If the law gives me the power of selling one or two of them who are not yet wise enough to be trusted to take care of themselves, it is a fact which both I and they have long forgotten. Their fathers grew gray at my father's table, and God grant that they may grow gray at mine! We eat together, work together, hunt together, fight together, jest together, and weep together. God help us all! for we have but one common weal. Now—do you make out the enemy, boys?'

'Anserinus, your Holiness. The same party who tried Myrsinitis last week. I know them by the helmets which they took from the Markmen.'

'And with whom are they fighting?'

No one could see. Fighting they certainly were, but their victims were beyond them, and the party galloped on.

'That was a smart business at Myrsintus. The Ausurians appeared while the people were at morning prayers. The soldiers, of course, ran for their lives, and hid in the caverns, leaving the matter to the priests.'

'If they were of your presbytery, I doubt not they proved themselves worthy of their diocesan.'

'Ah, if all my priests were but like them! or my people either!' and Synesius, chatting quietly in full gallop, like a true son of the saddle. They offered up prayers for victory, called out at the head of the peasants, and met the Moors in a narrow pass. Their then hearts failed them a little. Faustis, the deacon, makes them a speech, charges the leader of the robbers, like young David, with a stone, beats his brains out therewith, strips him in the Homeric fashion, and vents the Ausurians with the leader's sword, returns and erects a trophy in due heroic form, and saves the whole valley.

'You should make him archdeacon.'

'I would send him and his townfolk round the province, if I could, crowned with laurel, and proclaim before them at every market place, "These are men of God." With whom in these Ausurians be dealing? Peasants would have been all killed long ago, and soldiers would have run away long ago. It is truly a potent in this country to see a fight last ten minutes. Who can they be? I see them now, and hearing now like men too. They are all on foot but two, and we have not a cohort of infantry left for in my mile round.'

'I know who they are!' cried Raphael, suddenly striking spurs into his horse. 'I will swear in that armour among a thousand. And there is a hint in the midst of them. On! and light, men, if you ever fought in your lives!'

'Softly!' cried Synesius. 'Trust an old soldier, and perhaps alas! that he should have to say it—the best left in this wretched country. Round by the hollow, and take the barbarians suddenly in flank. They will not see us then till we are within twenty paces of them. Ah! you have a thing or two to learn yet, Alen-Esa.'

And chuckling at the prospect of action, the gallant bishop wheeled his little troop and in five minutes more dashed out of the copse with a shout and a flight of arrows, and rushed into the thickest of the fight.

Our cavalry skirmish must be very like another. A crash of horses, a flashing of sword-blades, five minutes of blind confusion, and then those who have not been knocked out of their saddles by their neighbours' knees, and have not cut off their own horses' heads instead of their enemies', find themselves, they know not how, either running away or being run away from—not one blow in ten having taken effect on either side. And even so Raphael, having made vain attempts to cut down several Moors, found himself standing on his head in an alto-

gether undignified posture, among innumerable horses' legs, in all possible frantic motions. To avoid one was to get in the way of another, so he philosophically sat still, speculating on the sensation of having his brains kicked out, till the cloud of legs vanished, and he found himself kneeling abjectly opposite the nose of a mule, on whose back sat, utterly unmoved, a tall and reverend man, in episcopal costume. The stranger, instead of bursting out laughing, as Raphael did, solemnly lifted his hand, and gave him his blessing. The Jew sprang to his feet, heedless of all such courtesies, and, looking round, saw the Ausurians galloping off up the hill in scattered groups, and Synesius standing close by him, waving a bloody sword.

'Is the litter safe?' were his first words.

'Safe, and so are all. I gave you up for killed, when I saw you run through with that lance.'

'Run through? I am as sound in the back as a crocodile,' said Raphael, laughing.

'Probably the fellow took the butt instead of the point,' he said. 'So goes a civilly subtle. I saw you hit three or four fellows running with the flat of your sword.'

'Ah, that explains,' said Raphael, 'why, I thought myself one of the best swordsmen on the Armenian frontier.'

'I suspect that you were thinking of some one besides the Moors,' said Synesius, archly pointing to the litter. And Raphael, for the first time for many a year, blushed like a boy of fifteen, and then turned haughtily away, and remounted his horse, saying, 'Chumsy fool that I was!'

'Thank God rather that you have been kept from the shedding of blood,' said the stranger bishop, in a soft, deliberate voice, with a peculiar clear and delicate intonation. 'It God have given us the victory, why grudge His living spirit my other of His creatures least's ourselves?'

'Because there are so many the more of them left to ravish, burn and slay,' answered Synesius. Nevertheless, I am not going to argue with Augustine.

Augustine. Raphael looked intently at the man, a tall, delicate featured personage, with a lofty and narrow forehead, scarred like his cheeks with the deep furrows of many a doubt and war. Resolute, gentle but unbending was expressed in his thin close-set lips and his clear quiet eye, but the calm of his mighty countenance was the calm of a worn-out volcano, over which centuries must pass before the earthquake-rents be filled with kindly soil, and the cinder slopes grow green with grass and flowers. The Jew's thoughts, however, were soon turned into another channel by the hearty embraces of Majoricus and his son.

'We have caught you again, you traitor!' said the young Tribune, 'you could not escape us, you see, after all.'

'Rather,' said the father, 'we owe him a second debt of gratitude for a second deliverance.'

We were right hard bested when you rode up.

'Oh, he brings nothing but good with him whenever he appears, and then he pretends to be a bird of ill-omen,' said the light-hearted Tribune, putting his arm round her.

Raphael was in his secret heart not sorry to find that his old friends bore him no grudge for his caprice, but all he answered was—

'Pray thank any one but me, I have, as usual, proved myself a fool. But what brings you here, like Gods and Men? It is contrary to all probabilities. One would not admit so astonishing an incident, even in the modern drama.'

'Contrary to none whatsoever, my friend. We found Augustine at Beroni, in act to set off to Synesius—we—one of us, that is, were certain that you would be found with him, and we decided on acting as Augustine's guard, for none of the dastardly garrison dare stir out.'

'One of us,' thought Raphael, '—which one?' And, conquering his pride, he asked, as carelessly as he could, for Victoria.

'She is there in the litter, poor child,' said her father in a serious tone.

'Surely not ill!'

'Alas! either the overwrought excitement of months of heroism broke down when she found us safe at last, or some stroke from God—'

Who can tell what I may not have deserved?—But she has been utterly prostrated in body and mind, ever since we parted from you at Beroni.

The blunt soldier little guessed the meaning of his own words. But Raphael, as he heard, felt a pang shoot through his heart, too keen for him to discern whether it sprang from joy or from despair.

'Come,' cried the cheerful voice of Synesius, 'come, Aben-Ezza, you have knelt for Augustine's blessing already, and now you must enter into the fruition of it. Come, you two philosophers must know each other. Most holy, I entreat you to preach to this friend of mine, at once the wisest and the foolishest of men.'

'Only the latter,' said Raphael, 'but open to any speech of Augustine's, at least when we are safe home, and game enough for Synesius's new guests killed.'

And turning away, he rode silent and sullen by the side of his companions, who began at once to consult together as to the plans of Majoricus and his soldiers.

In spite of himself, Raphael soon became interested in Augustine's conversation. He entered into the subject of Cyrenian misrule and ruin as heartily and shrewdly as any man of the world, and when all the rest were at a loss, the prompt practical hint which cleared up the difficulty was certain to come from him. It was by his advice that Majoricus had brought his soldierly brother, it was his proposal that they should be employed for a fixed period in defending these remote southern boundaries of the province, he checked the impetuosity of

Synesius, cheered the despair of Majoricus, appealed to the honour and the Christianity of the soldiers, and seemed to have a word—and that the right word—for every man, and after a while, Aben-Ezza quite forgot the stiffness and deliberation of his manner, and the quaint use of Scripture texts in far-fetched illustrations of every opinion which he propounded. It had seemed at first a mere affectation, but the arguments which it was employed to enforce were in themselves so moderate and so rational, that Raphael began to feel, little by little, that his apparent pedantry was only the result of a wish to refer every matter, even the most vulgar, to some deep and divine rule of right and wrong.

'But you forget all this while, my friends,' said Majoricus at last, 'the danger which you men by sheltering proclaimed rebels.'

'The King of kings has forgiven you rebellion, in that while. He has punished you by the loss of your lands and honours. He has given you your life for a prey in this city of refuge. It remains for you to bring forth worthy fruits of penitence, of which I know none better than those which John the Baptist commanded to the soldiers of old, "Do no violence to any man, and be content with your wages."'

'As for rebels and rebellion,' said Synesius, 'they are matters unknown among us, for where there is no king there can be no rebellion. Whosoever will help us against Ausurius is loyal in our eyes. And as for our political creed, it is simple enough—namely, that the emperor never dies, and that his name is Agamemnon, who fought at Troy, which any of my grooms will prove to you syllogistically enough to satisfy Augustine himself. As thus—'

'Agamemnon was the greatest and the best of kings.'

'The emperor is the greatest and the best of kings.'

'Therefore, Agamemnon is the emperor, and conversely.'

'It had been well,' said Augustine, with a grave smile, 'if some of our friends had held the same doctrine, even at the expense of their legs.'

'Or if,' answered Synesius, 'they believed with us, that the emperor's chamber-lain is a clever old man, with a bald head like my own, Ulysses by name, who was rewarded with the prefecture of all lands south of the Mediterranean, for putting out the Cyclops's eye two years ago. However, enough of this. But you see, you are not in any extreme danger of informers and informers. . . . The real difficulty is, how you will be able to obey Augustine, by being content with your wages—far, lowering his voice, 'you will get literally none.'

'It will be as much as we deserve,' said the young Tribune, 'but my fellows have a trick of eating—'

'They are welcome, then, to all deer and ostriches which they can catch. But I am not only penniless, but reduced myself to live, like the Læstrygons, on meat and nothing else, all

crops and stocks for miles round being either burnt or carried off.

'E nullo nihil!' said Augustine, having nothing else to say. But here Raphael woke up on a sudden with—

'Did the Constantinian wheat-ships go to Rome?'

'No, Orastes stopped them when he stopped the Alexandrian convoy.'

'Then the Jews have the wheat, trust them for it, and what they have I have. There are certain moneys of mine lying at interest in the scaports, which will set that matter to rights for a month or two. Do you have an escort to-morrow, and I will haul wheat.'

But, most generous of friends, I can neither repay your interest nor principal.

'It is so. I have spent so much money during the last thirty years in doing nothing but evil, that it is hard if I may not at last spend a little in doing good—I bless his Holiness of Hippo thinks it wrong for you to accept the good will of an infidel.'

'Which of these three,' said Augustine, 'was neighbour to him who fell among thieves, but he who had mercy on him? Verily, my friend Raphael Abou Ezra, thou art not far from the kingdom of God.'

'Of which God?' asked Raphael shyly.

'Of the God of thy forefather Abraham, whom thou shalt hear us worship this evening, if He will. Synesius, have you a church wherein I can perform the evening service, and give a word of exhortation to those my children?'

Synesius sighed. 'There is a ruin, which was last month a church.'

'And is now still. Man did not place there the presence of God, and man cannot expel it.'

And so, sending out hunting parties right and left in chase of everything which had animal life, and jacking up before night till a tolerably abundant supply of game, they went homewards, where Victoria was entrusted to the care of Synesius's old stewardess, and the soldiery were marched straight into the church, while Synesius's servants, to whom the Latin service would have been unintelligible, busied themselves in cooking the still water gruel.

Strongly enough it seemed to Raphael that evening to hear, among those smoke-grimed pillars and fallen rafters, the grand old Hebrew psalms of his nation ring abed, to the very chants, too, which were said by the rabbis to have been used in the Temple-worship of Jerusalem. There, and the invocations, thanksgivings, blessings, the very ordinary ceremonial itself, were all Hebrew, robust of the thoughts, the words of his own ancestors. This lesson from the book of Proverbs, which Augustine's deacon was reading in Latin—the blood of the man who wrote these words was flowing in Abou-Ezra's veins. Was it a mistake, an hypocrisy? or were they indeed worshipping, as they fancied, the Ancient One who spoke face to face with his forefathers, the Archetype of man, the friend of Abraham and of Israel?

And now the sermon began, and as Augustine stood for a moment in prayer in front of the ritual altar, every furrow in his worn face lit up by a ray of moonlight which streamed in through the broken roof, Raphael waited impatiently for his speech. What would he, the rhimed disbeliever, the ancient teacher of heathen rhetoric, the courtly and learned student, the ascetic celibate and theosophist, have to say to those coarse war-worn soldiers, Thaurians and Markmen, Gauls and Belgians, who sat watching there, with those sad earnest faces? What one thought or feeling in common could there be between Augustine and his congregation?

At last, after signing himself with the cross, he began. The subject was one of the psalms which had just been read—a battle-psalm, concerning Moab and Amalek, and the old border wars of Palestine. What would he make of that?

He seemed to start finely enough, in spite of the exquisite grace of his voice, and manner and language, and the epigrammatic fineness of every sentence. He spent some minutes over the inscription of the psalm, allegorised it—made it mean something which it never did mean in the writer's mind, and which it, as Raphael well knew, never could mean in his interpretation was founded on a sheer mis-translation. He pinned on the Latin version, derived the meaning of Hebrew words from Latin etymologies. And as he went on with the psalm itself, the common sense of David seemed to evaporate in mysticism. The most realistic and unbiassed illustrations drawn from the commonest objects, alternated with mysterious theosophic dogma. When was that beginning for which he was so famed? Where was that treasure for the old Hebrew Scriptures which he professed? He was to ring David is all is Hypatia used to treat Homer—worse even than old Philo did, when in the home life of the old Fathers, and in the nightly acts of Moses and Joshua, he could find nothing but spiritual allegories wherewith to pump the private experiences of the secluded theosophist. And Raphael felt very much inclined to get up and go away, and still more inclined to say, with a sob, in his haste, 'All men are fools.'

And yet, what an illustration that last was! No more time, but a real deep glow into the working of the material universe, is symbolic of the spiritual and immaterial. And not drawn, as Hypatia was, exclusively from some sublime or portentous phenomenon, but from some dog, or kettle, or fishwife, with a homely insight worthy of old Socrates himself. How personal he was becoming, too! No long bursts of declamation, but dramatic dialogue and interrogation, by hints and unexpected hits it once and the other most common place soldier's failing. And yet each pithy rebuke was put in a universal, comprehensive form, which made Raphael himself wince—which might, he thought, have made any man or woman either, wince in like manner. Well,

whether or not Augustine knew truths for all men, he at least knew sins for all men, and for himself as well as his hearers. There was no denying that He was a real man, right or wrong. What he rebuked in others, he had felt in himself, and lought it to the death-grip, as the flash and quiver of that worn face proclaimed.

But yet, why were the Edomites, by an utterly mistaken pun on their name, to signify one sort of sin, and the Ammonites another, and the Amalekites another? What had that to do with the old psalm? What had it to do with the present auditory? Was not this the wildest and lowest form of that unreal, subliming, mystic pedantry, of which he had sickened long ago in Hypatia's lecture room, till he fled to Brian, the dog, for honest practical realities?

No. Gradually, as Augustine's hints became more practical and pointed, Raphael saw that there was in his mind a most real and organic connection, true or false, in what seemed at first mere arbitrary allegory. Amalekites, personal sins, Assurban robbers, and ravishers, were to him only so many different forms of one and the same evil. He who helped any of them fought against the righteous God; he who fought against them fought for that God, but he must conquer the Amalekites within, if he expected to conquer the Amalekites without. Could the legions permanently put down the lust and greed around them, while their own hearts were enslaved to lust and greed within? Would they not be helping it by example, while they pretended to crush it by sword-strokes? Was it not a mockery, an hypocrisy? Could God's blessing be on it? Could they restore unity and peace to the country while there was neither unity nor peace within them? What had produced the helplessness of the people, the ineffectuality of the military, but inward helplessness, inward weakness? They were weak against Moors, because they were weak against enemies more deadly than Moors. How could they fight for God outwardly, while they were fighting against him inwardly? He would not go forth with their hosts. How could He, when He was not among their hosts? He, a spirit, must dwell in their spirits. . . . And then the shout of a king would be among them, and one of them should chase a thousand. Or if not, if both people and soldiers required still further chastening and humbling—what matter, provided that they were chastened and humbled? What matter if their faces were confounded, if they were thereby driven to seek His Name, who alone was the Truth, the Light, and the Life? What if they were slain? Let them have conquered the inward enemies, what matter to them if the outward enemies seemed to prevail for a moment? They should be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, when death was swallowed up in victory. It would be seen then who had really conquered in the eyes of the just God—they, God's ministers, the defenders of peace and justice, or the Assurians, the enemies thereof.

. . . And then, by some quaintest turn of fancy, he introduced a word of pity and hope, even for the wild Moorish robbers. It might be good for them to have succeeded thus far; they might learn from their Christian captives, purified by affliction, truths which those captives had forgotten in prosperity. And, again, it might be good for them, as well as for Christians, to be confounded and made like chaff before the wind, that so they too might learn His Name. And so on, through and in spite of all conceits, allegories, overstrained interpretations, Augustine went on evolving from the Psalms, and from the past, and from the future, the assertion of a Living, Present God, the eternal enemy of discord, injustice, and evil, the eternal helper and deliverer of those who were enslaved and crushed thereby in soul or body. It was

all most strange to Raphael. Strange in its utter unlikeness to any teaching, Platonist or Hebrew, which he had ever heard before, and stranger still in its agreement with those teachings, in the instinctive ease with which it seemed to unite and justify them all by the testimony of some one idea—and what that might be, his Jewish prejudices could not prevent his seeing, and yet would not allow him to acknowledge. But, however, he might reckon with Hebrew Jews, however he might long to persuade himself that Augustine was building up a sound and right practical structure on the foundation of a sheer lie, he could not help watching, at first with envy, and then with honest pleasure, the faces of the rough soldiers, as they gradually lighted up into fixed attention, into cheerful and solemn resolve.

'What wonder?' said Raphael to himself, 'what wonder, after all? He has been speaking to these wild beasts as to men and saints, he has been telling them that God is as much with them as with prophets and psalmists. I wonder if Hypatia, with all her beauty, could have touched their hearts as he has done?'

And when Raphael rose at the end of this strange discourse, he felt more like an old Hebrew than he had done since he sat upon his nurse's knee, and heard legends about Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. What if Augustine were right after all? What if the Jehovah of the old Scriptures were not merely the national patron of the children of Abraham, as the Rabbis held, not merely, as Philo held, the Divine Wisdom which inspired a few elect sages, even among the heathen; but the Lord of the whole earth, and of the nations thereof?—And suddenly, for the first time in his life, passages from the psalms and prophets flashed across him, which seemed to assert this. What else did that whole book of Daniel and the history of Nebuchadnezzar mean—if not that? Philo's latitudinarianism had long ago cured him of the Rabbinical notion of the Babylonian conqueror as an incarnate devil, devoted to Tophet, like Sennacherib before him. He had long in private admired the man, as a magnificent human character, a fairer one, in his eyes,

than either Alexander or Julius Cæsar. What if Augustine had given him a hint which might justify his admiration? . . . But more.

What if Augustine were right in going even further than Philo and Hypatia? What if this same Jehovah, Wisdom, Logos, call Him what they might, were actually the God of the spirits, as well as of the bodies of all flesh? What if he was as near—Augustine said that He was—to the horrors of those wild Markmen, Gauls, Thracians, as to Augustine's own heart? What if He were—Augustine said He was—yearning after, enlightening, leading home to Himself, the souls of the poorest, the most brutal, the most sinful?—What if He loved man as man, and not merely one favoured race or one favoured class of minds? And in the light of that hypothesis, that strange story of the Cross of Calvary seemed not so impossible after all. But then, ecstacy and asceticism, utterly non-human as they were, what had they to do with the theory of a human God?

And filled with many questionings, Raphael was not sorry to have the matter brought to an issue that very evening in Synesius's sitting-room. Majoricus, in his blunt, soldierlike way, set Raphael and Augustine at each other without circumlocution, and Raphael, after trying to smile and push-pooch away the subject, was tempted to make a jest on a winning fallacious conceit of Augustine's—found it more difficult than he thought to trip up the sonorous and wily logician, lost his temper a little—a sign, perhaps, of returning health in a sceptic and soon found himself fighting desperately, with Synesius backing him, apparently for the mere pleasure of seeing a battle, and Majoricus making him more and more cross by the impetuous dogmatic faith with which he lanced at one Gordian knot after another, till Augustine had to save himself from his friends by tripping the good Prefect gently up, and leaving him miles behind the disputants, who argued on and on, till broad daylight shone in, and the sight of the degradation below recalled all parties to more material weapons, and a sterner warfare.

But little thought Raphael Aben-Ezra, as he sat there, calling up every resource of his wit and learning, in the hope, half malicious, half honestly cautious, of upsetting the sage of Hippo, and forgetting all heaven and earth in the delight of battle with his peers, that in a neighbouring chamber, her tender limbs outspread upon the floor, her face buried in her dishevelled locks lay Victoria, wrestling all night long for him in prayer and bitter tears, as the murmur of busy voices reached her eager ears, longing in vain to catch the sense of words, on which hung now her hopes and bliss—how utterly and entirely, she had never yet confessed to herself, though she dare confess it to that Son of Man to whom she prayed, as to One who fit with tenderness and insight beyond that of a brother, a father, even of a mother, for her maiden's blushes and her maiden's woes.

CHAPTER XXII

PANDEMONIUM

BUT where was Philammon all that week?

For the first day or two of his imprisonment he had raved like some wild beast entrapped. His new-found purpose and energy, thus suddenly damped back and checked, boiled up in frantic rage. He tore at the bars of his prison, he rolled himself, shrieking, on the floor. He called in vain on Hypatia, on Pelagia, on Arcadius—on all but God. Pray he could not, and dare not, for to whom was he to pray? To the stars?—to the Abysses and the Plurimities?

Alas! as Augustine said once, bitterly enough, of his own Manichean teachers, Hypatia had taken away the living God, and given him instead the four elements. And in utter bewilderment and hopeless terror he implored the pity of every guard and gaoler who passed along the corridor, and begged them, as brothers, fathers, men, to help him. Moved it once by his agony and by his exceeding beauty, the rough Thracians, who knew enough of their employer's character to have little difficulty in believing his victim to be innocent, listened to him and questioned him. But when they offered the very help which he implored, and asked him to tell his story, the poor boy's tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. How could he publish his sister's shame? And yet she was about to publish it herself. And instead of words, he met their condolences with fresh agonies, till they gave him up as mad, and, tired by his violence, compelled him, with blows and curses, to remain quiet, and so the week wore out in dull and stupefied despair, which trembled on the very edge of idocy. Night and day were alike to him. The food which was thrust in through his grate remained untasted, hour after hour, day after day, he sat upon the ground, his head buried in his hands, half-dying from mere exhaustion of body and mind. Why should he care to stir, to eat, to live? He had but one purpose in heaven and earth and that one purpose was impossible.

At last his cell-door grated on its hinges. 'Up, my mad youth!' cried a rough voice. 'Up, and thank the favour of the gods, and the bounty of our noble—ahem!—Prefect. To day he gives freedom to all prisoners. And I suppose a pretty boy like you may go about your business, as well as uglier rascals.'

Philammon looked up in the gaoler's face with a dim half-comprehension of his meaning.

'Do you hear?' cried the man with a curse. 'You are free. Jump up or I shut the door again, and your one chance is over.'

'Did she dance Venus Anadyomene?'

'She! Who?'

'My sister! Pelagia!'

'Heaven only knows what she has not danced in her time! But they say she dances to day once more. Quick! out, or I shall not be ready in time for the sports. They began an hour

hence. Free admission into the theatre to-day for all—rogues and honest men, Christians and heathens—*Chore the boy! he's as mad as ever!*

So indeed Philammon scorned, for, springing suddenly to his feet, he rushed out past the gaoler, upsetting him into the corridor, and fled wildly from the prison among the crowd of liberated ruffians, ran from the prison house, from home to the baths, from the baths to the theatre, and was soon pushing his way, regardless of etiquette, towards the lower tiers of benches, in order, he hardly knew why, to place himself as near as possible to the very sight which he dreaded and abhorred.

As fate would have it, the passage by which he had entered opened close to the Prefect's chamber of state, where sat Orestes, gorgeous in his robes of office, and by him—to Philammon's surprise and horror—*Hypatia herself!*

More beautiful than ever, her forehead sparkling like Juno's own, with a lofty tower of jewels, her white Ionic robe half hidden by a crimson shawl, there sat the vestal, the philosopher. What did she there? But the boy's eager eyes, accustomed but too well to note every light and shade of feeling which crossed that face, saw in a moment how wan and haggard was its expression. She wore a look of constraint, of half-terrible self-resolve, as of a martyr—and yet not an undoubting martyr, for as Orestes turned his head at the stir of Philammon's intrusion, and flashing with anger at the sight, unthought how fiercely back, *Hypatia* turned too, and as her eyes met her pupil's she blushed crimson, and started, and seemed in act to motion him back also, and then, recollecting herself, whispered something to Orestes which quelled his wrath, and composed herself, or rather sank into her place again, as one who was determined to abide the worst.

A knot of gay young gentlemen, Philammon's fellow-students, pulled him down among them, with welcome and laughter, and before he could collect his thoughts, the curtain in front of the stage had fallen, and the sport began.

The scene represented a background of desert mountains, and on the stage itself, before a group of temporary huts, stood huddled together the black Libyan prisoners, some fifty men, women, and children, bedizened with gaily leathers and girdles of tasselled leather, brandishing their spears and targets, and glaring out with white eyes on the strange scene before them, in childish awe and wonder.

Along the front of the stage a wattle battlement had been erected, while below, the hypocaustum had been painted to represent rocks, thus completing the rough imitation of a village among the Libyan hills.

Amid breathless silence, a herald advanced, and proclaimed that these were prisoners taken in arms against the Roman senate and people, and therefore worthy of immediate death; but that the Prefect, in his exceeding clemency toward them, and especial anxiety to afford the greatest possible amusement to the obedient and

loyal citizens of Alexandria, had determined, instead of giving them at once to the beasts, to allow them to fight for their lives, promising to the survivors a free pardon if they acquitted themselves valiantly.

The poor wretches on the stage, when this proclamation was translated to them, set up a barbaric yell of joy, and brandished their spears and targets more fiercely than ever.

But their joy was short. The trumpets sounded the attack—a body of gladiators, equal in number to the savages, marched out from one of the two great side passages, made their obeisance to the applauding spectators, and planting their scaling-ladders against the front of the stage, mounted to the attack.

The Libyans fought like tigers, yet from the first, *Hypatia*, and Philammon also, could see that their promised chance of life was a mere mockery. Their tight darts and naked limbs were no match for the heavy swords and complete armour of their brutal assailants, who endured carelessly a storm of blows and thrusts on heads and faces protected by visored helmets; yet so fierce was the valour of the Libyans, that even they recoiled twice, and twice the scaling ladders were hurled down again, while more than one gladiator lay below, rolling in the death agony.

And then burst forth the sleeping devil in the hearts of that great barbarised multitude. Yet upon yell of savage triumph, and still more savage disappointment, rang from every tier of that vast ring of seats, at each blow and parry, onslaught and repulse, and Philammon saw with horror and surprise that luxury, refinement, philosophic culture itself, were no safeguards against the infection of blood-hirstiness. Gay and delicate ladies, whom he had seen three days before smothering delight at *Hypatia's* heavenward aspirations, and some, too, whom he seemed to recollect in Christian churches spring from their seats, waved their hands and handkerchiefs, and clapped and shouted to the gladiators. For, thus, there was no doubt as to which side the favour of the spectators inclined. With taunts, jeers, upbraiding, entreaties, the hired ruffians were urged on to their work of blood. The poor wretches heard no voice raised in their favour—nothing but contempt, hatred, eager lust of blood, glared from those thousands of pitiless eyes, and, broken-hearted, despairing, they flung and drew back one by one. A shout of triumph greeted the gladiators as they climbed over the battlement, and gained a footing on the stage. The wretched blacks broke up, and fled wildly from corner to corner, looking vainly for an outlet.

And then began a butchery. Some fifty men, women, and children were cooped together in that narrow space. And yet *Hypatia's* countenance did not falter. Why should it? What were their numbers, beside the thousands who had perished year by year for centuries, by that and far worse deaths, in the amphitheatres of that empire, for that faith

delicate line and grace of the beautiful maiden figures, while Hephestus turned toward the curtain, and seemed to await impatiently the forthcoming of the goddess.

Every lip was breathless with expectation as the flutes swelled louder and nearer, horns and cymbals took up the harmony, and, to a triumphant burst of music, the curtain rose, and a simultaneous shout of delight burst from ten thousand voices.

The scene behind represented a magnificent temple, half hidden in an artificial wood of tropic trees and shrubs, which filled the stage. Kannas and Dryads peeped laughing from among their stems, and gorgeous birds, tethered by unseen threads, fluttered and sang among their branches. In the centre an over-arching avenue of palms led from the temple doors to the front of the stage, from which the mimic battlements had disappeared, and had been replaced, in those few moments, by a broad slope of smooth green sward, leading down into the orchestra, and fringed with myrtles, roses, myrtle trees, poppies, and emerson hyacinths, studded with the like blood of Adonis.

The folding doors of the temple opened slowly, the crash of instruments resounded from within, and, preceded by the musicians, came forth the triumph of Aphrodite, and passed down the slope, and down the outer ring of the orchestra.

A splendid car, drawn by white oxen, bore the rarest and grandest of foreign flowers and hints, which young girls, dressed as Hours and Seasons, strewed in front of the procession and among the spectators.

A long line of beautiful youths and maidens, crowned with garlands and robed in scales of purple gauze, followed by two and two a pair carried or led a pair of wild animals, captives of the conquering might of Beauty.

Foremost were borne, on the wrists of the actors, the birds especially sacred to the goddess—doves and sparrows, wrens and swallows, and a pair of gigantic Indian tortoises, rich ridden by a lovely nymph, showed that Orestes had not forgotten our wish, at least, of his intended bride.

Then followed strange birds from India, parakeets, peacocks, pheasants silver and golden, bustards and ostriches—the latter, hestridden each by a tiny enjod, were led on in golden leashes, followed by antelopes and oryxes, elks from beyond the Danube, four-horned rams from the Isles of the Hyperborean Ocean, and the strange hybrid of the Libyan hills, believed by all spectators to be half-bull half-horse. And then a miriad of delighted awe ran through the theatre, as bears and leopards, lions and tigers, fettered in heavy chains of gold, and made gentle for the occasion by narcotics, paced sedately down the slope, obedient to their beautiful guides, while behind them, the unwieldy bulk of two double horned rhinoceroses, from the far south, was overtopped by the long slender necks and large soft eyes of a pair of giraffes, such as

had not been seen in Alexandria for more than fifty years.

A cry arose of 'Orestes! Orestes! Health to the illustrious Prefect! Thanks for his liberty!' And a loud voice or two among the crowd cried, 'Hail to Orestes! Hail, Emperor of Africa!' But there was no response.

'The rose is still in the bud,' whispered Orestes to Hypatia. He rose, bowed and bowed the crowd into silence, and then, after a short pantomimic exhibition of rapturous gratitude and humility, pointed triumphantly to the palm avenue, among the shadows of which appeared the wonder of the day—the huge tusks and trunk of the white elephant himself.

There it was at last! Not a doubt of it! A real elephant, and yet as white as snow. Sight never seen before in Alexandria—never to be seen again! 'Oh, thrice blest men of Macedonia!' shouted some worthy on high, 'the gods are bountiful to you this day!' And all mouths and eyes confirmed the opinion, as they opened wide and set water to drink in the inexhaustible joy and glory.

On he paced solemnly, while the whole theatre resounded to his heavy tread, and the Fauns and Dryads led in train. A choir of nymphs swung round him hand in hand, and sang, as they danced along, the conquering might of Beauty, the triumph of breasts and men and deities. Skimming parties of little winged cupids sprang themselves over the orchestra, from left to right, and pelted the spectators with perfumed comfits, shot among them from their tiny bows arrows of fragrant sandal-wood, or swung smoking censers, which laden the air with intoxicating odours.

The procession came on down the slope, and the elephant approached the spectators, his tusks were wreathed with roses and myrtles, his ears were jewelled with splendid earrings, a jewelled frontlet hung between his eyes, Eros himself, a lovely winged boy, sat on his neck, and guided him with the point of a golden arrow. But what precious thing was it which that child formed car upon his back contained? The goddess! Pelagos Aphrodite herself!

Yes, whiter than the snow-white elephant more rosy than the pink tipped shell on which she lay, among crimson cushions and silver gauze, there shone the goddess, thrilling all hearts with those delicious smiles, and glances of the bashful playful eyes, and grateful wavings of her tiny hand, as the whole theatre rose with one accord, and ten thousand eyes were concentrated on the unequalled loveliness beneath them.

Twice the procession passed round the whole circumference of the orchestra, and then returning from the foot of the slope towards the central group around Hephestus, deployed right and left in front of the stage. The lions and tigers were led away into the side passages, the youths and maidens combined themselves with the gentler animals into groups lessening gradually from the centre to the wings, and stood expectant,

while the elephant came forward, and knelt behind the platform destined for the goddess.

The valves of the shell closed. The Graces unloosed the fastenings of the car. The elephant turned his trunk over his back, and, guided by the hands of the girls, grasped the shell, and lifting it high in air, deposited it on the steps at the back of the platform.

Hephaestus humped forward, and, with his most uncouth gestures, signified the delight which he had in bestowing such a sight upon his faithful uterine of Alexandria, and the unspeakable enjoyment which they were to expect from the mystic dance of the goddess, and then retired, leaving the Graces to advance in front of the platform, and with their arms twined round each other, began Hyppatia's song of invocation.

As the first strophe died away, the valves of the shell reopened, and discovered Aphrodite crouching on one knee within. She raised her head, and gazed around the vast circle of seats. A mild surprise was on her countenance, which quickened into delightful wonder, and bashfulness struggling with the sense of new enjoyment and new powers. She glanced downward at herself, and smiled, astonished at her own loveliness, then upward at the sky, and scoured wildly, with an awful joy, to spring up into the boundless void. Her whole figure dilated, she seemed to drink in strength from every object which met her in through the universe around, and slowly, from among the shells and seaweeds, she rose to her full height, the mystic cestus glittering round her waist, in deep festoons of emeralds and pearls, and stepped forward upon the marble sea-floor, wringing the dripping perfume from her locks, as Aphrodite rose of old.

For the first minute the crowd was too breathless with pleasure to think of applause. But the goddess seemed to require due homage, and when she folded her arms across her bosom, and stood motionless for an instant, as if to demand the worship of the universe, every tongue was loosed, and a thunderous clap of 'Aphrodite!' rang out across the roofs of Alexandria, and strayed Cyril in his chamber at the Serapeum, and weary innkeepers on distant sand hills, and dozing mariners far out at sea.

And then began a miracle of art, such as was only possible among a people of the free and exquisite physical training, and the delicate aesthetic perception of those old Greeks, even in their most fallen days. A dance, in which every motion was a word, and rest as eloquent as motion, in which every attitude was a fresh motive for a sculptor of the purest school, and the highest physical activity was manifested, not as in the coarser comic pantomimes, in fantastic bounds and unnatural distortions, but in perpetual delicate modulations of a stately and self-restraining grace. The artist was for the moment transformed into the goddess. The theatre, and Alexandria, and the gorgeous pageant beyond, had vanished from her imagination, and therefore from the imagination of the spectators, under the constraining inspiration of

her art, and they and she alike saw nothing but the lonely sea around Cythera, and the goddess hovering above its emerald mirror, rayed forth on sea, and air, and shore, beauty, and joy, and love.

Phanamon's eyes were bursting from his head with shame and horror, and yet he could not hate her, not even despise her. He would have done so, had there been the faintest trace of human feeling in her countenance to prove that some germ of moral sense lingered within; but even the hint bluish and the downcast eye with which she had entered the theatre were gone, and the only expression on her face was that of intense enjoyment of her own activity and skill, and satisfied vanity, as of a petted child.

Was she accountable? A reasonable soul, capable of right or wrong at all? He hoped not. He would trust not. And still Pelagia danced on, and for a whole age of agony, he could see nothing in heaven or earth but the bewitching maze of those white feet, as they twinkled over their white image in the marble mirror. At last it was over. Every limb suddenly collapsed, and she stood drooping in soft self-satisfied fatigue, awaiting the burst of applause which rang through Phanamon's ears, proclaiming to heaven and earth, as with a mighty trumpet-blast, his sister's shame.

The elephant rose, and moved forward to the side of the slab. His back was covered with crimson cushions, on which it seemed Aphrodite was to return without her shell. She folded her arms across her bosom, and stood smiling, as the elephant gently wreathed his trunk around her waist, and lifted her slowly from the slab, in act to place her on his back.

The little feet, clung, half fearfully together, had just risen from the marble.—The elephant started, dropped his delicate burden lightly on the slab, looked down, raised his forefoot, and throwing his trunk into the air, gave a shrill scream of terror and disgust.

The foot was red with blood—the young boy's blood—which was soaking and bubbling up through the fresh sand where the elephant had trodden, in a round, dark, purple spot.

Phanamon could bear no more. Another moment and he had tumbled down through the dense mass of spectators, clearing rank after rank of seats by the sheer strength of madness, leaped the balustrade into the orchestra below, and rushed across the space to the foot of the platform.

'Pelagia! Sister! My sister! Have mercy on me! on yourself! I will hide you! Save you! and we will flee together out of this infernal place! this world of devils! I am your brother! Come!'

She looked at him one moment with wide, wild eyes.—The truth flashed on her—

'Brother!'

And she sprang from the platform into his arms. A vision of a lofty window in Athens, looking out over far olive-yards and gardens, and the bright roofs and basins of the Piræus, and the broad blue sea, with the purple peaks

of *Ægina* beyond all . . . And a dark-eyed boy, with his arm around her neck, pointed laughing to the twinkling masts in the far harbour, and called her sister. The dead soul woke within her, and with a wild cry she recoiled from him in an agony of shame, and covering her face with both her hands, sank down among the blood-stained sand.

A yell, as of all hell broke loose, rang along that vast circle—

'Down with him!' 'Away with him!' 'Crucify the slave!' 'Give the barbarian to the beasts!' 'To the beasts with him, noble Prefect!' A crowd of attendants rushed upon him, and many of the spectators sprang from their seats, and were on the point of leaping down into the orchestra.

Philemon turned upon them like a lion at bay, and clear and loud his voice rose through the roar of the multitude.

'Ay! murder me as the Romans murdered Saint Telemachus! Slaves as besotted and accursed as your besotted and accursed tyrants! Lower than the beasts whom you employ as your butchers! Murder and let go fitly hand in hand, and the throne of my sister's shame is well built on the blood of innocents! Let my death end the devil's sacrifice, and fill up the cup of your iniquity!'

'To the beasts!' 'Make the elephant trample him to powder!'

And the huge brute, guided on by the attendants, rushed on the youth, while *Eias* leaped from his neck, and fled weeping up the slope.

He caught Philemon in his trunk and raised him high in air. For an instant the great bellowing ocean of heads spun round and round. He tried to breathe off prayer, and shut his eyes—Pelagia's voice rang sweet and clear, even in the shrillness of intense agony—

'Spare him! He is my brother! Forgive him, men of Macedonia! For Pelagia's sake—Yon Pelagia! One boon—only this one!'

And she stretched her arms imploringly toward the spectators, and then clasping the huge knees of the elephant, called maddly to it in terms of passionate entreaty and endearment.

The men wavered. The brute did not. Quietly he lowered his trunk, and set down Philemon on his feet. The monk was saved. Breathless and dizzy, he found himself hurried away by the attendants, dragged through dark passages, and hurled out into the street, with curses, warnings, and congratulations, which fell on an unheeding ear.

But Pelagia kept her face still hidden in her hands, and rising, walked slowly back, crushed by the weight of some tremendous awe, across the orchestra, and up the slope; and vanished among the palms and oleanders, regardless of the applause and entreaties, and jeers, and threats, and curses, of that great multitude of sinful slaves.

For a moment all Orestes's spells seemed broken by this unexpected catastrophe. A cloud, whether of disgust or of disappointment, hung

upon every brow. More than one Christian rose hastily to depart, touched with real remorse and shame at the horrors of which they had been the willing witnesses. The common people behind, having glistened their curiosity with all that there was to see, began openly to murmur at the cruelty and heathenry of it. Hypatia, utterly unnerved, hid her face in both her hands. Orestes alone rose with the crisis. Now, or never, was the time for action, and stepping forward, with his most graceful obeisance, waved his hand for silence, and began his well-studied oration.

'Let me not, O men of Macedonia, suppose that you can be disturbed from that equanimity which befits politicians, by so light an accident as the caprice of a dancer. The spectacle which I have had the honour and delight of exhibiting to you—(Roars and applause from the liberated prisoners and the young gentlemen) and on which it seemed to me you have deigned to look with not altogether unkindly eyes—(Fresh applause, in which the Christian mob, relenting, began to join)—is but a pleasant prelude to three more serious business for which I have drawn you here together. Other testimonials of my good intentions have not been wanting in the release of suffering innocents, and in the largesse of food, the growth and natural property of Egypt, destined by your late tyrants to pamper the luxury of a distant court. Why should I boast?—yet even now this hour is weary, these limbs fail me, worn out in ceaseless efforts for your welfare, and in the perpetual administration of the strictest justice. For a time has come in which the Macedonian race, whose boast is the gorgeous city of Alexander, must rise again to the political pre-eminence which they held of old, and becoming once more the masters of one-third of the universe, be treated by their rulers as freemen, citizens, heroes, who have a right to choose and to employ their rulers.

'Rulers, did I say? Let us forget the world, and substitute in its place the more philosophical terms of ministers. To be your minister—the servant of you all—To sacrifice myself, my leisure, health, life, if need be, to the one great object of securing the independence of Alexandria—This is my work, my hope, my glory—longed for through weary years now for the first time possible by the fall of the late puppet Emperor of Rome. Men of Macedonia, remember that Honorius reigns no more! An African sits on the throne of the Cæsars! Herakleus, by one decisive victory, has gained, by the favour of Heaven, the imperial purple, and a new era opens for the world. Let the conqueror of Rome balance his account with that Byzantine court, so long the incubus of our Trans-Mediterranean wealth and civilisation, and let a free, independent, and united Africa rally round the palaces and docks of Alexandria, and find there its natural centre of polity and of prosperity.'

A roar of hired applause interrupted him and not a few, half for the sake of his compli-

ments and fine words, half from a natural wish to be on the right side—namely, the one which happened to be in the ascendant for the time being—joined.

The city authorities were on the point of crying, 'Imperator Orestes,' but thought better of it, and waited for some one else to cry first—being respectable. Whereon the Prefect of the Guards, being a man of some presence of mind, and also not in anywise respectable, picked up the Prefect of the docks with the point of his dagger, and bade him, with a fearful threat, take care how he played traitor. The worthy burcher roared incontinently—whether with pain or patriotism, and the whole array of respectabilities—having found a Curtius who would leap into the gulf, joined in unanimous chorus, and saluted Orestes as Emperor, while Hypatia, amid the shouts of her aristocratic scholars, rose and knelt before him, withering inwardly with shame and despair, and entreating him to accept that titelage of Greek commerce, supremacy, and philosophy which was forced on him by the unanimous voice of an adoring people.

'It is false!' shouted a voice from the highest tiers, appropriated to the women of the lower classes, which made all turn their heads in bewilderment.

'False! false! you are tricked! He is tricked! Herachian was utterly routed at Ostia, and is fled to Carthage, with the emperor's fleet in chase.'

'She hes! Drag the beast down!' cried Orestes, utterly thrown off his balance by the sudden check.

'She? He! I, a monk, brought the news! Cyril has known it—every Jew in the Delta has known it, for a week just! So perish all the cunninges of the Lord, caught in their own snare!'

And bursting desperately through the women who surrounded him, the monk vanished. An awful silence fell on all who heard. For a minute every man looked in his neighbour's face as if he longed to cut his throat, and get rid of one witness, at least, of his treason. And then arose a tumult, which Orestes in vain attempted to subdue. Whether the populace believed the monk's words or not, they were panic-stricken at the mere possibility of their truth. Horses with denzing, protesting, appealing, the would-be emperor had at last to summon his guards around him and Hypatia, and make his way out of the theatre as best he could, while the multitude melted away like snow before the rain, and poured out into the streets in eddying and roaring streams, to find every church placarded by Cyril with the particulars of Herachian's ruin.

CHAPTER XXIII

NEMESIS

THAT evening was a hideous one in the palace of Orestes. His agonies of disappointment, rage,

and terror were at once so shameful and so fearful, that none of his slaves dare approach him, and it was not till late that his confidential secretary, the Chaldean eunuch, driven by terror of the exasperated Catholics, ventured into the tiger's den, and represented to him the immediate necessity for action.

What could he do? He was committed—Cyril only knew how deeply. What might not the wily archbishop have discovered? What might not he pretend to have discovered? What accusations might he not send off on the spot to the Byzantine Court?

'Let the gates be guarded, and no one allowed to leave the city,' suggested the Chaldee.

'Keep in monks? as well keep in rats! No, we must send off a counter-report, instantly.'

'What shall I say, your Excellency?' quoth the ready scribe, pulling out pen and inkhorn from his sash.

'What do I care? Any lie which comes to hand. What in the devil's name are you here for at all, but to invent a lie when I want one?'

'True, my lord, and the worthy set nimbly down to his paper—but did not proceed rapidly.'

'I don't see anything that would suit the emergency, unless I stated, with your august leave, that Cyril, and not you, celebrated the gladiatorial exhibition, which might hardly appear credible.'

Orestes burst out laughing, in spite of himself. The sleek Chaldee smiled and parried in return. The victory was won, and Orestes, somewhat more master of himself, began to turn his vulpine cunning to the one absorbing question of the saving of his worthless neck.

'No, that would be too good. Write, that we had discovered a plot on Cyril's part to incorporate the whole of the African churches (mind and speech Carthage and Hippo) under his own jurisdiction, and to throw off allegiance to the Patriarch of Constantinople, in case of Herachian's success.'

The secretary purred delighted approval, and scribbled away now with right good heart.

'Herachian's success, your Excellency.'

'We of course desired, by every means in our power, to gratify the people of Alexandria, and, as was our duty, to excite by every lawful method their loyalty toward the throne of the Cesars (never mind who sat on it) at so critical a moment.'

'So critical a moment.'

'But as faithful Catholics, and abhorring, even in the extremest need, the sin of Uzzah, we dreaded to touch with the unsanctified hands of laymen the consecrated ark of the Church, even though for its preservation.'

'Its preservation, your Excellency.'

'We, therefore, as civil magistrates, felt bound to confine ourselves to those means which were already allowed by law and custom to our jurisdiction, and accordingly made use of those largesses, spectacles, and public execution of rebels, which have unhappily appeared to his

holiness the patriarch (too ready, perhaps, to find a cause of complaint against faithful adherents of the Byzantine See) to partake of the nature of those ghastly exhibitions, which are equally abhorrent to the spirit of the Catholic Church, and to the charity of the sainted emperors by whose pious edicts they have been long since abolished.

'Your Excellency is indeed great—but pardon your slave's remark—my simplicity is of opinion that it may be asked why you did not inform the Augusta Pulchra of Cyril's conspiracy?'

'Say that we sent a messenger off three months ago, but that—Make something happen to him, stupid, and save me the trouble.'

'Shall I kill him by Arabs in the neighbourhood of Palmyra, your Excellency?'

'Let me see—No. They may make inquiries there. Drown him at sea. Nobody can ask questions of the sharks.'

'Foundered between Tyre and Crete, from which sad calamity only one man escaped on a raft, and being picked up, after three weeks' exposure to the fury of the elements, by a returning wheat-ship—By the way, most noble, what am I to say about those wheat-ships not having even sailed?'

'Head of Augustus! I forgot them utterly. Say that—say that the plague was making such ravages in the harbour quarter that we feared carrying the infection to the seat of the empire, and let them sail to-morrow.'

The secretary's face lengthened.

'My fidelity is compelled to remark, even at the risk of your just indignation, that half of them have been unloaded again in your munificent largesses of the last two days.'

Orestes swore a great oath.

'Oh, that the numb had but one throat, that I might give them an emetic! Well, we must buy more corn, that's all.'

The secretary's face grew longer still.

'The Jews, most august—'

'What of them?' yelled the hapless Prefect.

'Have they been forestalling?'

'My assiduity has discovered this afternoon that they have been buying up and exporting all the provisions which they could obtain.'

'Scoundrels! Then they must have known of Heraclian's failure!'

'Your sagacity has, I fear, divined the truth. They have been betting largely against his success for the last week, both in Canopus and Pelusium.'

'For the last week! Then Miriam betrayed me knowingly! And Orestes broke forth again into a paroxysm of fury.

'Here—call the tribune of the guard! A hundred gold pieces to the man who brings me the witch alive!'

'She will never be taken alive.'

'Dead, then—in any way! Go, you Chaldees hound! What are you hesitating about?'

'Most noble lord,' said the secretary, prostrating himself upon the floor, and kissing his

master's feet in an agony of fear. 'Remember, that if you touch one Jew you touch all! Remember the bonds! Remember the—the—your own most august reputation, in short.'

'Get up, brute, and don't grovel there, but tell me what you mean, like a human being! If old Miriam is once dead, her bonds die with her, don't they?'

'Alas, my lord, you do not know the customs of that accursed folk. They have a damnable practice of treating every member of their nation as a brother, and helping each other and faithfully without reward; whereby they are enabled to plunder all the rest of the world, and thrive themselves, from the least to the greatest. Don't fancy that your bonds are in Miriam's hands. They have been transferred months ago. Your real creditors may be in Carthage, or Rome, or Byzantium, and they will attack you from thence, while all that you would find if you seized the old witch's property, would be papers, useless to you, belonging to Jews all over the empire, who would rise as one man in defence of their money. I assure you, it is a net without a bottom. If you touch me you touch all. And besides, my diligence, expecting some such command, has already taken the liberty of making inquiries as to Miriam's place of abode, but it appears, I am sorry to say, utterly unknown to any of your Excellency's servants.'

'You lie!' said Orestes. 'I would much sooner believe that you have been warning the hag to keep out of the way.'

Orestes had spoken, for that once in his life, the exact truth. The secretary, who had his own private dealings with Miriam, felt every particular atom of his skin shudder at those words, and had he had hair on his head, it would certainly have betrayed him by standing visibly on end. But as he was, luckily for him, close shaven, his turban remained in its proper place, as he meekly replied—

'Alas! a faithful servant can feel no keener sorrow than the careless suspicion of that sin before whose rays he daily prostrates his—'

'Confound your periphrases! Do you know where she is?'

'No!' cried the wretched secretary, driven to the last extremity, and confirmed the negation with such a string of oaths, that Orestes stopped his volubility with a kick, borrowed of him, under threat of torture, a thousand gold pieces as largess to the solihery, and ended by concentrating the stationaries round his own palace, for the double purpose of protecting himself in case of a riot, and of increasing the chances of the said riot, by leaving the distant quarters of the city without police.

'If Cyril would but make a fool of himself, now that he is in the full-blown pride of victory—the rascal!—about that Ammonius, or about Hypatia, or anything else, and give me a real handle against him! After all, truth works better than lying now and then. Oh, that I

could poison him! But one can't bribe those ecclesiastics, and as for the dagger, one could not hire a man to be torn in pieces by monks. No, I must just sit still, and see what Fortune's dice may turn up. Well, your pedants like Aristides or Epaminondas—thank Heaven, the race of them has died out long ago!—might call this no very creditable piece of provincial legislation, but after all, it is about as good as any now going, or likely to be going till the world's end, and one can't be expected to strike out a new path. I shall stick to the wisdom of my predecessors, and—oh, that Cyril may make a fool of himself to-night!

And Cyril did make a fool of himself that night, for the first and last time in his life, and suffers for it, as wise men are wont to do when they err, to this very day and hour. But how much Orestes gained by his father's false move cannot be decided till the end of this story, perhaps not even then.

CHAPTER XXIV

LOST LAMBS

AND PHILAMMON!

For a long while he stood in the street outside the theatre, too much stunned to determine on any course of action, and, ere he had recovered his self-possession, the crowd began to pour from every outlet, and filling the street, swept him away in its stream.

Then, as he heard his sister's name, in every tone of pity, contempt, and horror, mingle with their angry exclamations, he awoke from his dream, and, hursting through the mob, made straight for Pelagia's house.

It was fast closed, and his repeated knocks at the gate brought only, after long waiting, a surly negro face to a little wicket.

He asked eagerly and instinctively for Pelagia, of course she had not yet returned. For Wulf he was not within. And then he took his station close to the gateway, while his heart beat loud with hope and dread.

At last the Goths appeared, forcing their way through the mob in a close column. There were no hitters with them. Where, then, were Pelagia and her girls? Where, too, was the hated figure of the Anax and Wulf, and Smid? The man came on, led by Goderie and Agalmond, with folded arms, knitted brows, downcast eyes, a stern disgust, not unmingled with shame on every countenance, told Philammon afresh of his sister's infamy.

Goderie passed him close, and Philammon summoned up courage to ask for Wulf.

Pelagia he had not courage to name.

'Out, Greek hound! we have seen enough of your accursed race to-day! What? are you trying to follow us in?' And the young man's sword flashed from its sheath so swiftly, that Philammon had but just time enough to spring

back into the street, and wait there, in an agony of disappointment and anxiety, as the gates shut together again, and the house was as silent as before.

For a miserable hour he waited, while the mob thickened instead of flowing away, and the scattered groups of chattering began to form themselves into masses, and parade the streets with shouts of 'Down with the heathen!' 'Down with the idolaters!' 'Vengeance on all blaspheming hatlots!'

At last the steady tramp of legionaries, and in the midst of the glittering lines of armed men—oh, joy!—a string of hitters!

He sprang forward, and called Pelagia's name again and again. Once he fancied he heard an answer—but the soldiers thrust him back.

'She is safe here, young fool, and has been and been seen quite enough to-day already. Back!'

'Let me speak to her!'

'That is her business. Ours is now to see her home safe!'

'Let me go in with you, I beseech!'

'If you want to go in, knock for yourself when we are gone. If you have any business in the house, they will open to you, I suppose. Out, you interfering puppy!'

And a blow of the spear butt in his chest sent him rolling back into the middle of the street, while the soldiers, having delivered up their charge, returned with the same stolid indifference. In vain Philammon, returning, knocked at the gate—times and threats from the negro were all the answer which he received, and at last, worn into desperation, he waded away, up one street and down another, struggling in vain to form some plan of action for himself, until the sun was set.

Wearily he went homewards at last. Once the thought of Miriam crossed his mind. It was a disgusting alternative to ask help of her, the very author of his sister's shame. But yet she at least could obtain for him a sight of Pelagia, she had promised as much. But then the condition which she had appended to her help! To see his sister, and yet to leave her as she was!—Horrible contradiction! But could he not employ Miriam for his own ends?—outwit her!—deceive her!—for it came to that. The temptation was intense, but it lasted only a moment. 'Could he dole so pure a cause by falsehood?' And hurrying past the Jewess's door, hardly daring to look at it, lest the temptation should return, he darted upstairs to his own little chamber, hastily flung open the door, and stopped short in astonishment.

A woman, covered from head to foot in a large dark veil, stood in the centre of the chamber.

'Who are you? This is no place for you!' cried he, after a minute's pause. She replied only by a shudder and a sob. . . . He caught sight, beneath the folds of the veil, of a too well-known sallow shawl, and springing upon her like the lion on the lamb, clasped to his bosom his sister.

The veil fell from her beautiful forehead. She gazed into his eyes one moment with a look of tranced inquiry, and saw nothing there but love. And clinging heart to heart, brother and sister mingled holy kisses, and strained nearer and nearer still, as if to satisfy their last lingering doubts of each other's kin.

Many a minute passed in silent joy. Philammon dare not speak, he dare not ask her what brought her thither—dare not wake her to recollect the frightful present by questions of the past, of his long-forgotten parents, their home, her history. And, after all, was it not enough for him that he held her at last? her, there by her own will—the lost lamb returned to him?—and their tears mingled as their cheeks were pressed together.

At last she spoke.

'I ought to have known you, I believe I did know you from the first day.' When they mentioned your likeness to me, my heart leapt up within me, and a voice whispered, 'but I would not hear it.' I was ashamed—ashamed to acknowledge my brother, for whom I had sought and longed for years. I was ashamed to think that I had a brother. Ah, God! and ought I not to be ashamed?'

And she broke from him again, and threw herself on the floor.

'Trample upon me, curse me! anything but part me from him!'

Philammon had not the heart to answer her, but he made an involuntary gesture of sorrowful dissent.

'No! Call me what I am—what he called me just now! but do not take me away! Strike me, as he struck me! anything but parting!'

'Struck you? The curse of God be on him!'

'Ah, do not curse him!—not him! It was not a blow, indeed! only a jerk—a touch—and it was my fault—all mine. I angered him. I upbraided him—I was mad. Oh, why did he deceive me? Why did he let me dance?—command me to dance?'

'Command you?'

'He said that we must not break our words. He would not hear me, when I told him that we could deny having promised. I said that promises made over the wine need never be kept.'

Who ever heard of keeping them? And Orestes was drunk, too. But he said that I might teach a Goth to be what I liked, except a liar. Was not that a strange speech?'

'And Wulf bade him be strong, and blast him for it.'

'He was right,' sobbed Philammon.

'Then I thought he would love me for abusing him, though I loathed it!—Oh, God, how I loathed it! But how could I fancy that he did not like my doing it? Who ever heard of any one doing of their own will what they did not like?'

Philammon sobbed again, as the poor civilised savage artlessly opened to him all her moral darkness. What could he say? He knew

what to say. The disease was so utterly patent, that any of Cyril's school-children could have supplied the remedy. But how to speak it? how to tell her, before all things, as he longed to do, that there was no hope of her muzzling the Aimal, and, therefore, no peace for her till she left him.

'Then you did hate the—the—' and he, at last, catching at some gleam of light.

'Hate it? Do I not belong, body and soul, to him?—him only? And yet—Oh, I must tell you all! When I and the girls began to practise, all the old feelings came back—the love of being admired, and applauded, and cheered, and dandied is so delicious! so delicious to feel that you are doing anything beautiful perfectly, and better than every one else! And he saw that I liked it, and despised me for it. And, deceitful! he

little guessed how much of the pains which I took were taken to please him, to do my best to fascinate him, to win admiration, only that I might take it home and throw it all at his beloved feet, and make the world say once more, "She has all Alexandria to worship her, and yet she cares but that one Goth more than her—!" But he deceived me, true man that he is! He wished to enjoy my smirks to the last moment, and then to cast me off, when I had once given him an excuse.

'Too cowardly to upbraid me, he let me run myself, to save him the trouble of running me. Oh, men, men! all alike! They love us for their own sakes, and we love them for love's sake. We live by love, we die for love, and yet we never find it, but only selfishness dressed up in love's mask.

And then we take up with that, poor, fond, self-blinded creatures that we are!—and in spite of the poisoned hearts around us, persuade ourselves that our latest esp's egg, at least, will hatch into a dove, and that though all men be faithless, our own traitor can never change, for he is more than man!'

'But he has deceived you! You have found out your mistake. Leave him, then, as he deserves.'

Pelagia looked up, with something of a tender smile. 'Poor darling! little do you know of love!'

Philammon, utterly bewildered by this new and strangest phase of human passion, could only gasp out.

'But do you not love me, too, my sister?'

'Do I not love you? But not as I love him! Oh, hush, hush! you cannot understand yet! And Pelagia hid her face in her hands, while convulsive shudderings ran through every limb.

'I must do it! I must! I will dare everything, stoop to everything for love's sake! Go to her! to the wise woman—to Hypatia! She loves you! I know that she loves you! She will hear you, though she will not me!'

'Hypatia! Do you know that she was sitting there unmoved at—in the theatre?'

'She was forced! Orestes compelled her!'

Miriam told me so. And I saw it in her face. As I passed beneath her, I looked up, and she was as pale as ivory, trembling in every limb. There was a dark hollow round her eyes—she had been weeping, I saw. And I sneered in my mind self-conceit, and said, "She looks as if she was going to be brushed, not married!" But now, now!—Oh, go to her! Tell her that I will give her all I have—jewels, money, dresses, house! Tell her that I—I—entreat her pardon, that I will crawl to her feet myself and ask it, if she requires!—Only let her teach me—teach me to be wise and good, and honoured, and respected, as she is! Ask her to tell a poor broken-hearted woman her secret. She can make old Wulf, and him, and Orates even, and the magistrates, respect her. Ask her to teach me how to be like her, and to make him respect me again, and I will give her all an!"

Philammon hesitated. Something within warned him, as the Demon used to warn Socrates, that his errand would be bootless. He thought of the theatre, and of that firm, compressed lip, and forgot the hollow eye of misery which accompanied it, in his wrath against his lately worshipped idol.

"Oh, go! go! I tell you it was against her will. She told for me—I saw it!—Oh, God!—when I did not feel for myself!" And I hated her, because she seemed to despise me in my fool's triumph! She cannot despise me now in my misery. Go! Go! or you will drive me to the agony of going myself."

"There was but one thing to be done. 'You will wait, then, here! You will not leave me again?'

"Yes. But you must be quick! If he finds out that I am away, he may fancy. Ah, heaven! let him kill me, but never let him be jealous of me! Go now! this moment! Take this as an earnest—the cestus which I wore there. Horrid thing! I hate the sight of it! But I brought it with me on purpose, or I would have thrown it into the canal. There, say it is in earnest—only an earnest—of what I will give her!"

In ten minutes more Philammon was in Hypatia's hall. The household seemed full of terror and disturbance, the hall was full of soldiers. At last Hypatia's favourite maid passed, and knew him. Her mistress could not speak with any one. Where was Theon, then? He, too, had shut himself up. Never mind. Philammon must, would speak with him. And he pleaded so passionately and so sweetly, that the soft-hearted damsel, unable to resist so handsome a suppliant, undertook his errand, and led him up to the library, where Theon, pale as death, was pacing to and fro, apparently half beside himself with terror.

Philammon's breathless message fell at first upon unheeding ears.

"A new pupil, sir! Is this a time for pupils, when my house, my daughter's life, is not safe? Wretch that I am! And have I led her into

the snare? I, with my vain ambition and covetousness! Oh, my child! my child! my one treasure! Oh, the double curse which will light upon me, if—"

"She asks for but one interview."

"With my daughter, sir? Pelagia! Will you insult me? Do you suppose, even if her own pity should so far tempt her to degrade herself, that I could allow her so to contaminate her purity?"

"Your terror, sir, excuses your rudeness."

"Rudeness, sir? the rudeness lies in your intruding on us at such a moment!"

"Then this, perhaps, may, in your eyes at least, excuse me in my turn." And Philammon held out the cestus. "You are a better judge of its value than I. But I am commissioned to say, that it is only an earnest of what she will give willingly and at once, even to the half of her wealth, for the honour of becoming your daughter's pupil." And he laid the jewelled girdle on the table.

The old man halted in his walk. The emeralds and pearls shone like the galaxy. He looked at them, and walked on again more slowly. What might be their value? What might it not be? At least, they would pay all his debts.

And after hovering to and fro for another minute before the hut, he turned to Philammon. "If you would promise to mention the thing to no one—"

"I will promise."

"And in case my daughter, as I have a right to expect, shall refuse—"

"Let her keep the jewels. Their owner has harmed, thank God, to despise and hate them! Let her keep the jewels—and my curse! For God do so to me, and more also, if I ever see her face again!"

The old man had not heard the latter part of Philammon's speech. He had seized his hat as greedily as a crocodile, and hurried off with it into Hypatia's chamber, while Philammon stood expectant, possessed with a new and fearful doubt. "Degrade herself!" "Contaminate her purity!" It that notion were to be the hint of all her philosophy! If selfishness, pride, Pharisaism, were all its outcome! Why—had they not been its outcome already? When had he seen her helping, even pitying, the poor, the outcast? When had he heard from her one word of real sympathy for the sorrowing, for the sinful? He was still lost in thought when Thron re-entered, bringing a letter.

"From Hypatia to her well-beloved pupil!"

"I pity you—how should I not! And more I thank you for this your request, for it shows me that my unwilling presence at the hideous pageant of to-day has not alienated from me a soul of which I had cherished the noblest hopes, for which I had sketched out the loftiest destiny. But how shall I say it? Ask yourself whether a change—apparently impossible—must not take place in her for whom you plead, before she and I can meet. I am not so inhuman as

to blame you for having asked me, I do not even blame her for being what she is. She does but follow her nature, who can be angry with her, if destiny have informed so far an animal with a too gross and earthly spirit? Why weep over her? Dust she is, and unto dust she will return while you, to whom a more divine spark was allotted at your birth, must rise, and surmounting, leave below you one only connected with you by the unreal and fleeting bonds of fleshly kin.

Philammon crushed the letter together in his hand, and strode from the house without a word.

The philosopher had no gospel, then, for the harlot? No word for the sinner, the degraded? Destiny forsooth! She was to follow her destiny, and be base, miserable, self-condemned. She was to crush the voice of conscience and reason, as often as it awoke within her, and compel herself to believe that she was bound to be that which she knew herself bound not to be. She was to shut her eyes to that present palpable misery which was preaching to her, with the voice of God Himself, that the wages of sin are death. Dust she was, and unto dust she will return! Oh, glorious hope for her, for him, who felt as if an eternity of bliss would be worthless, if it parted him from his new found treasure! Dust she was, and unto dust she must return!

Hark ye Hypatia! If she must needs misapprehend the fashion of her school, a text or two here and there from the Hebrew Scriptures, what suicidal fantasy set her on quoting that one? For now, upon Philammon's memory flashed up in letters of light, old words forgotten for months—and ere he was aware, he found himself repeating aloud and passionately, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting,' and then clear and fair arose before him the vision of the God incarnate, as He lay at meat in the Pharisee's house, and of her who washed His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. And from the depths of his agonised heart arose the prayer, 'Blessed Magdalene, intercede for her!'

So high he could rise, but not beyond. For the notion of that God man was revealing fast to more and more awful abyssal heights, in the minds of a generation who were so getting His love in His power, and practically losing sight of His humanity in their eager doctrinal assertion of His Divinity. And Philammon's heart re-echoed the spirit of his age, when he felt that for an apostate like himself it were presumptuous to entreat for any light or help from the fountain-head itself. He who had denied his Lord, he who had voluntarily cut himself off from the communion of the Catholic Church—how could he restore himself? How could he appease the wrath of Him who died on the cross, save by years of bitter supplication and self-punishment?

'Fool! Vain and ambitious fool that I have

been! For this I threw away the faith of my childhood! For this I listened to words at which I shuddered, crushed down my own doubts and doubts, tried to persuade myself that I could reconcile them with Christianity—that I could make a lie fit into the truth! For this I puffed myself up in the vain hope of becoming not as other men are—superior, forsooth, to my kind! It was not enough for me to be a man made in the image of God, but I must needs become a god myself, knowing good and evil—And here is the end! I call upon my fine philosophy to help me once, in one real practical human struggle, and it folds its arms and sits serene and silent, smiling upon my misery! Oh! fool, fool, thou art filled with the fruit of thy own devices! Back to the old faith! Home again, thou wanderer! And yet how home? Are not the gates shut against me? Perhaps against her too. What if she, like me, were a baptized Christian?'

Terrible and all but hopeless that thought flashed across him, as in the first revelation of his conscience he plunged utterly and implicitly back again into the faith of his childhood, and all the dark and cruel theories popular in his day rose up before him in all their terrors. In the innocent simplicity of the Laura he had never felt their force, but he felt them now. If Pelagia were a baptized woman, what was before her but unceasing penance? Before her, as before him, a life of cold and hunger, groans and tears, loneliness and hideous soul-sackening uncertainty. Life was a dungeoning for them both henceforth. Be it so! There was nothing else to believe in. No other rock of hope in earth or heaven. That at least promised a possibility of forgiveness, of unobdurate, of virtue, of reward—ay, of everlasting bliss and glory, and even if she missed of that, better for her the cell in the desert than a life of self-contented impurity! If that latter were her destiny, as Hypatia said, she should at least be fighting against it, defying it, cursing it! Better virtue with hell, than sin with heaven! And Hypatia had not even promised her a heaven. The resurrection of the flesh was the carnal notion for her refined and lofty creed. And so, his four months' dream swept away in a moment, he hurried back to his chamber, with one fixed thought before him—the desert, a cell for Pelagia, another for himself. There they would repent, and pray, and mourn out life side by side, if perhaps God would have mercy upon their souls. Yet—perhaps, she might not have been baptized after all. And then she was safe. Like other converts from paganism, she might become a catechumen, and go on to baptism, where the mystic water would wash away in a moment all the past, and she would begin life afresh, in the spotless robes of innocence. Yet he had been baptized, he knew from Arsenius, before he left Athens, and she was older than he. It was all but impossible yet he would hope, and breathless with anxiety and excitement, he ran up the narrow stairs and found Miriam standing outside, her hand upon

the bolt, apparently inclined to dispute his passage.

'Is she still within?'

'What if she be?'

'Let me pass into my own room.'

'Yours? Who has been paying the rent for you, these four months past? You! What can you say to her? What can you do for her? Young pedant, you must be in love yourself before you can help poor creatures who are in love.'

But Philammon pushed past her so fiercely, that the old woman was forced to give way, and with a sinister smile she followed him into the chamber.

Pelagia sprang towards her brother

'Will she?—will she see me?'

'Let us talk no more of her, my beloved,' said Philammon, laying his hands gently on her trembling shoulders, and looking earnestly into her eyes. 'Better that we two should work out our deliverance for ourselves, without the help of strangers. You can trust me.'

'You! And can you help me? Will you teach me?'

'Yes, but not here.'

'We must escape—'

Nay, hear me, one moment! dearest sister, hear me! Are you so happy here that you can conceive of no better place? And—and, oh, God! that it may not be true after all—but is there not a hell hereafter?'

Pelagia covered her face with her hands—'The old monk warned me of it!'

'Oh, take his warning.'

And Philammon was bursting forth with some such words about the lake of fire and brimstone as he had been accustomed to hear from Pambo and Arcemus, when Pelagia interrupted him—

'Oh, Miriam! Is it true? Is it possible? What will become of me?' almost shrieked the poor child.

'What if it were true?—Let him tell you how he will save you from it,' answered Miriam quietly.

'Will not the Gospel save her from it—unbelieving Jew? Do not contradict me! I can save her.'

'If she does what?'

'Can she not repent? Can she not mortify these base affections? Can she not be forgiven? Oh, my Pelagia! forgive me for having dreamed one moment that I could make you a philosopher, when you may be a saint of God, a—'

He stopped short suddenly, as the thought about baptism flashed across him, and in a faltering voice asked, 'Are you baptized?'

'Baptized?' asked she, hardly understanding the term.

'Yes—by the bishop—in the church.'

'Ah,' she said, 'I remember now. . . . When I was four or five years old. . . . A tank, and women undressing. . . . And I was bathed thrice, and an old man dipped my head under the water three times. . . . I have forgotten what it all meant—it was so long ago. I wore a white dress, I know, afterwards.'

Philammon recoiled with a groan.

BY.

'Unhappy child! May God have mercy on you!'

'Will He not forgive me, then? You have forgiven me. He?—He must be more good even than you—Why not?'

'He forgave you then, freely, when you were baptized, and there is no second pardon unless—'

'Unless I leave my lover!' shrieked Pelagia.

'When the Lord forgave the blessed Magdalene freely, and told her that her faith had saved her—did she live on in sin, or even in the pleasures of this world? No! though God had forgiven her, she could not forgive herself. She fled forth into the desert, and there, naked and barefoot, clothed only with her hair, and feeding on the herb of the field, she stayed fasting and praying till her dying day, never seeing the face of man, but visited and comforted by angels and archangels. And if she, she who never fell again, needed that long penance to work out her own salvation—oh, Pelagia, what will not God require of you, who have broken your baptismal vows, and defiled these hute robes, which the tears of penance only can wash clean once more!'

'But I did not know! I did not ask to be baptized! Cruel, cruel parents, to bring me to it! And God! Oh, why did He forgive me so soon? And to go into the deserts! I dare not! I cannot! See me, how delicate and tender I am! I should die of hunger and cold! I should go mad with fear and loneliness! Oh! brother, brother, is this the Gospel of the Christians? I came to you to be taught how to be wise, and good, and respected, and you tell me that all I can do is to live this horrible life of torture here, on the chance of escaping torture for ever! And how do I know that I shall escape it? How do I know that I shall make myself miserable enough? How do I know that He will forgive me after all? Is this true, Miriam? Tell me, or I shall go mad!'

'Yes,' said Miriam, with a quiet sneer. 'This is the gospel and good news of salvation, according to the doctrine of the Nazarenes.'

'I will go with you!' cried Philammon. 'I will go! I will never leave you! I have my own sins to wash away!—Happy for me if I ever do it!—And I will build you a cell near mine, and kind men will teach us, and we will pray together night and morning, for ourselves and for each other, and weep out our weary lives together—'

'Better end them here, at once!' said Pelagia, with a gesture of despair, and dashed herself down on the floor.

Philammon was about to lift her up, when Miriam caught him by the arm, and in a hurried whisper—'Are you mad? Will you ruin your own purpose? Why did you tell her this? Why did you not wait—give her hope—time to collect herself—time to wean herself from her lover, instead of terrifying and disgusting her at the outset, as you have done? Have you a man's heart in you? No word of comfort for that poor creature, nothing but hell, hell, hell—See to

your own chance of hell first ! It is greater than you fancy !

'It cannot be greater than I fancy.'

'Then see to it. For her, poor darling !—why, even we Jews, who know that all you Gentiles are doomed to Gehenna alike, have some sort of hope for such a poor untaught creature as that.'

'And why is she untaught ? Wretch that you are ! You have had the training of her ! You brought her up to sin and shame ! You drove from her recollection the faith in which she was baptized !'

'So much the better for her, if the recollection of it is to make her no happier than it does already. Better to wake unexpectedly in Gehenna when you die, than to endure over and above the dread of it here. And as for leaving her untaught, on your own showing she has been taught too much already. Wiser it would be in you to curse your parents for having had her baptized, than me for giving her ten years' pleasure before she goes to the pit of Tophet. Come now, don't be angry with me. The old Jewess is your friend, revile her as you will. She shall marry this Goth.'

'An Arian heretic !'

'She shall convert him and make a Catholic of him, if you like. At all events, if you wish to win her, you must win her my way. You have had your chance, and spoiled it. Let me have mine. Pelagia, darling ! Up, and be a woman ! We will find a philtre downstairs to give that ungrateful man, that shall make him more mad about you, before a day is over than ever you were about him.'

'No !' said Pelagia, looking up. 'No love-potions ! No poisons !'

'Poisons, little fool ! Do you doubt the old woman's skill ? Do you think I shall make him lose his wits, as Calistophyria did to her lover last year, because she would trust to old Megra's drugs, instead of coming to me !'

'No ! No drugs, no magic ! He must love me really, or not at all ! He must love me for myself, because I am worth loving, because he honours, worships me, or let me die. I, whose boast was, even when I was basest, that I never needed such mean tricks, but conquered like Aphrodite, a queen in my own right ! I have been my own love charm : when I cease to be that, let me die !'

'One as mad as the other !' cried Miriam, in utter perplexity. 'Hush ! what is that tramp upon the stairs ?'

At this moment heavy footsteps were heard ascending the stairs. All three stopped aghast. Philammon, because he thought the visitors were monks in search of him ; Miriam, because she thought they were Orestes's guards in search of her, and Pelagia, from vague dread of anything and everything.

'Have you an inner room ?' asked the Jewess.

'None.'

The old woman set her lips firmly, and drew her dagger. Pelagia wrapped her face in her

cloak, and stood trembling, bowed down, as if expecting another blow. The door opened, and in walked, neither monks nor guard, but Wulf and Smid.

'Hildday, young monk !' cried the latter worthy, with a loud laugh. 'Veils here, too, eh ! At your old trade, my worthy portress of hell-gate ! Well, walk out now, we have a little business with this young gentleman.'

And slipping past the unsuspecting Goths, Pelagia and Miriam hurried downstairs.

'The young one, at least, seems a little ashamed of her errand. Now, Wulf, speak low ; and I will see that no one is listening at the door.'

Philammon faced his unexpected visitors with a look of angry inquiry. What right had they, or any man, to intrude at such a moment on his misery and disgrace ! But he was disarmed the next instant by old Wulf, who advanced to him, and looking him fully in the face with an expression which there was no mistaking, held out his broad, brown hand.

Philammon grasped it, and then covering his face with his hands, burst into tears.

'You did right. You are a brave boy. If you had died, no man need have been ashamed to die your death.'

'You were there, then ?' sobbed Philammon.

'We were.'

'And what is more,' said Smid, as the poor boy writhed at the admission, 'we were mightily minded, some of us, to have leapt down to you and cut you a passage out. One man, at least, whom I know of, felt his old blood as hot for the minute as a four-year-old's. The foul curs ! And to hoot her, after all ! Oh that I may have one good hour's hewing at them before I die !'

'And you shall !' said Wulf. 'Boy, you wish to get this sister of yours into your power.'

'It is hopeless—hopeless ! She will never leave her—the Amal !'

'Are you so sure of that ?'

'She told me so with her own lips not ten minutes ago. That was she who went out as you entered !'

A curse of astonishment and regret burst from Smid.

'Had I but known her ! By the soul of my fathers, she should have found that it was easier to come here than to go home again !'

'Hush, Smid ! Better as it is. Boy, if I put her into your power, dare you carry her off ?'

Philammon hesitated one moment.

'What I dare you know already. But it would be an unlawful thing, surely, to use violence.'

'Settle your philosopher's doubts for yourself. I have made my offer. I should have thought that a man in his senses could give but one answer, much more a mad monk.'

'You forget the money matters, prince,' said Smid, with a smile.

'I do not. But I don't think the boy so mean as to hesitate on that account.'

'He may as well know, however, that we

promise to send all her trumpery after her, even to the Amal's presents. As for the house, we won't trouble her to lend it us longer than we can help. We intend shortly to move into more extensive premises, and open business on a grander scale, as the shopkeepers say,—eh, prince!

'Her money!—That money! God forgive her!' answered Philammon. 'Do you fancy me base enough to touch it? But I am resolved! Tell me what to do, and I will do it.'

'You know the lane which runs down to the canal, under the left wall of the house!'

'Yea.'

'And a door in the corner tower, close to the landing-place!'

'I do.'

'Be there, with a dozen stout monks, to-morrow, an hour after sundown, and take what we give you. After that, the concern is yours, not ours.'

'Monks!' said Philammon. 'I am at open feud with the whole order.'

'Make friends with them, then,' shortly suggested Smid.

Philammon writhed inwardly. 'It makes no difference to you, I presume, whom I bring?'

'No more than ~~it~~ does whether or not you pitch her into the canal, and put a hurdle over her when you have got her,' answered Smid, 'which is what a Goth would do, if he were in your place.'

'Do not vex the poor lad, friend. If he thinks he can mend her instead of punishing her, in Freya's name, let him try. You will be there, then? And mind, I like you. I liked you when you faced that great river-hog. I like you better now than ever; for you have spoken to-day like a Sagaman, and dared like a hero. Therefore mind, if you do not bring a good guard to-morrow night, your life will not be safe. The whole city is out in the streets, and Odin alone knows what will be done, and who will be alive, eight-and-forty hours hence. Mind you!—The mob may do strange things, and they may see still stranger things done. If you once find yourself safe back here, stay where you are, if you value her life or your own. And—if you are wise, let the men whom you bring with you be monks, though it cost your proud stomach—'

'That's not fear, prince! You are telling too much!' interrupted Smid, while Philammon gulped down the said proud stomach, and answered, 'Be it so!'

'I have won my bet, Smid,' said the old man, chuckling, as the two tramped out into the street, to the surprise and fear of all the neighbours, while the children clapped their hands, and the street dogs felt it their duty to bark lustily at the strange figures of their unwonted visitors.

'No play, no pay, Wulf. We shall see to-morrow.'

'I knew that he would stand the trial! I knew he was right at heart!'

'At all events, there is no fear of his ill-using the poor thing, if he loves her well enough to go down on his knees to his sworn foes for her.'

'I don't know that,' answered Wulf, with a shake of the head. 'These monks, I hear, fancy that their God likes them the better the more miserable they are—so, perhaps they may fancy that he will like them all the more, the more miserable they make other people. However, it's no concern of ours.'

'We have quite enough of our own to see to just now. But mind, no play, no pay.'

'Of course not. How the streets are filling! We shall not be able to see the guards to-night, if this mob thickens much more.'

'We shall have enough to do to hold our own, perhaps. Do you hear what they are crying there? "Down with all heathens! Down with barbarians!" That means us, you know.'

'Do you fancy no one understands Greek but yourself? Let them come. It may give us an excuse. And we can hold the house a week.'

'But how can we get speech of the guards?'

'We will slip round by water. And, after all, deeds will win them better than talk. They will be forced to fight on the same side as we, and most probably be glad of our help, for if the mob attacks any one, it will begin with the Prefect.'

'And then—Curse their shouting! Let the soldiers once find our Amal at their head, and they will be ready to go with him a mile, where they meant to go a yard.'

'The Goths will, and the Markmen, and those Dacians, and Thracians, or whatever the Romans call them. But I hardly trust the Huns.'

'The curse of heaven on their pudding faces and pigs' eyes! There will be no love lost between us. But there are not twenty of them scattered in different troops, one of us can thrash three of them, and they will be sure to side with the winning party. Besides, plunder, plunder, comrades! When did you know a Hun turn back from that, even if he were only on the scent of a lump of tallow?'

'As for the Gauls and Latins,' went on Wulf meditatively, 'they belong to any man who can pay them.'

'Which we can do, like all wise generals, one penny out of our own pocket, and nine out of the enemy's. And the Amal is staunch.'

'Staunch as his own hounds, now there is something to be done on the spot. His heart was in the right place after all. I knew it all along. But he could never in his life see four-and-twenty hours before him. Even now if that Pelagia gets him under her spell again, he may throw down his sword, and fall as fast asleep as ever.'

'Never fear; we have settled her destiny for her, as far as that is concerned. Look at the mob before the door! We must get in by the postern-gate.'

'Got in by the sewer, like a rat! I go my

own way. Draw, old hammer and tongs! or run away!

'Not this time' And sword in hand, the two marched into the heart of the crowd, who gave way before them like a flock of sheep.

'They know their intended shepherds already,' said Smid. But at that moment the crowd, seeing them about to enter the house, raised a yell of 'Goths! Heathens! Barbarians!' and a rush from behind took place.

'If you will have it, then!' said Wulf. And the two long bright blades flashed round and round their heads, redder and redder every time they swung aloft. The old men never even checked their steady walk, and knocking at the gate, went in, leaving more than one lifeless corpse at the entrance.

'We have put the coal in the thatch, now, with a vengeance,' said Smid, as they wiped their swords inside.

'We have. Get me out a boat and half a dozen men, and I and Goderic will go round by the canal to the palace, and settle a thing or two with the guards.'

'Why should not the Ainalaf, and offer our help himself to the Prefect?'

'What? Would you have him after that turn against the hound? For troth and honour's sake, he must keep quiet in the matter.'

'He will have no objection to keep quiet—trust him for that! But don't forget Sigman Moneybag, the best of all orators,' called Smid laughingly after him, as he went off to man the boat.

CHAPTER XXV

SEEKING AFTER A SIGN

'WHAT answer has he sent back, father?' asked Hypatia, as Theon re-entered her chamber, after delivering that hapless letter to Philammon.

'Insolent that he is! he tore it to fragments and fled forth without a word.'

'Let him go, and desert us like the rest, in our calamity!'

'At least, we have the jewels.'

'The jewels? Let them be returned to their owner. Shall we defile ourselves by taking them as wages for anything—above all, for that which is unperformed?'

'But, my child, they were given to us freely. He bade me keep them, and—and, to tell you the truth, I must keep them. After this unfortunate failure, be sure of it, every creditor we have will be clamouring for payment.'

'Let them take our house and furniture, and sell us as slaves, then. Let them take all, provided we keep our virtue.'

'Sell us as slaves? Are you mad?'

'Not quite mad yet, father,' answered she with a sad smile. 'But how should we be worse than we are now, were we slaves? Raphael Aben-Ezra told me that he obeyed my precepts,

when he went forth as a houseless beggar, and shall I not have courage to obey them myself, if the need come? The thought of his endurance has shamed my luxury for this many a month. After all, what does the philosopher require but bread and water, and the clear brook in which to wash away the daily stains of his earthly prison-house? Let what is fated come. Hypatia struggles with the stream no more!'

'My daughter! And have you given up all hope? So soon disheartened! What! Is this paltry accident to sweep away the purposes of years? Orestos remains still faithful. His guards have orders to garrison the house for as long as we shall require them.'

'Send them away, then. I have done no wrong, and I fear no punishment.'

'You do not know the madness of the mob, they are shouting your name in the streets already, in company with Pelagia's.'

Hypatia shuddered. Her name in company with Pelagia's! And to this she had brought herself!

'I have deserved it! I have sold myself to a lie and a disgrace! I have stooped to truckle, to intrigue! I have bound myself to a sordid trickster! Father! never mention his name to me again! I have leagued myself with the impure and the bloodthirsty, and I have my reward! No more politics for Hypatia from henceforth, my father; no more orations and lectures, no more pearls of Divine wisdom cast before swine. I have sinned in divulging the secrets of the Immortals to the mob. Let their follow their natures! Feel that I was, to fancy that my speech, my plots, could raise them above that which the gods had made them!'

'Then you give up our lectures? Worse and worse! We shall be ruined utterly!'

'We are ruined utterly already. Orestos! There is no help in him. I know the man too well, my father, not to know that he would give us up to-morrow to the fury of the Christians were his own base life—even his own baser office—in danger.'

'Too true—too true! I fear,' said the poor old man, wringing his hands in perplexity.

'What will become of us,—of you, rather? What matter what happens to the useless old star-gazer? Let him die! To-day or next year is alike to him. But you,—you! Let us escape by the canal. We may gather up enough, even without these jewels, which you refuse, to pay our voyage to Athens, and there we shall be safe with Plutarch, he will welcome you—all Athens will welcome you—we will collect a fresh school—and you shall be Queen of Athens, as you have been Queen of Alexandria!'

'No, father. What I know, henceforth I will know for myself only. Hypatia will be from this day alone with the Immortal Gods!'

'You will not leave me?' cried the old man, terrified.

'Never on earth!' answered she, bursting into real human tears, and throwing herself on his bosom. 'Never—never' father of my spirit

as well as of my flesh!—the parent who has trained me, taught me, educated my soul from the cradle to use her wings!—the only human being who never misunderstood me—never thwarted me—never deceived me!’

‘My priceless child! And I have been the cause of your ruin!’

‘Not you!—a thousand times not you! I only am to blame! I tampered with worldly politics. I tempted you on to fancy that I could effect what I so rashly undertook. Do not accuse yourself unless you wish to break my heart! We can be happy together yet—A palm-leaf hut in the desert, dates from the grove, and water from the spring—the monk dares be miserable alone in such a dwelling, and cannot we dare to be happy together in it?’

‘Then you will escape?’

‘Not to-day. It were base to flee before danger comes. We must hold out at our post to the last moment, even if we dare not die at it like heroes. And to-morrow I go to the lecture-room,—to the beloved Museum, for the last time, to take farewell of my pupils. Unworthy as they are, I owe it to myself and to philosophy to tell them why I leave them.’

‘It will be too dangerous—indeed it will!’

‘I could take the guards with me, then. And yet—no. They shall never have occasion to impute fear to the philosopher. Let them see her go forth as usual on her errand, strong in the courage of innocence, secure in the protection of the gods. So, perhaps, some sacred awe, some suspicion of her divineness, may fall on them at last.’

‘I must go with you.’

‘No, I go alone. You might meet danger where I am safe. After all, I am a woman. And, fierce as they are, they will not dare to harm me.’

The old man shook his head.

‘Look now,’ she said smilingly, laying her hands on his shoulders, and looking into his face.

‘You tell me that I am beautiful, you know, and beauty will tame the lion. Do you not think that this face might disarm even a monk?’

And she laughed and blushed so sweetly, that the old man forgot his fears, as she intended that he should, and kissed her and went his way for the time being, to command all manner of hospitalities to the soldiers, whom he prudently determined to keep in his house as long as he could make them stay there, in pursuance of which wise purpose he contrived not to see a great deal of pleasant flirtation between his valiant defenders and Hypatia’s maids, who, by no means so prudish as their mistress, welcomed as a rare boon from heaven an afternoon’s chat with twenty tall men of war.

So they jested and laughed below, while old Theon, having brought out the very best old wine, and actually proposed in person, by way of mending matters, the health of the Emperor of Africa, locked himself into the library, and comforted his troubled soul with a tough problem of astronomy, which had been haunting him

the whole day, even in the theatre itself. But Hypatia sat still in her chamber, her face buried in her hands, her heart full of many thoughts, her eyes of tears. She had smiled away her father’s fears, she could not smile away her own.

She felt, she hardly knew why, but she felt as clearly as if a god had proclaimed it to her bodily ears, that the crisis of her life was come, that her political and active career was over, and that she must now be content to be for herself, and in herself alone, all that she was, or might become. The world might be regenerated—but not in her day,—the gods restored, but not by her. It was a fearful discovery,—and yet hardly a discovery. Her heart had told her for years that she was hoping against hope,—that she was struggling against a stream too mighty for her. And now the moment had come when she must either be swept helpless down the current, or, by one desperate effort, win firm land, and let the tide roll on its own way henceforth. Its own way! Not the way of the gods, at least, for it was sweeping their names from off the earth. What if they did not care to be known? What if they were weary of worship and reverence from mortal men, and, self-sufficing in their own perfect bliss, recked nothing for the weal or woe of earth? Must it not be so? Had she not proof of it in everything which she believed? What did Isis care for her Alexandria? What did Athens care for her Athens? And yet Homer and Hesiod, and those old Orphic singers, were of another mind.

Whence got they that strange fancy of gods counselling, warring, intermarrying, with mankind, as with some kindred tribe?

‘Zeus, father of gods and men!’ Those were words of hope and comfort! But were they true? Father of men? Impossible!—not father of Pelagia, surely. Not father of the base, the foul, the ignorant.

Father of heroic souls, only, the poets must have meant. But where were the heroic souls now? Was she one? If so, why was she deserted by the upper powers in her utter need? Was the heroic race indeed extinct? Was she merely assuming, in her self-conceit, an honour to which she had no claim? Or was it all a dream of these old singers? Had they, as some bold philosophers had said, invented gods in their own likeness, and palmed off on the awe and admiration of men their own fair phantoms? . . . It must be so. If there were gods, to know them was the highest bliss of man. Then would they not teach men of themselves, unveil their own loveliness to a chosen few, even for the sake of their own honour, if not, as she had dreamed once, from love to those who bore a kindred flame to theirs? . . . What if there were no gods? What if the stream of fate, which was sweeping away their names, were the only real power? What if that old Pyrrhonic notion were the true solution of the problem of the Universe? What if there were no centre, no order, no rest, no goal—but only a perpetual flux, a down-rushing change?

And before her dizzying brain and heart arose that awful vision of Lucrotius, of the homeless Universe falling, falling, for ever from nowhence toward nowhither through the unending ages, by causeless and unceasing gravitation, while the changes and efforts of all mortal things were but the jostling of the dust-atoms amid the everlasting storm. . .

It could not be! There was a truth, a virtue, a beauty, a nobleness, which could never change, but which were absolute, the same for ever. The God-given instinct of her woman's heart rebelled against her intellect, and, in the name of God, denied its lie. . . Yes,—there was virtue, beauty. And yet—might not they, too, be accidents of that enchantment, which man calls mortal life, temporary and mutable accidents of consciousness; brilliant sparks, struck out by the clashing of the dust-atoms? Who could tell?

There were those once who could tell. Did not Plotinus speak of a direct mystic intuition of the Deity, an enthusiasm without passion, a still intoxication of the soul, in which she rose above life, thought, reason, herself, to that which she contemplated, the absolute and first One, and united herself with that One, or, rather, became aware of that union which had existed from the first moment in which she emanated from the One? Six times in a life of sixty years had Plotinus risen to that height of mystic union, and known himself to be a part of God. Once had Porphyry attained the same glory. Hypatia, though often attempting, had never yet succeeded in attaining to any distinct vision of a being external to herself; though practice, a firm will, and a powerful imagination, had long since made her an adept in producing, almost at will, that mysterious trance, which was the preliminary step to supernatural vision. But her delight in the brilliant, and, as she held, divine imaginations, in which at such times she revelled, had been always checked and chilled by the knowledge that, in such matters, hundreds inferior to her in intellect and in learning,—ay, saddest of all, Christian monks and nuns, boasted themselves her equals,—indeed, if their own account of their visions was to be believed, her superiors—by the same methods which she employed. For by celibacy, rigorous fasts, perfect bodily quiescence, and intense contemplation of one thought, they, too, pretended to be able to rise above the body into the heavenly regions, and to behold things unspeakable, which nevertheless, like most other unspeakable things, contrived to be most carefully detailed and housed abroad. . . And it was with a half feeling of shame that she prepared herself that afternoon for one more, perhaps one last attempt, to scale the heavens, as she recollected how many an illiterate monk and nun, from Constantinople to the Thebaid, was probably employed at that moment exactly as she was. Still, the attempt must be made. In that terrible abyss of doubt, she must have something palpable, real; something beyond her own thoughts, and hopes, and

speculations, whereon to rest her weary faith, her weary heart. . . Perhaps this time, at least, in her extremest need, a god might vouchsafe some glimpse of his own beauty. . . Athene might pity at last. . . Or, if not Athene, some archetype, angel, demon. . . And then she shuddered at the thought of those evil and deceiving spirits, whose delight it was to delude and tempt the votaries of the gods, in the forms of angels of light. But even in the face of that danger, she must make the trial once again. Was she not pure and spotless as Athene's self? Would not her innate purity enable her to discern, by an instinctive antipathy, those foul beings beneath the fairest mask? At least, she must make the trial. . .

And so, with a look of intense humility, she began to lay aside her jewels and her upper robes. Then, baring her bosom and her feet, and shaking her golden tresses loose, she laid herself down upon the couch, crossed her hands upon her breast, and, with upturned ecstatic eyes, waited for that which might befall.

There she lay, hour after hour, as her eye gradually kindled, her bosom heaved, her breath came fast. But there was no more sign of life in those straight still limbs, and listless feet and hands, than in Pygmalion's ivory bride, before she bloomed to human flesh and blood. The sun sank towards his rest, the roar of the city grew louder and louder without, the soldiers revelled and laughed below: but every sound passed through unconscious ears, and went its way unheeded. Faith, hope, reason itself, were staked upon the result of that daring effort to scale the highest heaven. And, by one continuous effort of her practised will, which reached its highest virtue, as mystics hold, in its own suicide, she chained down her senses from every sight and sound, and even her mind from every thought, and lay utterly self-resigned, self-emptied, till consciousness of time and place had vanished, and she seemed to herself alone in the abyss.

She dared not reflect, she dared not hope, she dared not rejoice, lest she should break the spell. Again and again had she broken it at this very point, by some sudden and tumultuous yielding to her own joy or awe, but now her will held firm. . . She did not feel her own limbs, hear her own breath. . . A light bright mist, an endless network of glittering filins, coming, going, uniting, resolving themselves, was above her and around her. . . Was she in the body or out of the body? . . .

The network faded into an abyss of still clear light. . . A still warm atmosphere was around her, thrilling through and through her. She breathed the light, and floated in it, as a mote in the mid-day beam. . . And still her will held firm.

Far away, miles, and eons, and abysses away, through the interminable depths of glory, a dark and shadowy spot. It neared and grew. . .

A dark globe, grined with rainbows. . . . What might it be? She dared not hope. . . . It came nearer, nearer, nearer, touched her. . . . The centre quivered, flickered, took form—a face. . . . A god's! No—Pelagia's.

Beautiful, sad, craving, reproachful, indignant, awful. . . . Hypatia could bear no more, and sprang to her feet with a shriek, to experience in its full bitterness the fearful revulsion of the mystic, when the human reason and will which he has spurned reassert their God-given rights, and after the intoxication of the imagination, come its prostration and collapse.

And this, then, was the answer of the gods? The phantom of her whom she had despised, exposed, spurned from her? 'No, not their answer—the answer of my own soul! Fool that I have been! I have been exerting my will most while I pretended to resign it most! I have been the slave of every mental desire, while I tried to trample on them! What if that net work of light, that blaze, that globe of darkness, have been, like the face of Pelagia, the phantoms of my own imagination—ay, even of my own senses! What if I have mistaken for Deity my own self? What if I have been my own light, my own abyss! . . . Am I not my own abyss, my own light—my own darkness?' And she smiled bitterly as she said it, and throwing herself again upon the couch, buried her head in her hands, exhausted equally in body and in mind.

At last she rose, and sat, careless of her dishevelled locks, gazing out into vacancy. 'Oh for a sign, for a token! Oh for the golden days of which the poets sang, when gods walked among men, fought by their side as friends! And yet . . . are these old stories credible, pious, even modest? Does not my heart revolt from them? Who has shared more than I in Plato's contempt for the foul deeds, the degrading transformations, which Homer imputes to the gods of Greece? Must I believe them now? Must I stoop to think that gods, who live in a region above all sense, will deign to make themselves palpable to those senses of ours which are whole sons of existence below them? Degrade themselves to the base accidents of matter? Yes! That, rather than nothing! Be it even so. Better, better, better, to believe that Ares fled shrieking and wounded from a mortal man—better to believe in Zeus's adulteries and Hermes's thefts—than to believe that gods have never spoken face to face with men! Let me think, lest I go mad, that beings from that unseen world for which I hunger have appeared, and held communion with mankind, such as no reason or sense could doubt—even though those beings were more capricious and baser than ourselves! In there, after all, an unseen world? Oh for a sign, a sign!'

Haggard and dizzy, she wandered into her 'chamber of the gods', a collection of antiquities, which she kept there rather as matters of taste than of worship. All around her they looked out into vacancy with their white soulless eyeballs, their dead motionless beauty, those

cold dreams of the buried generations. Oh that they could speak, and set her heart at rest! At the lower end of the room stood a Pallas, completely armed with ægis, spear, and helmet, a gem of Athenian sculpture, which she had bought from some merchants after the sack of Athens by the Goths. There it stood severely fair; but the right hand, alas! was gone, and there the maimed arm remained extended, as if in sad mockery of the faith of which the body remained, while the power was dead and vanished.

She gazed long and passionately on the image of her favourite goddess, the ideal to which she had longed for years to assimilate herself, till—was it a dream? was it a frolic of the dying sunlight? or did those lips really bend themselves into a smile?

Impossible! No, not impossible. Had not, only a few years before, the image of Hecate smiled on a philosopher? Were there not stories of moving images, and winking pictures, and all the material miracles by which a dying faith strives desperately—not to deceive others—but to persuade itself of its own sanity? It had been—it might be—it was!—

No! there the lips were, as they had been from the beginning, closed upon each other in that stony self-collected calm, which was only not a snare. The wonder, if it was one, had passed, and now—did her eyes play her false, or were the snakes round that Medusa's head upon the shield all writhing, grinning, glaring at her with stony eyes, longing to stiffen her with terror into their own likeness?

No! that, too, passed. Would that even it had stayed, for it would have been a sign of life! She looked up at the face once more, but in vain—the stone was stone, and ere she was aware, she found herself clasping passionately the knees of the marble.

'Athene! Pallas! Adore! Ever Virgin! Absolute reason, springing unbegotten from the nameless One! Hear me! Athene! Have mercy on me! Speak, if it be to curse me! Thou who alone wieldest the lightnings of thy father, wield them to strike me dead, if thou wilt, only do something—something to prove thine own existence—something to make me sure that anything exists beside this gross miserable matter, and my miserable soul. I stand alone in the centre of the universe! I fall and sicken down the abyss of ignorance, and doubt, and boundless blank and darkness! Oh, have mercy! I know that thou art not this! Thou art everywhere and in all things! But I know that this is a form which pleases thee, which symbolises thy nobleness! I know that thou hast deigned to speak to those who—Oh! what do I know! Nothing! nothing! nothing!'

And she clung there, bedewing with scalding tears the cold feet of the image, while there was neither sign, nor voice, nor any that answered.

On a sudden she was startled by a rustling near; and, looking round, saw close behind her the old Jewess.

'Cry aloud!' hissed the hag, in a tone of bitter scorn, 'cry aloud, for she is a goddess. Either she is talking, or pursuing, or she is on a journey, or perhaps she has grown old, as we all shall do some day, my pretty lady, and is too cross and lazy to stir. What! her naughty doll will not speak to her, will it not? or even open its eyes, because the wires are grown rusty? Well, we will find a new doll for her, if she chooses.'

'Begone, hag! What do you mean by intruding here?' said Hypatia, springing up, but the old woman went on coolly—

'Why not try the fair young gentleman over there?' pointing to a copy of the Apollo which we call Belvedere—'What is his name? Old maids are always cross and jealous, you know. But he—he could not be cruel to such a sweet face as that. Try the fair young lad! Or, perhaps, if you are bashful, the old Jewess might try him for you!'

These last words were spoken with so marked a significance, that Hypatia, in spite of her disgust, found herself asking the hag what she meant. She made no answer for a few seconds, but remained looking steadily into her eyes with a glance of fire, before which even the proud Hypatia, as she had done once before, quailed utterly, so deep was the understanding, so dogged the purpose, so fearless the power, which burned within those withered and shrunken sockets.

'Shall the old witch call him up, the fair young Apollo, with the beauty-bloom upon his chin? He shall come! He shall come! I warrant him he must come, civilly enough, when old Miriam's finger is once held up.'

'To you! Apollo, the god of light, obey a Jewess!'

'A Jewess! And you a Greek?' almost yelled the old woman. 'And who are you who ask? And who are your gods, your heroes, your devils, you children of yesterday, compared with us? You, who were a set of half-naked savages squabbling about the siege of Troy, when our Solomon, amid splendours such as Rome and Constantinople never saw, was controlling demons and ghosts, angels and arch-angels, principalities and powers, by the ineffable name! What science have you that you have not stolen from the Egyptians and Chaldees? And what had the Egyptians which Moses did not teach them? And what have the Chaldees which Daniel did not teach them? What does the world know but from us, the fathers and the masters of magic—us, the lords of the inner secrets of the universe! Come, you Greek baby—as the priests in Egypt said of your forefathers, always children, craving for a new toy, and throwing it away next day—come to the fountain-head of all your paltry wisdom! Name what you will see, and you shall see it!'

Hypatia was cowed; for of one thing there was no doubt,—that the woman utterly believed her own words, and that was a state of mind of which she had seen so little, that it was no

wonder if it acted on her with that overpowering sympathetic force, with which it generally does, and perhaps ought to, act on the human heart. Besides, her school had always looked to the ancient nations of the East for the primeval founts of inspiration, the mysterious lore of mightier races long gone by. Might she not have found it now!—

The Jewess saw her advantage in a moment, and ran on, without giving her time to answer—

'What sort shall it be, then? By glass and water, or by the moonlight on the wall, or by the sieve, or by the meal? By the cymbals, or by the stars? By the table of the twenty-four elements, by which the Empire was promised to Theodosius the Great, or by the sacred counters of the Assyrians, or by the sapphire of the Hecate sphere? Shall I threaten, as the Egyptian priests used to do, to tear Osiris again in pieces, or to divulge the mysteries of Isis? I could do so, if I chose, for I know them all and more. Or shall I use the ineffable name on Solomon's seal, which we alone, of all the nations of the earth, know? No; it would be a pity to waste that upon a heathen. It shall be by the sacred wafer. Look here!—here they are, the wonder-working atoms! Eat no food this day, except one of these—very three hours, and come to me to-night at the house of your porter, Endamion, bringing with you the black ugate, and then—why then, what you have the heart to see, you shall see!'

Hypatia took the wafer, hesitating—

'But what are they?'

'And you profess to explain Homer? When did I hear the other morning lecturing away so glibly on the repentance which Helen gave the heroes, to fill them with the spirit of joy and love, how it was an allegory of the inward inspiration which flows from spiritual beauty, and all that!—pretty enough, fair lady; but the question still remains, what was it? and I say it was this. Take it and try, and then confess, that while you can talk about Helen, I can set her; and know a little more about Homer than you do, after all!'

'I cannot believe you! Give me some sign of your power, or how can I trust you?'

'A sign?—A sign! Kneel down then there, with your face toward the north; you are over tall for the poor old cripple.'

'I! I never knelt to human being!'

'Then consider that you kneel to the hand some idol there, if you will—but kneel!'

And, constrained by that glittering eye, Hypatia knelt before her.

'Have you faith? Have you desire? Will you submit? Will you obey? Self-will and pride see nothing, know nothing. If you do not give up yourself, neither God nor devil will care to approach. Do you submit?'

'I do! I do!' cried poor Hypatia, in an agony of curiosity and self-distrust, while she felt her eye quivering and her limbs loosening more and more every moment under that intolerable fascination.

The old woman drew from her bosom a crystal, and placed the point against Hypatia's breast. A cold shiver ran through her. The witch waved her hands mysteriously round her head, muttering from time to time, 'Down! down, prond spirit!' and then placed the tips of her skinny fingers on the victim's forehead. Gradually her eyelids became heavy, again and again she tried to raise them, and dropp'd them again before those fixed glaring eyes. and in another moment she lost consciousness.

When she awoke, she was kneeling in a distant part of the room, with dishevelled hair and garments. What was it so cold that she was clapping in her arms? The flet of the Apollo! The hag stood by her, chuckling to herself and clapping her hands.

'How came I here? What have I been doing?'

'Saying such pretty things!—paying the fair youth these such compliments, as he will not be rude enough to forget in his visit to-night. A charming prophetic trance you have had! Ah ha! you are not the only woman who is wiser asleep than awake! Well, you will make a very pretty Cassandra—or a Clyta, if you have the sense. It lies with you, my fair lady. Are you satisfied now? Will you have any more signs? Shall the old Jewess blast those blue eyes blind to show 'at she knows more than the heathens?'

'Oh, I believe you—I believe,' cried the poor exhausted maiden. 'I will come, and yet—'

'Ah! yes! You had better settle first how he shall appear.'

'As he wills!—let him only come! only let me know that he is a god. Abamnon said that gods appeared in a clear, steady, unbearable light, amid a choir of all the lesser deities, archangels, principalities, and heroes, who derive their life from them.'

'Abamnon was an old fool, then. Do you think young Phœbus ran after Daphne with such a mob at his heels? or that Jovi, when he swam up to Leda, headed a whole Nile-flock of ducks, and plover, and curlew? No, he shall come alone—to you alone, and then you may choose for yourself between Cassandra and Clyta. . . Farewell. Do not forget your wafers, or the agate either, and talk with no one between now and sunset. And then—my pretty lady!'

And laughing to herself, the old hag glided from the room.

Hypatia sat trembling with shame and dread. She, as a disciple of the more purely spiritualistic school of Porphyry, had always looked with aversion, with all but contempt, on those theurgic arts which were so much lauded and employed by Iamblicus, Abamnon, and those who clung lovingly to the old priestly rites of Egypt and Chaldaea. They had seemed to her vulgar toys, tricks of legerdemain, suited only for the wonder of the mob. . . She began to think of them with more favour now. How did she know that the vulgar did not require signs and wonders to make them believe! . . . How,

indeed! for did she not want such herself? And she opened Abamnon's famous letter to Porphyry, and read earnestly over, for the twentieth time, his subtle justification of magic, and felt it to be unanswerable. Magic? What was not magical? The whole universe, from the planets over her head to the meanest pebble at her feet, was utterly mysterious, ineffable, miraculous, influencing and influenced by affinities and repulsions as unexpected, as unfathomable, as those which, as Abamnon said, drew the gods towards those sounds, those objects, which, either in form, or colour, or chemical properties, were symbolic of, or akin to, themselves. What wonder in it, after all? Was not love and hatred, sympathy and antipathy, the law of the universe? Philosophers, when they gave mechanical explanations of natural phenomena, came no nearer to the real solution of them. The mysterious 'Why?' remained untouched.

All their analyses could only darken with big words the plain fact that the water hated the oil with which it refused to mix, the lime loved the acid which it eagerly received into itself, and, like a lover, grew warm with the rapture of affection. Why not? What might had we to deny sensation, emotion, to them, any more than to ourselves? Was not the same universal spirit stirring in them as in us? And was it not by virtue of that spirit that we thought, and felt, and loved?—Then why not they, as well as we? If the one spirit permeated all things, if its all-energising presence linked the flower with the crystal as well as with the demon and the god, must it not link together also the two extremes of the great chain of being? And even the nameless One itself to the smallest creature which bore its creative impress? What greater miracle in the attraction of a god or an angel, by material incense, symbols, and spells, than in the attraction of one soul to another by the material sounds of the human voice? Was the affinity between spirit and matter implied in that, more miraculous than the affinity between the soul and the body,—than the retention of that soul within that body by the breathing of material air, the eating of material food? Or even, if the physicians were right, and the soul were but a material product or energy of the nerves, and the sole law of the universe the laws of matter, then was not magic even more probable, more rational? Was it not far by every analogy to suppose that there might be other, higher beings than ourselves, obedient to those laws, and therefore possible to be attracted, even as human beings were, by the laws of material sights and sounds? If spirit pervaded all things, then was magic probable; if nothing but matter had existence, magic was morally certain. All that remained in either case was the test of experience. . . And had not that test been applied in every age, and asserted to succeed? What more rational, more philosophic action than to try herself those methods and ceremonies which she was assured on every hand had never failed

but through the ignorance or unfitness of the neophyte! . . . Abaddon must be right. . . She dared not think him wrong; for if this last hope failed, what was there left but to eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!

CHAPTER XXVI

MIRIAM'S PLOT

HE who has worshipped a woman, even against his will and conscience, knows well how storm may follow storm, and earthquake earthquake, before his idol be utterly overthrown. And so Philammon found that evening, as he sat pondering over the strange chances of the day, for, as he pondered, his old feelings towards Hypatia began, in spite of the struggles of his conscience and reason, to revive within him. Not only pure love of her great loveliness, the righteous instinct which bids us welcome and honour beauty, whether in man or woman, as something of real worth—divine, heavenly, ay, though we know not how, in a most deep sense eternal, which makes our reason give the lie to all merely logical and sentimental maunderings of moralists about 'the fleeting hues of this our painted clay', telling men, as the old Hebrew Scriptures tell them, that physical beauty is the deepest of all spiritual symbols, and that though beauty without discretion be the jewel of gold in the swine's snout, yet the jewel of gold it is still, the sacrament of an inward beauty, which ought to be, perhaps hereafter may be, fulfilled in spirit and in truth. Not only this, which whispered to him—and who shall say that the whisper was of the earth, or of the lower world?—'She is too beautiful to be utterly evil', but the very defect in her creed which he had just discovered, drew him towards her again. She had no Gospel for the Magdalene, because she was a Pagan.

That, then, was the fault of her Paganism, not of herself. She felt for Pelagia, but even if she had not, was not that, too, the fault of her Paganism? And for that Paganism who was to be blamed? She! . . . Was he the man to affirm that? Had he not seen scandals, stupidities, brutalities, enough to shake even his faith, educated a Christian? How much more excuse for her, more delicate, more acute, more lofty than he, the child, too of a heathen father? Her perfections, were they not her own?—her defects, those of her circumstances! And had she not welcomed him, guarded him, taught him, honoured him? Could he turn against her?—above all now in her distress—perhaps her danger? Was he not bound to her, if by nothing else, by gratitude? Was not he, of all men, bound to believe that all she required to make her perfect was conversion to the true faith? . . . And that first dream of converting her arose almost as bright as ever. Then he was checked by the thought of his first utter failure. . . . At least, if he could not convert her, he could love her,

pray for her. . . . No, he could not even do that; for to whom could he pray? He had to repent, to be forgiven, to humble himself by penitence, perhaps for years, ere he could hope to be heard even for himself, much less for another. . . . And so backwards and forwards swayed his hope and purpose, till he was roused from his ineditatigh by the voice of the little porter summoning him to his evening meal, and recollecting, for the first time, that he had tasted no food that day, he went down, half unwillingly, and ate.

But as he, the porter, and his negro wife were sitting silently and sadly enough together, Miriam came in, apparently in high good humour, and lingered a moment on her way to her own apartments upstairs.

'Eh? At supper? And nothing but lentils and water-melon, when the flesh-pots of Egypt have been famous any time these two thousand years. Ah! but times are changed since then!

You have worn out the old Hebrew hints, you miserable Gentiles, you, and got a Cress instead of a Joseph! Hist, you hussies!' cried she to the girls upstairs, clapping her hands loudly. 'Here! bring us down one of those roast chickens, and a bottle of the wine of wines—the wine with the green seal, you careless daughters of Midian, you, with your wits running on the men, I'll warrant, every minute I've been out of the house! Ah, you'll smart for it some day—you'll smart for it some day, you daughters of Adam's first wife!'

Down came, by the hands of one of the Syrian slave-girls, the fowl and the wine.

'There, now, we'll all sup together. Wine, that maketh glad the heart of man!—Youth, you were a monk once, so you have read all about that, eh? and about the best wine which goes down sweetly, causing the lips of them that are asleep to speak. And rare wine it was, I warrant, which the blessed Solomon had in his little country cellar up there in Lebanon. We'll try if this is not a very fair substitute for it, though. Come, my little man-monkey, drink, and forget your sorrow! You shall be temple-sweeper to Beelzebub yet, I promise you. Look at it there, creaming and curdling, the darling! purring like a cat at the very thought of touching human lips! As sweet as honey, as strong as fire, as clear as amber! Drink, ye children of Gehenna, and make good use of the little time that is left you between this and the unquenchable fire!'

And tossing a cup of it down her own throat, as if it had been water, she watched her companions with a meaning look, as they drank.

The little porter followed her example gallantly. Philammon looked, and longed, and sipped blushing and bashfully, and tried to fancy that he did not care for it; and sipped again, being willing enough to forget his sorrow also for a moment, the negress refused with fear and trembling—'She had a vow on her.'

'Satan possess you and your vow! Drink, you coal out of Tophet! Do you think it is

poisoned! You, the only creature in the world that I should not enjoy ill-using, because every one else ill-uses you already without my help! Drink, I say, or I'll turn you pea-green from head to foot!

The negress put the cup to her lips, and contrived, for her own reasons, to spill the contents unobserved.

'A very fine lecture that of the Lady Hypatia's the other morning, on Helen's nepenthe,' quoth the little porter, growing philosophic as the wine-fumes rose. 'Such a power of extracting the cold water of philosophy out of the bottomless pit of Mythus, I never did hear. Did you ever, my Philammonidion?'

'Aha! she and I were talking about that half an hour ago,' said Miriam.

'What! have you seen her?' asked Philammon, with a flutter of the heart.

'If you mean, did she mention you,—why, then, yes!'

'How!—how!'

'Talked of a young Phoebus Apollo—without mentioning names, certainly, but in the most sensible, and practical, and hopeful way—the wisest speech that I have heard from her this twelvemonth.'

Philammon blushed scarlet.

'And that,' thought he, 'is a dispute of what passed this morning!—Why, what is the matter with our host!'

'He has taken Solomon's advice, and forgotten his sorrow.'

And so, indeed, he had, for he was sleeping sweetly, with open lack-lustre eyes, and a mandarin smile at the ceiling; while the negress, with her head fallen on her chest, seemed equally unconscious of their presence.

'We'll see,' quoth Miriam, and taking up the lamp, she held the flame unceremoniously to the arm of each of them, but neither winced nor stirred.

'Surely your wine is not drugged!' said Philammon, in trepidation.

'Why not? What has made them beasts, may make us angels. You seem none the less lively for it! Do I!'

'But drugged wine!'

'Why not? The same who made wine made poppy-juice. Both will make man happy. Why not use both!'

'It is poison!'

'It is the nepenthe, as I told Hypatia, whereof she was twaddling mysticism this morning. Drink, child, drink! I have no mind to put you to sleep to-night! I want to make a man of you, or rather, to see whether you are one!'

And she drained another cup, and then went on, half talking to herself—

'Ay, it is poison; and music is poison, and woman is poison, according to the new creed, Pagan and Christian; and wine will be poison, and meat will be poison, some day; and we shall have a world full of mad Nebuchadnezzars, eating grass like oxen. It is poisonous, and brutal, and devilish, to be a man, and not a monk, and

an eunuch, and a dry branch. You are all in the same line, Christians and philosophers, Cyril and Hypatia! Don't interrupt me, but drink, young fool!—Ay, and the only man who keeps his manhood, the only man who is not ashamed to be what God has made him, is your Jew. You will find yourselves in want of him after all, some day; you besotted Gentiles, to bring you back to common sense and common manhood.—In want of him and his grand old books, which you despise while you make idols of them, about Abraham, and Jacob, and Moses, and David, and Solomon, whom you call saints, you miserable hypocrites, though they did what you are too dainty to do, and had their wives and their children, and thanked God for a beautiful woman, as Adam did before them, and their sons do after them—Drink, I say—and believed that God had really made the world, and not the devil, and had given them the lordship over it, as you will find out to your cost some day!'

Philammon heard, and could not answer, and on she rambled.

'And music, ho! Our priests were not afraid of sackbut and psaltery, dulcimer and trumpet, in the house of the Lord, for they knew who had given them the cunning to make them. Our prophets were not afraid of calling for music, when they wished to prophesy, and letting it soften and raise their souls, and open and quicken them till they saw into the inner harmony of things, and beheld the future in the present, for they knew who made the melody and harmony, and made them the outward symbols of the inward song which runs through sun and stars, storm and tempest, thrilling his word—in that these sham philosophers the heathen are wiser than those Christian monks. Try it!—try it! Come with me! Leave these sleepers here, and come to my rooms. You long to be as wise as Solomon. Then get at wisdom as Solomon did, and give your heart first to know folly and madness. You have read the Book of the Preacher!'

Poor Philammon! He was no longer master of himself. The arguments—the wine—the terrible spell of the old woman's voice and eye, and the strong overpowering will which showed out through them, dragged him along in spite of himself. As if in a dream, he followed her up the stairs.

'There, throw away that stupid, ugly, shapeless philosopher's cloak. So! You have on the white tunic I gave you! And now you look as a human being should. And you have been to the baths to-day! Well—you have the comfort of feeling now like other people, and having that alabaster skin as white as it was created, instead of being tanned like a brute's hide. Drink, I say! Ay—what was that face, that figure, made for? Bring a mirror here, hussy! There, look in that and judge for yourself! Were those lips rounded for nothing? Why were those eyes set in your head, and made to sparkle bright as jewels, sweet as

mountain honey? Why were those curls laid ready for soft fingers to twine themselves among them, and look all the whiter among the glossy black knots? Judge for yourself!

Alas! poor Philammon!

'And after all,' thought he, 'is it not true, as well as pleasant?'

'Sing to the poor boy, girls!—sing to him! and teach him for the first time in his little ignorant life, the old road to inspiration!'

One of the slave-girls sat down on the divan, and took up a double flute, while the other rose, and accompanying the plaintive dreamy air with a slow dance, and delicate twinklings of her silken armlets and anklets, and the sistrum which she held aloft, she floated gracefully round and round the floor and sang—

Why were we born but for bliss?

Why are we ripe, but to fall?
Dream not that duty can bar thee from beauty,
Like water and sunshine, the hurloom of ill

Lips were made only to kiss,

Hands were made only to toy,
Eyes were made only to lure on the lonely,
The longing, the loving, and drown them in joy.

Alas, for poor Philammon! And yet no! The very poison brought with it its own antidote, and, shaking off by one strong effort of will the spell of the music and the wine, he sprang to his feet.

'Never! If love means no more than that if it is to be a mere delicate self-indulgence, worse than the brute's, because it requires the prostration of nobler faculties, and a selfishness the more huge in proportion to the greatness of the soul which is crushed inward by it—then I will have none of it! I have had my dream—yes! but it was of one who should be at once my teacher and my pupil, my debtor and my queen—who should lean on me, and yet support me—supply my defects, although with lesser light, as the old moon fills up the circle of the new—labour with me side by side in some great work—rising with me for ever as I rose, and this is the base substitute! Never!'

Whether or not this was unconsciously forced into words by the vehemence of his passion, or whether the old Jewess heard, or pretended to hear, a footstep coming up the stair, she at all events sprang instantly to her feet.

'Hist! Silence, girls! I hear a visitor! What mad maiden has come to beg a love-charm of the poor old witch at this time of night? Or have the Christian bloodhounds tracked the old house of Judah to her den at last? We'll see!'

And she drew a dagger from her girdle, and stepped boldly to the door.

As she went out she turned—

'So! my brave young Apollo! You do not admire simple woman? You must have something more learned and intellectual and spiritual, and so forth. I wonder whether Eve, when she came to Adam in the garden, brought with her a certificate of proficiency in the seven sciences? Well, well—like must after like. Perhaps we

shall be able to suit you after all. Vaniah, daughters of Midian!'

The girls vanished accordingly, whispering and laughing, and Philammon found himself alone. Although he was somewhat soothed by the old woman's last speech, yet a sense of terror, of danger, of coming temptation, kept him standing sternly on his feet, looking warily round the chamber, lest a fresh siren should emerge from behind some curtain or heap of pillows.

On one side of the room he perceived a doorway, filled by a curtain of gauze, from behind which came the sound of whispering voices. His feet, growing with the general excitement of his mind, rose into anger as he began to suspect some snare; and he faced round towards the curtain, and stood like a wild beast at bay, ready, with uplifted arm, for all evil spirits, male or female.

'And he will show himself! How shall I arrest him?' whispered a well-known voice—could it be Hypatia's? And then the guttural Hebrew accent of the old woman answered—

'As you spoke of him this morning—'

'Oh! I will tell him all, and he must—he must have mercy! But he!—so awful, so glorious!—'

What the answer was, he could not hear; but the next moment a sweet heavy scent, as of narcotic gums, filled the room—mutterings, of incantations—and then a blaze of light, in which the curtain vanished, and disclosed to his astonished eyes, enveloped in a glory of luminous smoke, the hag standing by a tripod, and, kneeling by her, Hypatia herself, robed in pure white, glittering with diamonds and gold, her lips parted, her head thrown back, her arms stretched out in an agony of expectation.

In an instant, before he had time to stir, she had sprung through the blaze, and was kneeling at his feet.

'Phœbus! beautiful, glorious, ever young! Hear me! only a moment! only this once!'

Her drapery had caught fire from the tripod, but she did not heed it. Philammon instinctively clasped her in his arms, and crushed it out, as she cried—

'Have mercy on me! Tell me the secret! I will obey thee! I have no self—I am thy slave! Kill me, if thou wilt, but speak!'

The blaze sank into a soft, warm, mellow gleam, and beyond it what appeared?

The negro-woman, with one finger upon her lips, as with an imploring, all but despairing look, she held up to him her little crucifix.

He saw it. What thoughts flashed through him, like the lightning bolt, at that blessed sign of infinite self-sacrifice, I say not; let those who know it judge for themselves. But in another instant he had spurned from him the poor deluded maiden, whose idolatrous ecstasies he saw instantly were not meant for himself, and rushed desperately across the room, looking for an outlet.

He found a door in the darkness—a room—

a window—and in another moment he had leapt twenty feet into the street, rolled over, bruised and bleeding, rose again like an Antæus, with new strength, and darted off towards the archbishop's house.

And poor Hyppatia lay half senseless on the floor, with the Jews watching her bitter tears—not merely of disappointment, but of utter shame. For as Philammon fled she had recognised those well-known features, and the veil was lifted from her eyes, and the hope and the self-respect of Theon's daughter were gone for ever.

Her righteous wrath was too deep for upbraidings. Slowly she rose; returned into the inner room, wrapped her cloak deliberately around her, and went silently away, with one look at the Jewess of solemn scorn and defiance.

'Ah! I can afford a few sulky looks to-night!' said the old woman to herself, with a smile, as she picked up from the floor the prize for which she had been plotting so long—Raphael's half of the black agate.

'I wonder whether she will miss it! Perhaps she will have no fancy for its company any longer, now that she has discovered what over-palpable arrangements appear when she rubs it. But if she does try to recover it—why—let her try her strength with mine—or, rather, with a Christian mob.'

And then, drawing from her bosom the other half of the talisman, she fitted the two pieces together again and again, fingering them over, and poring upon them with tear-brimming eyes, till she had satisfied herself that the fracture still fitted exactly, while she murmured to herself from time to time—'Oh, that he were here! Oh, that he would return now—now! It may be too late to-morrow! Stay—I will go and consult the teraph, it may know where he is.'

And she departed to her incantations, while Hyppatia threw herself upon her bed at home, and filled the chamber with a long, low wailing, as of a child in pain, until the dreary dawn broke on her shame and her despair. And then she rose, and rousing herself for one great effort, calmly prepared a last oration, in which she intended to bid farewell for ever to Alexandria and to the schools.

Philammon meanwhile was striding desperately up the main street which led towards the Serapeum. But he was not destined to arrive there as soon as he had hoped to do. For ere he had gone half a mile, behold a crowd advancing towards him blocking up the whole street.

The mass seemed endless. Thousands of torches flared above their heads, and from the heart of the procession rose a solemn chant, in which Philammon soon recognised a well-known Catholic hymn. He was half minded to turn up some by-street, and escape meeting them. But on attempting to do so, he found every avenue which he tried similarly blocked up by a tributary stream of people, and, almost ere

he was aware, was entangled in the vanguard of the great column.

'Let me pass!' cried he in a voice of entreaty.

'Pass, thou heathen!'

In vain he protested his Christianity.

'Origenist, Donatist, heretic! Whither should a good Catholic be going to-night, save to the Cæsareum!'

'My friends, my friends, I have no business at the Cæsareum!' cried he, in utter despair.

'I am on my way to seek a private interview with the patriarch, on matters of importance.'

'Oh, liar! who pretends to be known to the patriarch, and yet is ignorant that this night he visits at the Cæsareum the most sacred corpse of the martyr Ammonius!'

'What! Is Cyril with you!'

'He and all his clergy.'

'Better so, better in public,' said Philammon to himself, and, turning, he joined the crowd.

Onward, with chant and dirge, they swept out through the Sun-gate, upon the harbour esplanade, and wheeled to the right along the quay, while the torchlight bathed in a red glare the great front of the Cæsareum, and the tall obelisks before it, and the masts of the thousand ships which lay in the harbour on their left, and last, but not least, before the huge dim mass of the palace which bounded the esplanade in front, a long line of glittering helmets, cuirasses, behind a barrier of cables which stretched from the shore to the corner of the museum.

There was a sudden halt, a low ominous growl, and then the mob pressed onward from behind, surged up almost to the barrier. The soldiers dropped the points of their lances, and stood firm. Again the mob recoiled, again surged forward. fiercer cries arose, some of the boldest stooped to pick up stones—but, luckily, the pavement was too firm for them. Another moment, and the whole soldiery of Alexandria would have been fighting for life and death against fifty thousand Christians.

But Cyril had not forgotten his generalship. Reckless as that night's events proved him to be about arousing the passions of his subjects, he was yet far too wary to risk the odium and the danger of a night attack, which, even if successful, would have cost the lives of hundreds. He knew well enough the numbers and the courage of the enemy, and the certainty that, in case of a collision, no quarter would be given or accepted on either side. Beside, if a battle must take place—and that, of course, must happen sooner or later—it must not happen in his presence and under his sanction. He was in the right now, and Orestes in the wrong, and in the right he would keep—at least till his express to Byzantium should have returned, and Orestes was either proscribed or superseded. So looking forward to some such chance as this, the wary prelate had schooled his aides-de-camp, the deacons of the city, and went on his way up the steps of the Cæsareum, knowing that they could be trusted to keep the peace outside.

And they did their work well. Before a blow had been struck, or even an insult passed on either side, they had burst through the front rank of the mob, and by stent threats of excommunication, enjoined not only peace, but absolute silence until the sacred ceremony which was about to take place should be completed, and enforced their commands by marching up and down like sentries between the hostile ranks for the next weary two hours, till the very soldiers broke out into expressions of admiration, and the tribune of the cohort, who had no great objection, but also no great wish, to fight, paid them a high-flown compliment on their laudable endeavours to maintain public order, and received the somewhat ambiguous reply, that the 'weapons of their warfare were not carnal, that they wrestled not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers,'—an answer which the tribune, being now somewhat sleepy, thought it best to leave unexplained.

In the meanwhile, there had passed up the steps of the Temple a gorgeous line of priests, among whom glittered, more gorgeous than all, the stately figure of the pontiff. They were followed close by thousands of monks, not only from Alexandria and Nitria, but from all the adjoining towns and monasteries. And as Philammon, unable for some half hour more to force his way into the church, watched their endless stream, he could well believe the boast which he had so often heard in Alexandria, that one half of the population of Egypt was at that moment in 'religious orders.'

After the monks, the laity began to enter but even then so vast was the crowd, and so dense the crush upon the steps, that before he could force his way into the church, Cyril's sermon had begun.

—'What went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Nay, such are in kings' palaces, and in the palaces of prefects who would needs be emperors, and cast away the Lord's bonds from them—of whom it is written, that He hath sitteth in the heavens laugheth them to scorn, and taketh the wicked in their own snare, and maketh the devices of princes of none effect. Ay, in king's palaces, and in theatres too, where the rich of this world, poor in faith, deny their covenant, and defile their baptismal robes that they may do honour to the devourers of the earth. Woe to them who think that they may partake of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. Woe to them who will praise with the same mouth Aphrodite the fiend, and her of whom it is written that He was born of a pure Virgin. Let such be excommunicate from the cup of the Lord, and from the congregation of the Lord, till they have purged away their sins by penance and by almsgiving. But for you, ye poor of this world, rich in faith, you whom the rich despise, hale before the judgment seats, and blaspheme that holy name whereby ye are called—what went ye out into the wilderness to see? A prophet?—Ay, and

more than a prophet—a martyr! More than a prophet, more than a king, more than a prefect, whose theatre was the sands of the desert, whose throne was the cross, whose crown was bestowed, not by heathen philosophers and daughters of Satan, deceiving men with the works of their fathers, but by angels and archangels; a crown of glory, the victor's laurel, which grows for ever in the paradise of the highest heaven. Call him no more Ammonius, call him Thaumastus, wonderful! Wonderful in his poverty, wonderful in his zeal, wonderful in his faith, wonderful in his fortitude, wonderful in his death, most wonderful in the manner of that death. Oh thrice blessed, who has merited the honour of the cross itself! What can follow, but that one so honoured in the flesh should also be honoured in the life which he now lives, and that from the virtue of these thrice-holy limbs the leper should be cleansed, the dumb should speak, the very dead be raised? Yes, it were impiety to doubt it. Consecrated by the cross, this flesh shall not only rest in hope but work in power. Approach, and be healed! Approach, and see the glory of the saints, the glory of the poor. Approach, and learn that that which man despises, God hath highly esteemed, that that which man rejects, God accepts, that that which man punishes, God rewards. Approach, and see how God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of this world to confound the strong. Man abhors the cross. The Son of God condescended to endure it! Man tramples on the poor: The Son of God hath not where to lay His head. Man passes by the sick as useless. The Son of God chooses them to be partakers of His sufferings, that the glory of God may be made manifest in them. Man curses the publican, while he employs him to fill his coffers with the plunder of the poor. The Son of God calls him from the receipt of custom to be an apostle, higher than the kings of the earth. Man casts away the harlot like a faded flower, when he has tempted her to become the slave of sin for a season; and the Son of God calls her, the defiled, the despised, the forsaken, to Himself, accepts her tears, blesses her offering, and declares that her sins are forgiven, for she hath loved much, while to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little.

Philammon heard no more. With the passionate and impulsive nature of a Greek fanatic, he burst forward through the crowd, towards the steps which led to the choir, and above which, in front of the altar, stood the corpse of Ammonius, enclosed in a coffin of glass, beneath a gorgeous canopy; and never stopping till he found himself in front of Cyril's pulpit, he threw himself upon his face upon the pavement, spread out his arms in the form of a cross, and lay silent and motionless before the feet of the multitude.

There was a sudden whisper and rustle in the congregation—but Cyril, after a moment's pause, went on—

'Man, in his pride and self-sufficiency, despises

humiliation, and penance, and the broken and the contrite heart; and tells thee that only as long as thou dost well unto thyself will he speak well of thee: the Son of God says that he that humbleth himself, even as this our penitent brother, he it is who shall be exalted. He it is of whom it is written that his father saw him afar off, and ran to meet him, and bade put the best robe on him, and a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and make merry and be glad with the choir of angels who rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. Arise, my son, whosoever thou art, and go in peace for this night, remembering that he who said, "My belly cleaveth unto the pavement," hath also said, "Rejoice not against me, Satan, mine enemy, for when I fall I shall arise!"

A thunder-clap of applause, surely as pardonable as any an Alexandrian church ever heard, followed this dexterous, and yet most righteous, turn of the patriarch's oratory: but Philammon raised himself slowly and fearfully to his knees, and blushing scarlet endured the gaze of ten thousand eyes.

Suddenly, from beside the pulpit, an old man sprang forward, and clasped him round the neck. It was Arsenius.

"My son! my son!" sobbed he, almost aloud. "Slave, as well as son, if you will!" whispered Philammon. "One boon from the patriarch, and then home to the *Barra* for ever!"

"Oh, twice-blest night," rolled on above the deep rich voice of Cyril, "which beholds at once the coronation of a martyr and the conversion of a sinner; which increases at the same time the ranks of the church triumphant, and of the church militant, and pierces celestial essences with a twofold rapture of thanksgiving, as they welcome on high a victorious, and on earth a repentant, brother!"

And at a sign from Cyril, Peter the Reader stepped forward, and led away, gently enough, the two weepers, who were welcomed as they passed by the blessings, and prayers, and tears even of those fierce fanatics of Nitinia Nay, Peter himself, as he turned to leave them together in the sacristy, held out his hand to Philammon.

"I ask your forgiveness," said the poor boy, who plunged eagerly and with a sort of delight into any and every self-abasement.

"And I accord it," quoth Peter, and returned to the church, looking, and probably feeling, in a far more pleasant mood than usual.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN

ABOUT ten o'clock the next morning, as Hypatia, worn out with sleepless sorrow, was trying to arrange her thoughts for the farewell lecture, her favourite maid announced that a messenger from Synesius waited below. A letter from

Synesius! A gleam of hope flashed across her mind. From him, surely, might come something of comfort, of advice. Ah! if he only knew how sorely she was bestead!

"Let him send up his letter!"

"He refuses to deliver it to any one but yourself. And I think,"—added the damsel, who had, to tell the truth, at that moment in her purse a substantial reason for so thinking—"I think it might be worth your ladyship's while to see him."

Hypatia shook her head impatiently.

"He seems to know you well, madam, though he refuses to tell his name: but he bade me put you in mind of a black agate—I cannot tell what he meant—of a black agate, and a spirit which was to appear when you rubbed it."

Hypatia turned pale as death. Was it Philammon again? She felt for the talisman—it was gone! She must have lost it last night in Miriam's chamber. "Now she saw the true purpose of the old hag's plot— . . . deceived, tricked, doubly tricked! And what new plot was this?"

"Tell him to leave the letter, and begone. My father! What! Who is this! Whom are you bringing to me at such a moment?"

And as she spoke, Theon ushered into the chamber no other than Raphael Aben-Ezra, and then retired.

He advanced slowly towards her, and falling on one knee, placed in her hand Synesius's letter.

Hypatia trembled from head to foot at the unexpected apparition. Well, at least he could know nothing of last night and its disgrace. But not daring to look him in the face, she took the letter and opened it. If she had hoped for comfort from it, her hope was not realised.

"Synesius to the Philosopher."

"Even if Fortune cannot take from me all things, yet what she can take she will. And yet of two things, at least, she shall not rob me—to prefer that which is best, and to succour the oppressed. Heaven forbid that she should overpower my judgment, as well as the rest of me! Therefore I do hate injustice, for that I can do: and my will is to stop it, but the power to do so is among the things of which she has bereaved me—before, too, she bereaved me of my children."

"Once, in old times, Milesian men were strong."

And there was a time when I, too, was a comfort to my friends, and when you used to call me a blessing to every one except myself, as I squandered for the benefit of others the favour with which the great regarded me. . . . My hands they were—then. . . . But now I am left desolate of all: unless you have any power. For you and virtue I count among those good things, of which none can deprive me. But you always have power, and will have it, surely, now—using it as nobly as you do.

"As for Nicæus and Philolaus, two noble

youths, and kinsmen of my own, let it be the business of all who honour you, both private men and magistrates, to see that they return possessors of their just rights.'¹

'Of all who honour me!' said she, with a bitter sigh: and then looked up quickly at Raphael, as if fearful of having betrayed herself. She turned deadly pale. In his eyes was a look of solemn pity, which told her that he knew—not all!—surely not all!

'Have you seen the—Miriam?' gasped she, rushing desperately at that which she most dreaded.

'Not yet. I arrived but one hour ago; and Hypatia's welfare is still more important to me than my own.'

'My welfare? It is gone!'

'So much the better. I never found mine till I lost it.'

'What do you mean?'

Raphael lingered, yet without withdrawing his gaze, as if he had something of importance to say, which he longed and yet feared to utter. At last—

'At least, you will confess that I am better dressed than when we met last. I have returned, you see, like a certain demoniac of Galilee, about whom we used to argue, clothed—and perhaps also in my right mind. God knows!'

'Raphael! are you come here to mock me? You know—you cannot have been here an hour without knowing—that but yesterday I dreamed of being'—and she drooped her eyes—'an empress, that to-day I am ruined, to-morrow, perhaps, proscribed. Have you no speech for me but your old sarcasms and ambiguities?'

Raphael stood silent and motionless.

'Why do you not speak? What is the meaning of this sad, earnest look, so different from your former self? You have something strange to tell me!'

'I have,' said he, speaking very slowly. 'What—what would Hypatia answer if, after all, Aben-Ezra said like the dying Julian, "The Galilean has conquered"?''

'Julian never said it! It is a monkish calumny.'

'But I say it!'

'Impossible!'

'I say it!'

'As your dying speech? The true Raphael Aben-Ezra, then, lives no more!'

'But he may be born again!'

'And die to philosophy, that he may be born again into barbaric superstition! Oh worthy metempsychosis! Farewell, sir!' And she rose to go.

'Hear me!—hear me patiently this once, noble, beloved Hypatia! One more sneer of yours, and I may become again the same case-hardened fiend which you knew me of old—to all, at least, but you. Oh, do not think me ungrateful, forgetful! What do I not owe to you, whose pure and lofty words alone kept

¹ An authentic letter of Synesius to Hypatia.

amouldering in me the dim remembrance that there was a Right, a Truth, an unseen world of spirits, after whose pattern man should aspire to live!'

She paused, and listened in wonder. What faith had she of her own! She would at least hear what he had found.

'Hypatia, I am older than you—wiser than you, if wisdom be the fruit of the tree of knowledge. You know but one side of the medal, Hypatia, and the fairer, I have seen its reverse as well as its obverse. Through every form of human thought, of human action, of human sin and folly, have I been wandering for years, and found no rest—as little in wisdom as in folly, in spiritual dreams as in sensual brutality. I could not rest in your Platonism—I will tell you why hereafter. I went on to Stoicism, Epicurism, Cynicism, Scepticism, and in that lowest deep I found a lower depth, when I became sceptical of Scepticism itself.'

'There is a lower deep still,' thought Hypatia to herself, as she recollected last night's magic, but she did not speak.

'Then in utter abasement, I confessed myself lower than the brutes, who had a law, and obeyed it, while I was my own lawless God, devil, harpy, whirlwind. I needed even my own dog to awaken in me the brute consciousness of my own existence, or of anything without myself. I took her, the dog, for my teacher, and obeyed her, for she was wiser than I. And she led me back—the poor dumb beast—like a God-sent and God-obeying angel, to human nature, to mercy, to self-sacrifice, to belief, to worship—to pure and wedded love.'

Hypatia started. And in the struggle to hide her own bewilderment, answered almost without knowing it—

'Wedded love? Wedded love? Is that, then, the paltry bait by which Raphael Aben-Ezra has been tempted to desert philosophy?'

'Thank Heaven!' said Raphael to himself. 'She does not care for me, then! If she had, pride would have kept her from that sneer.'

'Yes, my dear lady,' answered he aloud, 'to desert philosophy, to search after wisdom, because wisdom itself had sought for me, and found me. But, indeed, I had hoped that you would have approved of my following your example for once in my life, and resolving, like you, to enter into the estate of wedlock.'

'Do not sneer at me!' cried she, in her turn, looking up at him with shame and horror, which made him repent of uttering the words. 'If you do not know—you will soon, too soon! Never mention that hateful dream to me, if you wish to have speech of me more!'

A pang of remorse shot through Raphael's heart. Who but he himself had plotted that evil marriage! But she gave him no opportunity of answering her, and went on hurriedly—

'Speak to me rather about yourself. What is this strange and sudden betrothal! What has it to do with Christianity? I had thought that it was rather by the glories of celibacy—

gross and superstitious as their notions of it are—that the Galileans tempted their converts’

‘So had I, my dearest lady,’ answered he, as, glad to turn the subject for a moment, and perhaps a little nettled by her contemptuous tone, he resumed something of his old arch and careless manner. ‘But—there is no accounting for man’s agreeable inconsistencies—one morning I found myself, to my astonishment, seized by two bishops, and betrothed, whether I chose or not, to a young lady who but a few days before had been destined for a nunnery.’

‘Two bishops?’

‘I speak simple truth. The one was syncretist of course,—that most incoherent and most benevolent of busybodies chose to betray me behind my back—but I will not trouble you with that part of my story. The real wonder is that the other episcopal match-maker was Augustine of Hippo himself!’

‘Anything to bribe a convert,’ said Hypatia contemptuously.

‘I assure you, no. He informed me, and he also, openly and unconvincingly enough, that he thought us very much to be pitied for so great a fall. But as we neither of us seemed to have any call for the higher life of celibacy, he could not press it on us. We should have trouble in the flesh. But if we married we had not sinned. To which I answered that my humility was quite content to sit in the very lowest ranks, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’

He replied by an encomium on virginity, in which I seemed to hear again the voice of Hypatia herself.

‘And sneered at it inwardly, as you used to sneer at me.’

‘Really I was in no sneering mood at that moment, and whatsoever I may have felt inclined to reply, he was kind enough to say for me and himself the next minute.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘He went on, to my utter astonishment, by such a eulogium on wedlock as I never heard from Jew or heathen, and ended by advice to young married folk so thoroughly excellent and to the point, that I could not help telling him, when he stopped, what a pity I thought it that he had not himself married, and made some good woman happy by putting his own recipes into practice. And at that, Hypatia, I saw an expression on his face which made me wish for the moment that I had bitten out this impudent tongue of mine, before I so rashly touched some deep old wound.’

‘That man touched some deep old wound. . . That man has wept bitter tears ere now, be sure of it.’

But he turned the conversation instantly, like a well-bred gentleman as he is, by saying, with the sweetest smile, that though he had made it a solemn rule never to be a party to making up any marriage, yet in one case Heaven had so plainly pointed us out for each other, etc. etc., that he could not refuse himself the pleasure. . . and ended by a blessing as kindly as ever came from the lips of man.

‘You seem wonderfully taken with the sophist
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of Hippo,’ said Hypatia impatiently, ‘and forget, perhaps, that his opinions, especially when, as you confess, they are utterly inconsistent with themselves, are not quite as important to me as they seem to have become to you.’

‘Whether he be consistent or not about marriage,’ said Raphael, somewhat proudly, ‘I care little. I went to him to tell me, not about the relation of the sexes, on which point I am probably as good a judge as he—but about God, and on that subject he told me enough to bring me back to Alexandria, that I might undo, if possible, somewhat of the wrong which I have done to Hypatia.’

‘What wrong have you done me?’ . . . You are silent? Be sure, at least, that whatsoever it may be, you will not wipe it out by trying to make a proselyte of me!’

‘Be not too sure of that. I have found too great a treasure not to wish to share it with Theon’s daughter.’

‘A treasure!’ said she, half scornfully.

‘Yes, indeed. You recollect my last words, when we parted, there below a few months ago?’

Hypatia was silent. One terrible possibility at which he had hinted flashed across her memory for the first time since, . . . but she spurned proudly from her the heaven sent warning.

‘I told you that, like Diogenes, I went forth to seek a man. Did I not promise you, that when I had found one you should be the first to hear of him? And I have found a man.’

Hypatia waved her beautiful hand. ‘I know whom you would say that crucified one lie it so. I want not a man, but a god.’

‘What sort of a god, Hypatia? A god made up of our own intellectual notions, or rather of negations of them—of infinity and eternity, and invisibility, and impassibility—and why not of immortality, too, Hypatia? For I recollect we used to agree that it was a carnal degrading of the Supreme One to predicate of Him so merely human a thing as virtue.’

Hypatia was silent.

‘Now I have always had a sort of fancy that what we wanted, as the first predicate of our Absolute One, was that He was to be not merely an infinite God—whatever that meant, which I suspect we did not always see quite clearly—or an eternal one—or an omnipotent one—or even merely a one God at all, none of which predicates, I fear, did we understand more clearly than the first—but that He must be a righteous God—or rather, as we used sometimes to say, that He was to have no predicate—Righteousness itself. And all along, I could not help remembering that my old sacred Hebrew books told me of such a one, and feeling that they might have something to tell me which—’

‘Which I did not tell you! And thus, then, caused your air of reserve, and of sly superiority over the woman whom you mocked by calling her your pupil! I little suspected you of so

truly Jewish a jealousy! Why, oh why, did you not tell me this?

'Because I was a beast, Hypatia, and had all but forgotten what this righteousness was like, and was afraid to find out lest it should condemn me. Because I was a devil, Hypatia, and hated righteousness, and neither wished to see you righteous, nor God righteous either, because then you would both have been unlike myself. God be merciful to me a sinner.'

She looked up in his face. The man was changed as if by miracle—and yet not changed. There was the same gallant consciousness of power, the same subtle and humorous twinkle in those strong ripe Jewish features and those glittering eyes, and yet every line in his face was softened, sweetened, the mask of sneering fauconess was gone—impugning tenderness and earnestness beamed from his whole countenance. The chrysalis case had fallen off, and disclosed the butterfly within. She sat looking at him, and passed her hand across her eyes, as if to try whether the apparition would not vanish. He, the subtle—he, the mocker—he, the Laicist of Alexandria—he whose depth and power had awed her, even in his most polluted days. And this was the end of him.

'It is a freak of cowardly superstition. Those Christians have been frightening him about his sins and their Tartarus.'

She looked again into his bright, clear, fearless face, and was ashamed of her own calumny. And this was the end of him—of Syneus—of Augustine—of learned and unlearned, Goth and Roman. The great flood would have its way, then. Could she alone fight against it?

She could! Would she submit?—She? Her will should stand firm, her reason free, to the last—to the death if need be. And yet last night!—last night!

At last she spoke, without looking up.

'And what if you have found a man in that crucified one? Have you found in him a God also?'

'Does Hypatia recollect Glaucon's definition of the perfectly righteous man? How, without being guilty of one unrighteous act, he must labour his life long under the imputation of being utterly unrighteous, in order that his disinterestedness may be thoroughly tested, and by proceeding in such a course, arrive inevitably, as Glaucon says, not only in Athens of old, or in Judaea of old, but, as you yourself will agree, in Christian Alexandria at this moment, at—do you remember, Hypatia?—bonds, and the scourge, and lastly, at the cross itself. If Plato's idea of the righteous man be a crucified one, why may not mine also? If, as we both—and old Bishop Clements, too—as good a Platonist as we, remember—and Augustine himself, would agree, Plato in specking those strange words, spoke not of himself, but by the Spirit of God, why should not others have spoken by the same Spirit when they spoke the same words?'

'A crucified man. Yes. But a crucified God, Raphael! I shudder at the blasphemy.'

'So do my poor dear fellow-countrymen. And they the more righteous in their daily doings, Hypatia, on account of their fancied reverence for the glory of One who probably knows best how to preserve and manifest His own glory? But you assent to the definition? Take care!' said he, with one of his arch smiles, 'I have been fighting with Augustine, and have become of late a terrible dialectician. Do you assent to it?'

'Of course—it is Plato's.'

'But do you assent merely because it is written in the book called Plato's, or because your reason tells you that it is true? You will not tell me. Tell me this, then, at least. Is not the perfectly righteous man the highest specimen of man?'

'Surely,' said she half carelessly, but not unwilling, like a philosopher and a Greek, as a matter of course, to embark in anything like a word battle, and to shut out sadder thoughts for a moment.

'Then must not the Autanthropos, the archetypal and ideal man, who is more perfect than any individual specimen, be perfectly righteous also?'

'Yes.'

'Suppose, then, for the sake of one of those pleasant old games of ours, an argument, that he wished to manifest his righteousness to the world. The only method for him, according to Plato, would be Glaucon's, of calumny and persecution, the scourge and the cross?'

'What words are these, Raphael? Maternal scourges and crosses for an eternal and spiritual idea?'

'Did you ever yet, Hypatia, consider at leisure what the archetype of man might be like?'

Hypatia studied, as at a new thought, and confessed as every Neo-Platonist would have done—that she had never done so.

'And yet our master, Plato, bids us believe that there was a substantial archetype of each thing, from a flower to a nation, eternal in the heavens. Perhaps we have not been faithful Platonists enough heretofore, my dearest tutor. Perhaps, being philosophers, and somewhat of Platonists to boot, we began all our lucubrations as we did our prayers, by thanking God that we were not as other men were, and so misread another passage in the *Republic*, which we used in pleasant old days to be fond of quoting.'

'What was that?' asked Hypatia, who became more and more interested every moment.

'That philosophers were men.'

'Are you mocking me? Plato defines the philosopher as the man who seeks after the objects of knowledge, while others seek after those of opinion.'

'And most truly. But what if, in our eagerness to assert that wherein the philosopher differed from other men, we had overlooked that in which he resembled other men, and so forgot

that, after all, man was a genus whereof the philosopher was only a species !

Hypatia sighed

'Do you not think, then, that as the greater contains the less, and the archetype of the genus that of the species, we should have been wiser if we had speculated a little more on the archetype of man as man, before we meddled with a pair of that archetype,—the archetype of the philosopher ? . . . Certainly it would have been the easier course, for there are more men than philosophers, Hypatia, and every man is a real man, and a fair subject for examination, while every philosopher is not a real philosopher—our friends the Academics, for instance, and even a Neo-Platonist or two whom we know ! You seem impatient. Shall I cease ?'

'You mistook the cause of my impatience,' answered she, looking up at him with her great sad eyes 'Go on'

'Now—for I am going to do terribly scholastic—is it not the very definition of man, that he is, alone of all known things, a spirit temporarily united to an animal body ?'

'Enchanted in it, as in a dungeon, rather,' said she sighing

'Be it so if you will. But—must we not say that the archetype—the very man—that if he is the archetype, he too will be for must have been, once at least, temporarily enchanted into an animal body ?' 'You are silent. I will not press you. Only ask you to consider at your leisure whether Plato may not justify somewhat from the charge of absurdity the fisherman of Gahlee, when he said that he in whose image man is made was made flesh, and dwelt with him bodily there by the lake-side at Tiberias, and that he beheld His Glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.'

'That last question is a very different one. God made flesh ! My reason revolts at it.'

'Old Homer's reason did not.'

Hypatia started, for she recollected her yesterday's cravings after those old, pulpy, and human deities. And—'Go on,' she cried eagerly

'Tell me, then—This archetype of man, if it exists anywhere, it must exist eternally in the mind of God ! At least, Plato would have so said ?'

'Yes'

'And derive its existence immediately from Him ?'

'Yes.'

'But a man is one willing person, unlike to all others.'

'Yes.'

'Then this archetype must be such.'

'I suppose so.'

'But possessing the faculties and properties of all men in their highest perfection.'

'Of course.'

'How sweetly and obediently my late teacher becomes my pupil !'

Hypatia looked at him with her eyes full of tears.

'I never taught you anything, Raphael.'

'You taught me most, beloved lady, when you least thought of it. But tell me one thing more. Is it not the property of every man to be a son ? For you can conceive of a man as not being a father, but not as not being a son.'

'Be it so.'

'Then this archetype must be a son also.'

'Whose son, Raphael ?'

'Why not of "Zeus, father of gods and men" ? For we agreed that it—we will call it he, now, having agreed that it is a person—could owe its existence to none but God Himself.'

'And what then ?' said Hypatia, fixing those glorious eyes full on his face, in an agony of doubt, but yet, as Raphael declared to his dying day, all hope and joy

'Well, Hypatia, and must not a son be of the same species as his father ? "Eagles," says the poet, "do not beget doves." Is the word son anything but an empty and false metaphor, unless the son be the perfect and equal likeness of his father ?'

'Heroes beget sons worse than themselves,' says the poet.

'We are not talking now of men as they are, whom Homer's Zeus calls the most wretched of all the beasts of the field, we are talking—are we not ?—of a perfect and archetypal Son, and a perfect and archetypal Father, in a perfect and eternal world, wherein is neither growth, decay, nor change, and of a perfect and archetypal generation, of which the only definition can be, that he begets its perfect like !'

You are silent. Be so, Hypatia. We have gone up too far into the abysses

And so they both were silent for a while. And Raphael thought solemn thoughts about Victoria, and about ancient signs of Isaiah's, which were to him none the less prophecies concerning The Man whom he had found, because he prayed and trusted that the same signs might be repeated to himself, and a child given to him also, as a token that, in spite of all his business, 'God was with him.'

But he was a Jew, and a man. Hypatia was a Greek, and a woman—and for that matter, so were the men of her school. To her, the relations and duties of common humanity shone with none of the awful and divine meaning which they did in the eyes of the converted Jew, awakened for the first time in his life to know the meaning of his own scriptures, and become an Israelite indeed. And Raphael's dialectic, too, though it might silence her, could not convince her. Her creed, like those of her fellow-philosophers, was one of the fancy and the religious sentiment, rather than of the reason and the moral sense. All the brilliant cloud-world in which she had revolved for years,—cosmogonies, emanations, atomies, symbolisms, hierarchies, abysses, eternities, and the rest of it—though she could not rest in them, not even believe in them—though they had vanished into thin air at her most utter need,—yet—they were too pretty to be lost sight of

for ever, and, struggling against the growing conviction of her reason, she answered at last—

'And you would have me give up, as you seem to have done, the sublime, the beautiful, the heavenly, for a dry and barren chain of dialectic—in which, for aught I know,—for after all, Raphael, I cannot cope with you—I am a woman—a weak woman!'

And she covered her face with her hands

'For aught you know, what?' asked Raphael gently

'You may have made the worse appear the better reason'

'So said Aristophanes of Socrates. But hear me once more, beloved Hypatia. You refuse to give up the beautiful, the sublime, the heavenly? What if Raphael Aben-Ezra, at least, had never found them till now? Recollect what I said just now—What if our old Beautiful, and Sublime, and Heavenly, had been the sheerest materialism, notions spun by our own brains out of the impressions of pleasant things, and high things, and low things, and awful things, which we had seen with our bodily eyes? What if I had discovered that the spiritual is not the intellectual, but the moral, and that the spiritual world is not, as we used to make it, a world of our own intellectual abstractions, or of our own physical emotions, religious or other, but a world of righteous or unrighteous persons? What if I had discovered that one law of the spiritual world, in which all others were contained, was righteousness, and that disharmony with that law, which we called unspirituality, was not being vulgar, or clumsy, or ill-taught, or unmagmatic, or dull, but simply being unrighteous? What if I had discovered that righteousness, and it alone, was the beautiful righteousness, the sublime, the heavenly, the Godlike—ay, God Himself? And what if it had dawned on me, as by a great sunrise, what that righteousness was like? What if I had seen a human being, a woman, too, a young weak girl, showing forth the glory and the beauty of God? Showing me that the beautiful was to mingle unshrinking, for duty's sake, with all that is most foul and loathsome, that the sublime was to stoop to the most menial offices, the most outwardly-degrading self-denials, that to be heavenly was to know that the commonest relations, the most vulgar duties, of earth, were God's commands, and only to be performed aright by the help of the same spirit by which He rules the Universe, that righteousness was to love, to help, to suffer for—if need be, to die for—those who, in themselves, seem fitted to arouse no feelings except indignation and disgust? What if, for the first time, I trust not for the last time, in my life, I saw this vision; and at the sight of it my eyes were opened, and I knew it for the likeness and the glory of God? What if I, a Platonist, like John of Galilee, and Paul of Tarsus, yet, like them, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, had confessed to myself—If the creature can love thus, how much more its archetype? If weak woman

can endure thus, how much more a Son of God? If for the good of others, man has strength to sacrifice himself in part, God will have strength to sacrifice Himself utterly. If He has not done it, He will do it or He will be less beautiful, less sublime, less heavenly, less righteous than my poor conception of Him, ay, than this weak playful girl! Why should I not believe those who tell me that He has done it already? What if their evidence be, after all, only probability? I do not want mathematical demonstration to prove to me that when a child was in danger his father saved him—neither do I here. My reason, my heart, every faculty of me, except this stupid sensuous experience, which I find deceiving me every moment, which cannot even prove to me my own existence, accepts that story of Calvary as the most natural, most probable, most necessary of earthly events, assuming only that God is a righteous Person, and not some dream of an all-pervading necessary spirit—nonsense which, in its very terms, confesses its own materialism'

Hypatia answered with a forced smile,

'Raphael Aben-Ezra has deserted the method of the severe dialectician for that of the eloquent lover'

'Not altogether,' said she, smiling in return. 'For suppose that I had said to myself, We Platonists agree that the sight of God is the highest good.'

Hypatia once more shuddered at last night's recollections

'And if He be righteous, and righteousness be—as I know it to be—identical with love, then He will desire that highest good for men far more than they can desire it for themselves.

Then He will desire to show Himself and His own righteousness to them. Will you make answer, dearest Hypatia, or shall I? or does your silence give consent? At least let me go on to say this, that if God do desire to show His righteousness to men, His only perfect method, according to Plato, will be that of calumny, persecution, the scourge, and the cross, that so He, like Glaucon's righteous man, may remain for ever free from any suspicion of selfish interest, or weakness of endurance. Am I deserting the dialectic method now, Hypatia?

You are still silent? You will not hear me, I see. At some future day, the philosopher may condescend to lend a kinder ear to the words of her greatest debtor. . . . Or, rather, she may condescend to hear, in her own heart, the voice of that Archetypal Man, who has been loving her, guiding her, helping her with every perfection of body and of mind, inspiring her with all pure and noble longings, and only asks of her to listen to her own reason, her own philosophy, when they proclaim Him as the giver of them, and to impart them freely and humbly, as He has imparted them to her, to the poor, and the brutish, and the sinful, whom He loves as well as He loves her. . . . Farewell!'

'Stay!' said she, springing up: 'whither are you going?'

'To do a little good before I die, having done much evil. To farm, plant, and build, and rescue a little corner of Ormuz's earth, as the Persians would say, out of the dominion of Ahri-man. To fight Assurian robbers, feed Thracian mercenaries, save a few widows from starvation, and a few orphans from slavery. Perhaps to leave behind me a son of David's line, who will be a better Jew, because a better Christian, than his father. . . We shall have trouble in the flesh, Augustine tells us. But, as I answered him, I really have had so little thereof yet, that my fair share may probably be rather a useful education than otherwise. Farewell!'

'Stay!' said she. 'Come again!—again! And her. . . Bring her. . . I must see her! She must be noble, indeed, to be worthy of you!'

'She is many a hundred miles away.'

'Ah! Perhaps she might have taught something to me—me, the philosopher! You need not have feared me. I have no heart to make converts now. Oh, Raphael Aben Ezra, why break the husel reed? My plans are scattered to the winds, my pupils worthless, my fair name tarnished, my conscience heavy with the thought of my own cruelty. If you do not know all, you will know it but too soon. My last hope, Synesius, implores for himself the hope which I need from him!'

And, over and above all. You! Et tu, Brute! Why not fold my mantle round me, like Julius of old, and die!'

Raphael stood looking sadly at her, as her whole face sank into utter prostration.

'Yes—come. The Galilean. If He conquers strong men, can the weak mind resist Him? Come soon. . . This afternoon. My heart is breaking fast.'

'At the eighth hour this afternoon.'

'Yes. At noon I lecture. . . take my farewell, rather, for ever of the school! Gods! What have I to say? . . . And tell me about Him of Nazareth. Farewell!'

'Farewell, beloved lady! At the ninth hour, you shall hear of Him of Nazareth!'

Why did his own words sound to him strangely pregnant, all but ominous? He almost fancied that not he, but some third person had spoken them. He kissed Hypatia's hand, it was as cold as ice; and his heart, too, in spite of all his bliss, felt cold and heavy, as he left the room.

As he went down the steps into the street, a young man sprang from behind one of the pillars, and seized his arm.

'Aha! my young Corypheus of pious plunderers! What do you want with me?'

Philammon, for it was he, looked at him an instant, and recognised him.

'Save her! for the love of God, save her!'

'Whom?'

'Hypatia!'

'How long has her salvation been important to you, my good friend?'

'For God's sake,' said Philammon, 'go back and warn her! She will hear you—you are

rich—you used to be her friend—I know you—I have heard of you. . . Oh, if you ever cared for her—if you ever felt for her a thousandth part of what I feel—go in and warn her not to stir from home!'

'I must hear more of this,' said Raphael, who saw that the boy was in earnest. 'Come in with me, and speak to her father.'

'No! not in that house! Never in that house again! Do not ask me why, but go yourself! She will not hear me. Did you—did you prevent her from listening?'

'What do you mean?'

'I have been here—ages! I sent a note in by her maid, and she returned no answer.'

Raphael recollected then, for the first time, a note which he had seen brought to her during the conversation.

'I saw her receive a note. She tossed it away. Tell me your story. If there is reason in it, I will bear your message myself. Of what is she to be warned?'

'Of a plot. I know that there is a plot—against her! among the monks and Parabolani. As I lay in bed this morning in Arsenius's room—they thought I was asleep—'

'Arsenius! Has that venerable fanatic, then, gone the way of all monastic flesh, and turned persecutor?'

'God forbid! I heard him beseeching Peter the Reader to refrain from something, I cannot tell what, but I caught her name. I heard Peter say, "She that hindereth will hinder till she be taken out of the way." And when he went out into the passage I heard him say to another, "That thou doest, do quickly! . . ."

'These are slender grounds, my friend.'

'Ah, you do not know of what those men are capable!'

'Do I not? Where did you and I meet last?'

Philammon blushed and burst forth again. 'That was enough for me. I know the hatred which they bear her, the crimes which they attribute to her. Her house would have been attacked last night had it not been for Cyril. . . And I knew Peter's tone. He spoke too gently and softly not to mean something devilish. I watched all the morning for an opportunity of escape, and here I am!—Will you take my message, or see her—'

'What?'

'God only knows, and the devil whom they worship instead of God!'

Raphael hurried back into the house—'Could he see Hypatia?' She had shut herself up in her private room, strictly commanding that no visitor should be admitted. . . 'Where was Theon, then?' 'He had gone out by the canal gate half an hour before, with a bundle of mathematical papers under his arm, no one knew whither. . . "Inbecile old idiot!" and he hastily wrote on his tablet—'

'Do not despise the young monk's warning. I believe him to speak the truth. As you love yourself and your father, Hypatia, stir not out to-day.'

He bribed a maid to take the message upstairs:

and passed his time in the hall in warning the servants. But they would not believe him. It was true the shops were shut in some quarters, and the Museum gardens empty, people were a little frightened after yesterday. But Cyril, they had heard for certain, had threatened excommunication only last night to any Christian who broke the peace, and there had not been a monk to be seen in the streets the whole morning. And as for any harm happening to their mistress—impossible! 'The very wild beasts would not tear her,' said the huge negro porter, 'if she was thrown into the amphitheatre.'

Whereat a man bowed his ears for talking of such a thing; and then, by way of mending it, declared that she knew for certain that her mistress could turn aside the lightning, and call legions of spirits to fight for her with a nod. What was to be done with such idolaters? And yet who could help liking them the better for it?

At last the answer came down, in the old graceful, stiched, self-conscious signifying.

'It is a strange way of persuading me to your new faith, to bid me beware, on the very first day of your preaching, of the wickedness of those who believe it. I think you—but your affection for me makes you timorous. I dread nothing. They will not dare. Did they dare now, they would have dared long ago. As for that youth—to obey or to believe his word, even to seem aware of his existence, were shame to me henceforth. Because he is insolent enough to warn me therefore I will go. Fear not for me. You would not wish me, for the first time in my life, to fear for myself. I must follow my destiny. I must speak the words which I have to speak. Above all, I must let no Christian say, that the philosopher dared less than the lunatic. If my Gods are Gods, then will they protect me; and if not, let your God prove His rule as seems to Him good.'

Raphael tore the letter to fragments. The guards, at least, were not gone and like the rest of the world. It wanted half an hour of the time of her lecture. In the interval he might summon force enough to crush all Alexandria. And turning suddenly, he darted out of the room and out of the house.

'*Quem Deus vult perdere*——' cried he to Philammon, with a gesture of grief. 'Stay here and stop her!—make a last appeal! Drag the horses' heads down, if you can! I will be back in ten minutes.' And he ran off for the nearest gate of the Museum gardens.

On the other side of the gardens lay the courtyard of the palace. There were gates in plenty communicating between them. If he could but see Orestes, even alarm the guard in time!

And he hurried through the walks and alcoves, now deserted by the fearful citizens, to the nearest gate. It was fast, and barricaded firmly on the outside.

Terrified, he ran on to the next, it was

barred also. He saw the reason in a moment, and maidenly as he saw it. The guards, careless about the Museum, or reasonably fearing no danger from the Alexandrian populace to the glory and wonder of their city, or perhaps wishing wisely enough to concentrate their forces in the narrowest space, had contented themselves with cutting off all communication with the gardens, and so converting the lofty partition-wall into the outer enceinte of their marble citadel. At all events, the doors leading from the Museum itself might be open. He knew them every one, every hall, passage, statue, picture, almost every book in that vast treasure-house of ancient civilisation. He found an entrance, hurried through well-known corridors to a puerum through which he and Orestes had lounged a hundred times, their lips full of bad words, their hearts of worse thoughts, gathered in those records of the fan wickedness of old.

It was fast. He beat upon it, but no one answered. He rushed on and tried another. No one answered there. Another—still silence and despair! He rushed up stairs, hoping that from the windows above he might be able to call to the guard. The prudent soldiers had locked and barred the entrances to the upper floors of the whole right wing, lest the palace court should be commanded from thence. Whither now? Back—and whither then? Back, round endless galleries, vaulted halls, staircases, doorways, some fast some open, up and down, trying this way and that, losing himself at whiles in that enormous silent labyrinth. And his breath failed him, his throat was parched, his face burned as with the sunbeam wind, his legs were trembling under him. His presence of mind, usually so perfect, failed him utterly. He was baffled, nettled, there was a spell upon him. Was it a dream? Was it all one of those hideous nightmares of endless pillars beyond pillars, stairs above stairs, rooms within rooms, changing, shifting, lengthening out for ever and for ever before the dreamer, narrowing, closing in on him, choking him? Was it a dream? Was he doomed to wander for ever and for ever in some palace of the dead, to expiate the sin which he had learnt and done therein? His brain, for the first time in his life, began to reel! He could recollect nothing but that something dreadful was to happen—and that he had to prevent it, and could not. Where was he now? In a little by-chamber. He had talked with her there a hundred times, looking out over the Pharos and the blue Mediterranean. What was that near below? A sea of wolvering yelling heads, thousands on thousands, down to the very beach, and from their innumerable throats one mighty wail—'God, and the mother of God!' Cyril's hounds were loose. He reeled from the window, and darted frantically away again.

Whither, he knew not, and never knew until his dying day.

And Philammon? . . . Sufficient for the chapter, as for the day, is the evil thereof.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WOMAN'S LOVE

PELAGIA had passed that night alone in sleepless sorrow, which was not diminished by her finding herself the next morning palpably a prisoner in her own house. Her girls told her that they had orders—they would not say from whom—to prevent her leaving her own apartments. And though some of them made the announcement with sighs and tears of condolence, yet more than one, she could see, was well inclined to make her feel that her power was over, and that there were others besides herself who might aspire to the honour of reigning favourite.

What matter to her? Whispers, sneers, and sneering answers fell on her ear unheeded. She had one idol, and she had lost it, one power, and it had failed her. In the heaven above, and in the earth beneath, was neither peace, nor help, nor hope, nothing but black, blank, stupid terror and despair. The little weak infant soul, which had just awakened in her, had been crushed and stunned in its very birth hour, and instinctively she crept away to the roof of the tower where her apartments were, to sit and weep alone.

There she sat, hour after hour, beneath the shade of the large windsail, which served in all Alexandrian houses the double purpose of a shelter from the sun and a ventilator for the rooms below, and her eye roved carelessly over that endless sea of roofs and towers, and masts, and glittering canals, and gliding boats, but she saw none of them—nothing but one beloved face, lost, lost for ever.

At last a low whistle roused her from her dream. She looked up. Across the narrow lane, from one of the embrasures of the opposite house parapet bright eyes were peering at her. She moved angrily to escape them.

The whistle was repeated, and a head rose cautiously above the parapet. It was Miriam's. Casting a careful look around, Pelagia went forward. What could the old woman want with her?

Miriam made interrogative signs, which Pelagia understood as asking her whether she was alone, and the moment that an answer in the negative was returned, Miriam rose, tossed over to her feet a letter weighted with a pebble, and then vanished again.

'I have watched here all day.' They refused me admittance below. Beware of Wulf, of every one. Do not stir from your chamber. There is a plot to carry you off to-night, and give you up to your brother the monk; you are betrayed, be brave.

Pelagia read it with blanching cheek and staring eyes; and took, at least, the last part of Miriam's advice. For walking down the stair, she passed proudly through her own rooms, and commanding back the girls who would have stayed her, with a voice and gesture

at which they quailed, went straight down, the letter in her hand, to the apartment where the Amal usually spent his mid-day hours.

As she approached the door, she heard loud voices within. His '—yes, but Wulf's also. Her heart failed her, and she stopped a moment to listen. . . She heard Hypatia's name, and mad with curiosity, crouched down at the lock, and hearkened to every word.

'She will not accept me, Wulf.'

'If she will not, she shall go further and fare worse. Besides, I tell you, she is hard run. It is her last chance, and she will jump at it. The Christians are mad with her, if a storm blows up, her life is not worth—that.'

'It is a pity that we have not brought her hither already.'

'It is, but we could not. We must not break with Orestes till the palace is in our hands.'

'And will it ever be in our hands, friend?'

'Certain. We were round at every banquet last night, and the very notion of an Amal's heading them made them so eager, that we had to bribe them to be quiet rather than to rise.'

'Odim! I wish I were among them now.'

'Wait till the city rises. If the day pass over without a riot, I know nothing. The treasure is all on board, is it not?'

'Yes, and the galleys ready. I have been working like a horse at them all the morning, as you would let me do nothing else. And to-morrow will not be back from the palace, you say, till nightfall.'

If we are attacked first, we are to throw up a fire signal to him, and he is to come off hither with what holds he can muster. If the palace is attacked first, he is to give us the signal, and we are to pack up and row round thither. And in the meanwhile he is to make that bound of a Greek prefect as drunk as he can.'

'The Greek will see him under the table. He has drugs, I know, as all these Roman rascals have, to sober him when he likes, and then he sets to work and drinks again. Send off old Smul, and let him beat the armourer if he can.'

'A very good thought,' said Wulf, and came out instantly for the purpose of putting it in practice.

Pelagia had just time to retreat into an adjoining doorway, but she had heard enough, and as Wulf passed, she sprang to him and caught him by the arm.

'Oh, come in hither! Speak to me one moment, for mercy's sake speak to me!' and she drew him, half against his will, into the chamber, and throwing his feet, broke out into a childlike wail.

Wulf stood silent, utterly discomfited by this unexpected submission, where he had expected petulant and artful resistance. He almost felt guilty and ashamed, as he looked down into that beautiful imploring face, convulsed with simple sorrow, as of a child for a broken toy. . . . At last she spoke.

'Oh, what have I done—what have I done? Why must you take him from me? What have I done but love him, honour him, worship him? I know you love him, and I love you for it.—I do indeed! But you—what is your love to mine? Oh, I would do for him—be torn in pieces for him—now, this moment!'

Wulf was silent.

'What have I done but love him? What could I wish but to make him happy? I was rich enough, praised, and petted, and then he came, . . . glorious as he is, like a god among men among apes rather—and I worshipped him—was I wrong in that? I gave up all for him—was I wrong in that? I gave him myself—what could I do more? He condescended to like me—he the hero! Could I help submitting? I loved him—could I help loving him? Did I wrong him in that? Cruel, cruel Wulf!'

Wulf was forced to be stern, or he would have melted at once.

'And what was your love worth to him? What has it done for him? It has made him a sot, an idler, a laughing-stock, to these Greek dogs, when he might have been their conqueror, their king. Foolish woman, who cannot see that your love has been his bane, his ruin! He, who ought by now to have been sitting upon the throne of the Ptolemies, the lord of all south of the Mediterranean—as he shall be still!'

Pelagia looked up at him wide eyed, as if her mind was taking in slowly some vast new thought, under the weight of which it reeled already. Then she rose slowly.

'And he might be Emperor of Africa.'

'And he shall be, but not—'

'Not with me!' she almost shrieked. 'No! not with wretched, ignorant, polluted me! I see—oh-God, I see it all! And this is why you want him to marry her—her—'

She could not utter the dreaded name.

Wulf could not trust himself to speak, but he bowed his head in acquiescence.

'Yes—I will go—up into the desert—with Philammon—and you shall never hear of me again. And I will be a nun, and pray for him, that he may be a great king, and conquer all the world. You will tell him why I went away, will you not? Yes, I will go—now, at once—'

She turned away hurriedly, as if to act upon her promise, and then she sprang again to Wulf with a sudden shudder.

'I cannot, Wulf—I cannot leave him! I shall go mad if I do! Do not be angry,—I will promise anything—take any oath you like, if you will only let me stay here. Only as a slave—as anything—if I may but look at him sometimes. No—not even that—but to be under the same roof with him, only—Oh, let me be but a slave in the kitchen! I will make over all I have to him—to you—to any one! And you shall tell him that I am gone—dead, if you will.—Only let me stay! And I will

wear rags, and grind in the mill. . . . Even that will be delicious, to know that he is eating the bread which I have made! And if I ever dare speak to him—even to come near him—let the steward hang me up by the wrists, and whip me, like the slave which I deserve to be!'

And then shall I soon grow old and ugly with grief, and there will be no more danger then, dear Wulf, will there, from this accursed face of mine? Only promise me that, and— There! he is calling you! Don't let him come in and see me—I cannot bear it! Go to him, quick, and tell him all—No, don't tell him yet.

And she sank down again on the floor, as Wulf went out murmuring to himself—

'Poor child! poor child! well for thee this day if thou wert dead, and at the bottom of Hela!'

And Pelagia heard what he said.

Gradually, amid sobs and tears, and stormy confusion of impossible hopes and projects, those words took root in her mind, and spread, till they filled her whole heart and brain.

'Well for me if I were dead!'

And she rose slowly.

'Well for me if I were dead? And why not? Then it would indeed be all settled! There would be no more danger from poor little Pelagia then.

She went slowly, firmly, proudly, into the well-known chamber. She threw herself upon the bed, and covered the pillow with kisses. Her eye fell on the Ainal's sword, which hung across the bed's head, after the custom of Gothic warriors. She seized it, and took it down, shuddering.

'Yes! Let it be with this, if it must be.

And it must be—I cannot bear it! Anything but shame! To have fancied all my life—vain fool that I was!—that every one loved and admired me, and to find that they were despising me, hating me, all along! Those students at the lecture-room door told me I was despised.—The old monk told me so—Fool that I was! I forgot it next day.—For he—he loved me still!—Ah—how could I believe them, till his own lips had said it? Intolerable! And yet women as bad as I am have been honoured—when they were dead. What was that song which I used to sing about Epicharia, who hung herself in the litter, and Leana, who bit out her tongue, lest the torture should drive them to betray their lovers? There used to be a statue of Leana, they say, at Athens—a lioness without a tongue. . . . And whenever I sang the song, the theatre used to rise, and shout, and call them noble and blessed. . . . I never could tell why then; but I know now!—I know now! Perhaps they may call me noble, after all. At least, they may say "She was a—a—but she dare die for the man she loved!"

Ay, but God despises me too, and hates me. He will send me to eternal fire. Philammon said so—though he was my brother. The old monk said so—though he wept as he said it. . . . The flames of hell for ever! Oh, not for ever!

Great, dreadful God! Not for ever! Indeed, I did not know! No one taught me about right and wrong, and I never knew that I had been baptized—Indeed, I never knew! And it was so pleasant—so pleasant to be happy, and praised, and loved, and to see happy faces round me. How could I help it? The birds there who are singing in the darling, beloved court—they do what they like, and Thou art not angry with them for being happy! And Thou wilt not be more cruel to me than to them, great God—for what did I know more than they? Thou hast made the beautiful sunshine, and the pleasant, pleasant world, and the flowers, and the birds—Thou wilt not send me to burn for ever and ever! Will not a hundred years be punishment enough—or a thousand? Oh God! is not this punishment enough already,—to have to leave him just as—just as I am beginning to long to be good, and to be worthy of him? Oh, have mercy—mercy—mercy—and let me go after I have been punished enough! Why may I not turn into a bird, or even a worm, and come back again out of that horrible place, to see the sun shine, and the flowers grow once more? Oh, am I not punishing myself already? Will not this help to atone? . . . Yes—I will die!—and perhaps so God may pity me!’

And with trembling hands she drew the sword from its sheath and covered the blade with kisses.

‘Yes—on this sword—with which he won his battles. That is right—his to the last! How keen and cold it looks! Will it be very painful? No—I will not try the point, or my heart might fail me. I will fall on it at once let it hurt me as it may, it will be too late to draw back then. And after all it is his sword—It will not have the heart to torture me much. And yet he struck me himself this morning!’

And at that thought, a long wild cry of misery broke from her lips, and rang through the house. Hurriedly she fastened the sword upright to the foot of the bed, and tore open her tunic. . . . ‘Here—under this widowed bosom, where his head will never lie again! There are footsteps in the passage! Quick, Pelagia! Now—’

And she threw up her arms wildly, in act to fall.

‘It is his step! And he will find me, and never know that it is for him I die!’

The Amal tried the door. It was fast. With a single blow he burst it open, and demanded—

‘What was that shriek? What is the meaning of this? Pelagia!’

Pelagia, like a child caught playing with a forbidden toy, hid her face in her hands and cowered down.

‘What is it?’ cried he, lifting her.

But she burst from his arms.

‘No, no!—never more! I am not worthy of you! Let me die, wretch that I am! I can only drag you down. You must be a king. You must marry her—the wise woman!’

‘Hypatia! She is dead!’

‘Dead?’ shrieked Pelagia.

‘Murdered, an hour ago, by those Christian devils.’

Pelagia put her hands over her eyes, and burst into tears. Were they of pity or of joy?

She did not ask herself; and we will not ask her.

‘Where is my sword? Soul of Odin! Why is it fastened here?’

‘I was going to—Do not be angry! . . . They told me that I had better die, and—’

Tho Amal stood thunderstruck for a moment.

‘Oh, do not strike me again! Send me to the mill. Kill me now with your own hand! Anything but another blow!’

‘A blow!—Noble woman!’ cried the Amal, clasping her in his arms.

The storm was past, and Pelagia had been nestling to that beloved heart, coming like a happy dove, for many a minute before the Amal aroused himself and her . . .

‘Now!—quick! We have not a moment to lose. Up to the tower, where you will be safe; and then to show these curs what comes of snarling round the wild wolves’ den!’

CHAPTER XXIX

NEMESIS

AND was the Amal’s news true, then?

Philammon saw Raphael rush across the street into the Museum gardens. His last words had been a command to stay where he was, and the boy obeyed him. The black porter who let Raphael out told him somewhat insolently, that his mistress would see no one, and receive no messages, but he had made up his mind complained of the sun, quietly ensconced himself behind a buttress, and sat coiled up on the pavement, ready for a desperate spring. The slave stared at him, but he was accustomed to the vagaries of philosophers, and thanking the gods that he was not born in that station of life, retired to his porter’s cell, and forgot the whole matter.

There Philammon awaited a full half-hour. It seemed to him hours, days, years. And yet Raphael did not return—and yet no guards appeared. Was the strange Jew a traitor? Impossible!—his face had shown a desperate earnestness of terror as intense as Philammon’s own. Yet why did he not return?

Perhaps he had found out that the streets were clear; their mutual fears groundless.

What meant that black knot of men some two hundred yards off, hanging about the mouth of the side street, just opposite the door which led to her lecture-room? He moved to watch them—they had vanished. He lay down again and waited. . . . There they were again. It was a suspicious post. That street ran along the back of the Casareum, a favourite haunt of monks, communicating by innumerable entries

and back buildings with the great Church itself. And yet, why should there not be a knot of monks there? What more common in every street of Alexandria? He tried to laugh away his own fears. And yet they ripened, by the very intensity of thinking on them, into certainty. He knew that something terrible was at hand. More than once he looked out from his hiding-place—the knot of men were still there, . . . it seemed to have increased, to draw nearer. If they found him, what would they not suspect? What did he care? He would die for her, if it came to that—not that it could come to that, but still he must speak to her—he must warn her. Passenger after passenger, carriage after carriage passed along the street, student after student entered the lecture-room, but he never saw them, not though they passed him close. The sun rose higher and higher, and turned his whole blaze upon the corner where Philammon crouched, till the pavement scorched like hot iron, and his eyes were dazzled by the blinding glare, but he never heeded it. His whole heart, and sense, and sight, were riveted upon that well-known door, eyeing it to open.

At last a carriage, glittering with silver, rattled round the corner and stopped opposite him. She must be coming now. The crowd had vanished. Perhaps it was, after all, a fancy of his own. No, there they were, peeping round the corner, close to the lecture-room—the hell-hounds! A slave brought out an embroidered cushion—and then Hypatia herself came forth, looking more glorious than ever, her lips set in a sad firm smile, her eyes uplifted, inquiring, eager, and yet gentle, dimmed by some great inward awe, as if her soul was far away aloft, and face to face with God.

In a moment he sprang up to her, caught her robe convulsively, threw himself on his knees before her—

'Stop! Stay! You are going to destruction!'

Calmly she looked down upon him. 'Accomplices of witches! Would you make of Theon's daughter a traitor like yourself?'

He sprang up, stepped back, and stood stupefied with shame and despair. . . .

She beheld him guilty, then! It was the will of God!

The plumes of the horses were waving far down the street before he recovered himself, and rushed after her, shouting he knew not what.

It was too late! A dark wave of men rushed from the ambuscade, surged up round the car . . . swept forward . . . she had disappeared! and as Philammon followed breathless, the horses galloped past him madly homeward with the empty carriage.

Whither were they dragging her? To the Cæsareum, the Church of God Himself? Impossible! Why thither of all places of the earth? Why did the mob, increasing momentarily by hundreds, pour down upon the beach,

and return brandishing flints, shells, fragments of pottery?

She was upon the church steps before he caught them up, invisible among the crowd, but he could track her by the fragments of her dress.

Where were her gay pupils now? Alas! they had barricaded themselves shamefully in the Museum, at the first rush which swept her from the door of the lecture-room. Cowards! he would save her!

And he struggled in vain to pierce the dense mass of Parabolani and monks, who, mingled with the fishwives and dock-workers, leaped and yelled around their victim. But what he could not do another and a weaker did—even the little porter. Furiously—no one knew how or whence—he burst up as if from the ground in the thickest of the crowd, with knife, teeth, and nails, like a venomous wild-cat, tearing his way towards his idol. Alas! he was torn down himself, rolled over the steps, and lay there half dead in an agony of weeping, as Philammon sprang up past him into the church.

Yes. On into the church itself! Into the cool dim shadow, with its fretted pillars, and lowering domes, and candles, and incense, and blazing altar, and great pictures looking from the walls against the gorgeous gloom. And right in front, above the altar, the colossal Christ watching unmoved from off the wall, His right hand raised to give a blessing—or a curse?

On, up the nave, fresh shreds of her dress strewn the holy pavement—up the chancel steps themselves—up to the altar—right underneath the great still Christ, and there even those hell-hounds paused. . . .

She shook herself free from her tormentors, and springing back, rose for one moment to her full height, naked, snow-white against the dark mass around—shame and indignation in those wide clear eyes, but not a stain of fear. With one hand she clasped her golden locks around her; the other long white arm was stretched upward toward the great still Christ appealing—and who dare say in vain?—from man to God. Her lips were opened to speak, but the words that should have come from them reached God's ear alone, for in an instant Peter struck her down, the dark mass closed over her again, and then wail on wail, long, wild, ear-piercing, rang along the vaulted roofs, and thrilled like the trumpet of avenging angels through Philammon's ears.

Crushed against a pillar, unable to move in the dense mass, he pressed his hands over his ears. He could not shut out those shrieks! When would they end? What in the name of the God of mercy were they doing? Tearing her piecemeal? Yes, and worse than that. And still the shrieks rang on, and still the great Christ looked down on Philammon with that calm, intolerable eye, and would not turn away. And over His head was written in the rainbow, 'I am the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever!' The same as He was in Judea

of old, Philammon! Then what are these, and in whose temple? And he covered his face with his hands, and longed to die.

It was over. The shrieks had died away into moans, the moans to silence. How long had he been there? An hour, or an eternity? Thank God it was over! For her sake—but for theirs! But they thought not of that as a new cry rose through the dome.

'To the Cinaron! Burn the houses to ashes! Scatter them into the sea!' And the mob poured past him again.

He turned to flee but, once outside the church, he sank exhausted, and lay upon the steps, watching with stupid horror the glaring of the fire, and the mob who leaped and yelled like demons round their Moloch sacrifice.

A hand grasped his arm, he looked up, it was the porter.

'And this, young butcher, is the Catholic and apostolic Church!'

'No! Eudaimon, it is the church of the devils of hell!' And gathering himself up, he sat upon the steps and buried his head within his hands. He would have given life itself for the power of weeping but his eyes and brain were hot and dry as the desert.

Eudaimon looked at him a while. The shock had sobered the poor fellow for once.

'I did what I could to die with her!' said he.

'I did what I could to save her,' answered Philammon.

'I know it. Forgive the words which I just spoke. Did we not both love her?'

And the little wretch sat down by Philammon's side, and as the blood dripped from his wounds upon the pavement, broke out into a latter agony of human tears.

There are times when the very intensity of our misery is a boon, and kindly stuns us till we are unable to torture ourselves by thought. And so it was with Philammon then. He sat there, he knew not how long.

'She is with the gods,' said Eudaimon at last.

'She is with the God of gods,' answered Philammon: and they both were silent again.

Suddenly a commanding voice aroused them. They looked up, and saw before them Raphael Aben-Ezra.

He was pale as death, but calm as death. One look into his face told them that he knew all.

'Young monk,' he said, between his closed teeth, 'you seem to have loved her?'

Philammon looked up, but could not speak.

'Then arise, and flee for your life into the farthest corner of the desert, ere the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah fall upon this accursed city. Have you father, mother, brother, sister,—ay, cat, dog, or bird for which you care, within its walls?'

Philammon started; for he recollected Pelagia.

That evening, so Cyril had promised, twenty trusty monks were to have gone with him to seize her.

'You have? Then take them with you, and escape, and remember Lot's wife. Eudaimon, come with me. You must lead me to your house, to the lodging of Miriam the Jewess. Do not deny! I know that she is there. For the sake of her who is gone I will hold you harmless, ay, reward you richly, if you prove faithful. Rise!'

Eudaimon, who knew Raphael's face well, rose and led the way trembling, and Philammon was left alone.

They never met again. But Philammon knew that he had been in the presence of a stronger man than himself, and of one who hated even more bitterly than he himself that deed at which the very sun, it seemed, ought to have veiled his face. And his words, 'Arise, and flee for thy life,' uttered as they were with the stern self-command and writhing lip of compressed agony, rang through his ears like the tramp of doom. Yes, he would flee. He had gone forth to see the world, and he had seen it. Arsenius was in the night after all. Home to the desert! But first he would go himself, alone, to Pelagia, and implore her once more to flee with him. 'Beast, fool, that he had been to try to win her by force—by the help of such as these! God's kingdom was not a kingdom of fanatics yelling for a doctrine, but of willing, loving, obedient hearts. If he could not win her heart, her will, he would go alone, and die praying for her.'

He sprang from the steps of the Cæsareum, and turned up the street of the Museum. Alas! it was one roiling sea of heads! They were sucking Theon's house—the house of so many memories! Perhaps the poor old man too had perished! Still—his sister! He must save her and flee. And he turned up a side street and tried to make his way onward.

Alas again! the whole of the dock-quarter was up and out. Every street poured its tide of furious fanatics into the main river; and ere he could reach Pelagia's house the sun was set, and close behind him, echoed by ten thousand voices, was the cry of 'Down with all heathens! Root out all Arian Goths! Down with idolatrous wantons! Down with Pelagia Aphrodite!'

He hurried down the alley, to the tower door, where Wulf had promised to meet him. It was half open, and in the dusk he could see a figure standing in the doorway. He sprang up the steps, and found, not Wulf, but Miriam.

'Let me pass!'

'Wherefore?'

He made no answer, and tried to push past her.

'Fool, fool, fool!' she whispered the hag, holding the door against him with all her strength. 'Where are your fellow-kidnappers? Where are your band of monks?'

Philammon started back. How had she discovered his plan?

'Ay—where are they? Besotted boy! Have you not seen enough of monkery this afternoon, that you must try still to make that poor girl

even such a one as yourselves? Ay, you may root out your own human natures if you will, and make yourselves devils in trying to become angels—but woman she is, and woman she shall live or die!

'Let me pass!' cried Philammon furiously.

'Raise your voice—and I raise mine—and then your life is not worth a moment's purchase. Fool, do you think I speak as a Jewess? I speak as a woman—as a nun! I was a nun once, madman—the iron entered into my soul!—God do so to me, and more also, if it ever enter into another soul while I can prevent it! You shall not have her! I will strangle her with my own hand first!' And turning from him, she darted up the winding stair.

He followed, but the intense passion of the old hag hurled her onward with the strength and speed of a young Menad. Once Philammon was near passing her. But he recollected that he did not know his way, and contented himself with keeping close behind, and making the fugitive his guide.

Stair after stair, he fled upward, till she turned suddenly into a chamber door. Philammon paused. A few feet above him the open sky showed at the stair-head. They were close then to the roof! One moment more, and the hag darted out of the room again, and turned to flee upward still. Philammon caught her by the arm, hurled her back into the empty chamber, shut the door upon her, and with a few bounds gained the roof, and met Pelagia face to face.

'Come!' gasped he breathlessly. 'Now is the moment! Come, while they are all below!' and he seized her hand.

But Pelagia only recoiled.

'No, no,' whispered she in answer, 'I cannot, cannot—he has forgiven me all, all! and I am his for ever! And now, just as he is in danger, when he may be wounded—ah, heaven! would you have me do anything so base as to desert him!'

'Pelagia, Pelagia, darling sister!' cried Philammon, in an agonised voice, 'think of the doom of sin! Think of the pains of hell!'

'I have thought of them this day and I do not believe you! No—I do not! God is not so cruel as you say! And if He were—to lose my love, that is hell! Let me burn hereafter, if I do but keep him now!'

Philammon stood stupefied and shuddering. All his own early doubts flashed across him like a thunderbolt, when in the temple-cave he had seen those painted ladies at their revels, and shuddered, and asked himself, were they burning for ever and ever!

'Come!' gasped he once again; and throwing himself on his knees before her, covered her hands with kisses, wildly entreating: but in vain.

'What is this!' thundered a voice; not Miriam's, but the Amal's. He was unarmed. but he rushed straight upon Philammon.

'Do not harm him!' shrieked Pelagia, 'he

is my brother—my brother of whom I told you!'

'What does he here?' cried the Amal, who instantly divined the truth.

Pelagia was silent.

'I wish to deliver my sister, a Christian, from the sinful embraces of an Arian heretic; and deliver her I will, or die!'

'An Arian?' laughed the Amal. 'Say a heathen at once, and tell the truth, young fool! Will you go with him, Pelagia, and turn nun in the sand-heaps!'

Pelagia sprang towards her lover: Philammon caught her by the arm for one last despairing appeal, and in a moment, neither knew how, the Goth and the Greek were locked in deadly struggle, while Pelagia stood in silent horror, knowing that a call for help would bring instant death to her brother.

It was over in a few seconds. The Goth lifted Philammon like a baby in his arms, and bearing him to the parapet, attempted to hurl him into the canal below. But the active Greek had wound himself like a snake around him, and held him by the throat with the strength of despair. Twice they rolled and tottered on the parapet, and twice recoiled. A third fearful lunge—the earthen wall gave way, and down to the dark depths, locked in each other's arms, fell Goth and Greek.

Pelagia rushed to the brink, and gazed downward into the gloom, dumb and dry-eyed with horror. Twice they turned over together in mid-air. The foot of the tower, as was usual in Egypt, sloped onwards towards the water. They must strike upon that—and then! It seemed an eternity ere they touched the masonry. The Amal was undermost. She saw his fair floating locks dash against the cruel stone. His grasp suddenly loosened, his limbs collapsed, two distinct plunges broke the dark sullen water, and then all was still but the awakened ripple, lapping angrily against the wall.

Pelagia gazed down one moment more, and then, with a shriek which rang along roof and river, she turned, and fled down the stairs and out into the night.

Five minutes afterwards, Philammon, dripping, bruised, and bleeding, was crawling up the water-steps at the lower end of the lane. A woman rushed from the postern door, and stood on the quay edge, gazing with clasped hands into the canal. The moon fell full on her face. It was Pelagia. She saw him, knew him, and recoiled.

'Sister!—my sister! Forgive me!'

'Murderer!' she shrieked, and dashing aside his outspread hands, fled wildly up the passage.

The way was blocked with bales of merchandise—but the dancer bounded over them like a deer; while Philammon, half stunned by his fall, and blinded by his dripping locks, stumbled, fell, and lay, unable to rise. She held on for a few yards towards the torch-lit

mob, which was surging and roaring in the main street above, then turned suddenly into a side alley, and vanished; while Philammon lay groaning upon the pavement, without a purpose or a hope upon earth.

Five minutes more, and Wulf was gazing over the broken parapet, at the head of twenty terrified spectators, male and female, whom Polagna's shriek had summoned.

He alone suspected that Philammon had been there; and shuddering at the thought of what might have happened, he kept his secret.

But all knew that Polagna had been on the tower; all had seen the Amal go up thither. Where were they now? And why was the little postern gate found open, and shut only just in time to prevent the entrance of the mob?

Wulf stood, revolving in a brain but too well practised in such cases, all possible contingencies of death and horror. At last—

'A rope and a light, Smid!' he almost whispered.

They were brought, and Wulf, resisting all the entreaties of the younger men to allow them to go on the perilous search, lowered himself through the breach.

He was about two-thirds down, when he shook the rope, and called in a steady voice, to those above—

'Haul up! I have seen enough.'

Breathless with curiosity and fear, they hauled him up. He stood among them for a few moments, silent, as if stunned by the weight of some enormous woe.

'Is he dead?'

'Odin has taken his son home, wolves of the Goths!' And he held out his right hand to the awe-struck ring, and burst into an agony of weeping. A clotted tress of long fair hair lay in his palm.

It was snatched; handed from man to man. . . One after another recognised the beloved golden locks. And then, to the utter astonishment of the girls who stood round, the great simple hearts, too brave to be ashamed of tears, broke out and wailed like children. Their Amal! Their heavenly man! Odin's own son, their joy and pride, and glory! Their 'Kingdom of heaven,' as his name declared him, who was all that each wished to be, and more, and yet belonged to them, bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh! Ah, it is bitter to all true human hearts to be robbed of their ideal, even though that ideal be that of a mere wild bull, and soulless gladiator.

At last Smid spoke—

'Heroes, this is Odin's doom, and the All-father is just. Had we listened to Prince Wulf four months ago, this had never been. We have been cowards and sluggards, and Odin is angry with his children. Let us swear to be Prince Wulf's men and follow him to-morrow where he will!'

Wulf grasped his outstretched hand lovingly—

'No, Smid, son of Troll! These words are not yours to speak. Agilmund son of Cuwa, Goderic son of Ermenric, you are Balts, and to you the succession appertains. Draw lots here, which of you shall be our chieftain.'

'No! no! Wulf!' cried both the youths at once. 'You are the hero! you are the Sagaman! We are not worthy, we have been cowards and sluggards, like the rest. Wolves of the Goths, follow the Wolf, even though he lead you to the land of the giants!'

A roar of applause followed.

'Lift him on the shield,' cried Goderic, tearing off his buckler. 'Lift him on the shield! Hail, Wulf king! Wulf, king of Egypt!'

And the rest of the Goths, attracted by the noise, rushed up the tower-stairs in time to join in the mighty shout of 'Wulf, king of Egypt!'—as careless of the vast multitude which yelled and surged without, as boys are of the snow against the window-pane.

'No!' said Wulf solemnly, as he stood on the uplifted shield. 'If I be indeed your king, and ye my men, wolves of the Goths, to-morrow we will go forth of this place, hated of Odin, rank with the innocent blood of the Alruna maid. Back to Adolf, back to our own people! Will you go?'

'Back to Adolf!' shouted the men.

'You will not leave us to be murdered!' cried one of the girls. 'The mob are breaking the gates already!'

'Silence, silly one! Men—we have one thing to do. The Amal must not go to the Valhalla without fair attendance.'

'Not the poor girls!' said Agilmund, who took for granted that Wulf would wish to celebrate the Amal's funeral in true Gothic fashion by a slaughter of slaves.

'No. One of them I saw behave this very afternoon worthy of a Vala. And they, too—they may make heroes' wives after all, yet.

Women are better than I fancied, even the worst of them. No. Go down, heroes, and throw the gates open, and call in the Greek hounds to the funeral supper of a son of Odin.'

'Throw the gates open!'

'Yes Goderic, take a dozen men, and be ready in the east hall. Agilmund, go with a dozen to the west side of the court—there in the kitchen, and wait till you hear my war-cry. Smid and the rest of you, come with me through the stables close to the gate—as silent as Hela.'

And they went down—to meet, full on the stairs below, old Miriam.

Breathless and exhausted by her exertion, she had fallen heavily before Philammon's strong arm, and lying half stunned for a while, recovered just in time to meet her doom.

She knew that it was come, and faced it like herself.

'Take the witch!' said Wulf slowly.—'Take the corrupter of heroes—the cause of all our sorrows!'

Miriam looked at him with a quiet smile. 'The witch is accustomed long ago to hear fools lay on her the consequences of their own lust and laziness.'

'Hew her down, Smid, son of Troll, that she may pass the Amal's son and gladden it on her way to Nidheim.'

Smid did it, but so terrible were the eyes which glared upon him from those sunken sockets, that his sight was dazzled. The axe turned aside, and struck her shoulder. She reeled, but did not fall.

'It is enough,' she said quietly.

'The accursed Grendel's daughter numbed my arm!' said Smid. 'Let her go! No man shall say that I struck a woman twice.'

'Nidhogg waits for her, soon or late,' answered Wulf.

And Miriam, coolly folding her shawl around her, turned and walked steadily down the stair, while all men breathed more freely, as if delivered from some accursed and supernatural spell.

'And now,' said Wulf, 'to your posts, and vengeance!'

The mob had weltered and howled ineffectually around the house for some half-hour. But the lofty walls, opening on the street only by a few narrow windows in the higher stories, rendered it an impregnable fortress. Suddenly, the iron gates were drawn back, disclosing to the front rank the court, glaring empty and silent and ghastly in the moonlight. For an instant they recoiled, with a vague horror, and dread of treachery, but the mass behind pressed them onward, and in swept the murderers of Hypatia, till the court was full of choking wretches, surging against the walls and pillars in aimless fury. And they from under the archway on each side, rushed a body of tall armed men, driving back all incomers more, the gates shut together again upon their grooves, and the wild beasts of Alexandria were trapped at last.

And then began a murder grim and great. From three different doors issued a line of Goths, whose helmets and mail-shirts made them invulnerable to the clumsy weapons of the mob, and began hewing their way right through the living mass, helpless from their close-packed array. True, they were but as one to ten; but what are ten eurs before one lion? And the moon rose higher and higher, staring down ghastly and unoved upon that doomed court of the furies, and still the bills and swords hewed on and on, and the Goths drew the corpses, as they found room, towards a dark pile in the midst, where old Wulf sat upon a heap of slain, singing the praises of the Amal and the glories of Valhalla, while the shrieks of his lute rose shrill above the shrieks of the dying and the wounded, and its wild waltz-time danced and rollicked on swifter and swifter as the old singer maddened, in awful mockery of the terror and agony around.

And so, by men and purposes which recked

not of her, as is the wont of Providence, was the blood of Hypatia avenged in part that night.

In part only. For Peter the Reader, and his especial associates, were safe in sanctuary at the Cæsareum, clinging to the altar. Terrified at the storm which they had raised, and fearing the consequences of an attack upon the palace, they had left the mob to run riot at its will; and escaped the swords of the Goths to be reserved for the more awful punishment of impunity.

CHAPTER XXX

PETER MAN TO HIS OWN PLACE

It was near midnight. Raphael had been sitting some three hours in Miriam's inner chamber, waiting in vain for her return. To recover, if possible, his ancestral wealth, to convey it, without a day's delay, to Cyrene, and, if possible, to persuade the poor old Jewess to accompany him, and there to soothe, to guide, perhaps to convert her, was his next purpose—at all events, with or without his wealth, to flee from that accursed city. And he counted impatiently the slow hours and minutes which detained him in an atmosphere which seemed reeking with innocent blood, black with the lowering curse of an avenging God. More than once, unable to bear the thought, he rose to depart, and leave his wealth behind, but he was checked again by the thought of his own past life. How had he added his own sin to the great heap of Alexandrian wickedness! How had he tempted others, pampered others in evil! Good God! how had he not only done evil with all his might, but had pleasure in those who did the same! And now, now he was reaping the fruit of his own devices. For years past, merely to please his lust of power, his misanthropic scorn, he had been making that wicked Orestes wickedder than he was even by his own base will and nature, and his puppet had avenged itself upon him! He, he had prompted him to ask Hypatia's hand. He had laid, half in sport, half in envy of her excellence, that foul plot against the only human being whom he loved, and he had destroyed her! He, and not Peter, was the murderer of Hypatia! True, he had never meant her death. . . . No, but had he not meant for her worse than death? He had never foreseen. . . . No; but only because he did not choose to foresee. He had chosen to be a god, to kill and to make alive by his own will and law, and behold, he had become a devil by that very act. Who can—and who dare, even if he could—withdraw the sacred veil from those bitter agonies of inward shame and self-reproach, made all the more intense by his clear and undoubting knowledge that he was forgiven? What dread of punishment, what blank despair, could have pierced that great heart so deeply as did the thought that the God

whom he had hated and hated had returned him good for evil, and rewarded him not according to his iniquities? That discovery, as Ezekiel of old had warned his forefathers, filled up the cup of his self-loathing. 'To have found at last the hated and dreaded name of God, and found that it was Love! To possess Victoria, a living, human likeness, however imperfect, of that God, and to possess in her a home, a duty, a purpose, a fresh clear life of righteous labour, perhaps of final victory.' That was his punishment, that was the brand of Cain upon his forehead, and he felt it greater than he could bear.

But at least there was one thing to be done. Where he had sinned, there he must make amends, not as a propitiation, not even as a restitution, but simply as a confession of the truth which he had found. And as his purpose shaped itself, he longed and prayed that Miriam might return, and make it possible.

And Miriam did return. He heard her pass slowly through the outer room, learn from the girls who was within, order them out of the apartments, close the outer door upon them, at last she entered, and said quietly—

'Welcome! I have expected you. You could not surprise old Miriam. The tetrarch told me last night that you would be here.'

Did she see the smile of incredulity upon Raphael's face, or was it some sudden pang of conscience which made her cry out—

'No! I did not! I never expected you! I am a liar, a miserable old liar, who cannot speak the truth, even if I try! Only look kind! Smile at me, Raphael!—Raphael come back at last to his poor, miserable, villainous old mother! Smile on me but once, my beautiful, my son! my son!'

And springing to him, she clasped him in her arms.

'Your son!'

'Yes, my son! Safe at last! Mine at last! I can prove it now! The son of my womb, though not the son of my vows!' And she laughed hysterically. 'My child, my heir, for whom I have toiled and hoarded for three and thirty years! Quick! here are my keys. In that cabinet are all my papers—all I have is yours. Your jewels are safe—buried with mine. The negro-woman, Eudamon's wife, knows where I made her swear secrecy upon her little wooden idol, and, Christian as she is, she has been honest. Make her rich for life. She had your poor old mother, and kept her safe to see her boy come home. But give nothing to her little husband—he is a bad fellow, and beats her.—Go, quick! take your riches, and away! No, stay one moment—just one little moment—that the poor old wretch may feast her eyes with the sight of her darling once more before she dies!'

'Before you die! Your son? God of my fathers, what is the meaning of all this, Miriam! This morning I was the son of Ezra the merchant of Antioch!'

'His son and heir, his son and heir! He knew all at last. We told him on his death-bed! I swear that we told him, and he adopted you!'

'Who! Who?'

'His wife and I. He craved for a child, the old miser, and we gave him one—a better one than ever came of his family. But he loved you, accepted you, though he did know all. He was afraid of being laughed at after he was dead—afraid of having it known that he was childless, the old dotard! No—he was right—true Jew in that, after all!'

'Who was my father, then?' interrupted Raphael, in utter bewilderment.

The old woman laughed a laugh so long and wild, that Raphael shuddered.

'Sit down at your mother's feet. Sit down just to please the poor old thing! Even if you do not believe her, just play at being her child, her darling, for a minute before she dies, and she will tell you all. Perhaps there is time yet!'

And he sat down. 'What if this incarnation of all wickedness were really my mother!'

And yet—why should I shrink thus proudly from the notion? Am I so pure myself as to deserve a purer source? And the old woman laid her hand fondly on his head, and her skinny fingers played with his soft locks, as she spoke hurriedly and thick.

'Of the house of Jesse, of the seed of Solomon, not a rabbi from Babylon to Rome dare deny that! A king's daughter I am, and a king's heart I had, and have, like Solomon's own, my son! A kingly heart! It made me dread and scorn to be a slave, a plaything, a soulless doll, such as Jewish women are condemned to be by their tyrants, the men I craved for wisdom, cunning, power—power—power! and my nation refused them to me because, forsooth, I was a woman! So I left them. I went to the Christian priests. They gave me what I asked. They gave me more. They pampered my woman's vanity, my pride, my self-will, my scorn of wedded bondage, and bade me be a saint, the judge of angels and archangels, the bride of God! Liars! liars! And so—if you laugh, you kill me, Raphael—and so Miriam, the daughter of Jonathan—Miriam, of the house of David—Miriam, the descendant of Ruth and Rachab, of Rachel and Sara, became a Christian nun, and shut herself up to see visions, and dream dreams, and fattened her own mad self-conceit upon the impious fancy that she was the spouse of the Nazarene, Joshua Bar-Joseph, whom she called Jehovah!—Silence! If you stop me a moment, it may be too late. I hear them calling me already, and I made them promise not to take me before I had told all to my son—the son of my shame!'

'Who calls you?' asked Raphael, but after one strong shudder she ran on, unheeding—

'But they had, had, had! I found them out that day. . . Do not look up at me, and I will tell you all. There was a riot—a fight between the Christian devils and the Heathen

devils—and the convent was sacked, Raphael, my son!—Sacked! Then I found out their blasphemy. Oh God! I shrieked to Him, Raphael! I called on Him to rend His heavens and come down—to pour out His thunderbolts upon them—to cleave the earth and devour them—to save the wretched helpless girl who adored Him, who had given up father, mother, kinsfolk, wealth, the light of heaven, womanhood itself, for Him—who worshipped, meditated over Him, dreamed of Him night and day. . . And, Raphael, He did not hear me! He did not hear me! . . . And then I knew it all for a lie!

‘And you knew it for what it is!’ cried Raphael through his sobs, as he thought of Victoria, and felt every vein burning with righteous wrath.

—‘There was no mistaking that test, was there? . . . For nine months I was mad. And then your voice, my baby, my joy, my pride—that brought me to myself once more! And I shook off the dust of my feet against those Galilean priests, and went back to my own nation, where God had set me from the beginning. I made them—the Rabbis, my father, my kin—I made them all receive me. They could not stand before my eye. I can make people do what I will, Raphael! I could—I could make you emperor now, if I had but time left! I went back. I palmed you off on Ezra as his son, I and his wife, and made him believe that you had been born to him while he was in Byzantium. . . And then—to live for you! And I did live for you. For you I travelled from India to Britain, seeking wealth. For you I toiled, hoarded, lied, intrigued, won money by every means, no matter how base—for was it not for you? And I have conquered! You are the richest Jew south of the Mediterranean, you, my son! And you deserve your wealth. You have your mother’s soul in you, my boy! I watched you, gloried in you—in your cunning, your daring, your learning, your contempt for these Gentile hounds. You felt the royal blood of Solomon within you! You felt that you were a young lion of Judah, and they the jackals who followed to feed upon your leavings! And now, now! Your only danger is past! The cunning woman is gone—the sorceress who tried to take my young lion in her pitfall, and has fallen into the midst of it herself, and he is safe, and returned to take the nations for a prey, and grind their bones to powder, as it is written, “He couched like a lion, he lay down like a lioness’s whelp, and who dare rouse him up?”’

‘Stop!’ said Raphael. ‘I must speak! Mother! I must! As you love me, as you expect me to love you, answer! Had you a hand in her death? Speak!’

‘Did I not tell you that I was no more a Christian? Had I remained one—who can tell what I might not have done? All I, the Jewess, dare do was—Fool that I am! I have forgotten all this time the proof—the proof—’

‘I need no proof, mother. Your words are enough,’ said Raphael, as he clasped her hand between his own, and pressed it to his burning forehead. But the old woman hurried on—‘See! See the black agate which you gave her in your madness!’

‘How did you obtain that?’

‘I stole it—stole it, my son; as thieves steal, and are crucified for stealing. What was the chance of the cross to a mother yearning for her child?—to a mother who put round her baby’s neck, three-and-thirty black years ago, that broken agate, and kept the other half next her own heart by day and night? See! See how they fit! Look, and believe your poor old sinful mother! Look, I say!’ and she thrust the talisman into his hands.

‘Now, let me die! I vowed never to tell this secret but to you—never to tell it to you, until the night I died. Farewell, my son! Kiss me but once—once, my child, my joy! Oh, this makes up for all! Makes up even for that day, the last on which I ever dreamed myself the bride of the Nazarene!’

Raphael felt that he must speak, now or never. Though it cost him the loss of all his wealth, and a mother’s curse, he must speak. And not daring to look up, he said gently—

‘Alas! I lied to you about Him, mother, but has He ever lied to you about Himself? He did not lie to me when He sent me out into the world to find a man, and sent me back again to you with the good news that The Man is born into the world!’

But to his astonishment, instead of the burst of bigoted indignation which he had expected, Miriam answered in a low, confused, abstracted voice—

‘And did He send you hither? Well—that was more like what I used to fancy Him. A grand thought it is after all—a Jew the king of heaven and earth! Well—I shall know soon. . . I loved Him once, and perhaps perhaps—’

Why did her head drop heavily upon his shoulder? He turned—a dark stream of blood was flowing from her lips! He sprang to his feet. The gulls rushed in. They tore open her shawl, and saw the ghastly wound, which she had hidden with such iron resolution to the last. But it was too late. Miriam the daughter of Solomon was gone to her own place.

Early the next morning, Raphael was standing in Cyril’s anteroom, awaiting an audience. There were loud voices within; and after a while a tribune whom he knew well hurried out, muttering curses—

‘What brings you here, friend?’ said Raphael.

‘The scoundrel will not give them up,’ answered he, in an undertone.

‘Give up whom?’

‘The murderers. They are in sanctuary now at the Caesarem. Orestes sent me to demand them, and this fellow defies him openly!’ And the tribune hurried out.

Raphael, smothered with disgust, half-turned to follow him; but his better angel conquered, and he obeyed the summons of the deacon who ushered him in.

Cyril was walking up and down, according to his custom, with great strides. When he saw who was his visitor, he stopped short with a look of fierce inquiry. Raphael entered on business at once, with a cold calm voice.

'You know me, doubtless, and you know what I was. I am now a Christian catechumen. I come to make such restitution as I can for certain past ill-deeds done in this city. You will find among these papers the trust-deeds for such a yearly sum of money as will enable you to hire a house of refuge for a hundred fallen women, and give such dowries to thirty of them yearly as will enable them to find suitable husbands. I have set down every detail of my plan. On its exact fulfilment depends the continuance of my gift.'

Cyril took the document eagerly, and was breaking out with some commonplace about pious benevolence, when the Jew stopped him.

'Your Holiness's compliments are unnecessary. It is to your office, not to yourself, that this business relates.'

Cyril, whose conscience was ill enough at ease that morning, felt abashed before Raphael's dry and quiet manner, which bespoke, as he well knew, reproof more severe than all open upbraidings. So looking down, not without something like a blush, he ran his eye hastily over the paper; and then said, in his blandest tone—

'My brother will forgive me for remarking, that while I acknowledge his perfect right to dispose of his charities as he will, it is somewhat startling to me, as Metropolitan of Egypt, to find not only the Abbot Isidore of Pelusium, but the secular Defender of the Plebs, a civil officer, implicated, too, in the late conspiracy, associated with me as co-trustees.'

'I have taken the advice of more than one Christian bishop on the matter. I acknowledge your authority by my presence here. If the Scriptures say rightly, the civil magistrates are as much God's ministers as you, and I am therefore bound to acknowledge their authority also. I should have preferred associating the Prefect with you in the trust; but as your discussions with the present occupant of that post might have crippled my scheme, I have named the Defender of the Plebs, and have already put into his hands a copy of this document. Another copy has been sent to Isidore, who is empowered to receive all moneys from my Jewish bankers in Pelusium.'

'You doubt, then, either my ability or my honesty?' said Cyril, who was becoming somewhat nettled.

'If your Holiness dislikes my offer, it is easy to omit your name in the deed. One word more. If you deliver up to justice the murderers of my friend Hypatia, I double my bequest on the spot.'

Cyril burst out instantly—

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'Thy money perish with thee! Do you presume to bribe me into delivering up my children to the tyrant?'

'I offer to give you the means of showing more mercy, provided that you will first do simple justice.'

'Justice?' cried Cyril. 'Justice? If it be just that Peter should die, am, see first whether it was not just that Hypatia should die. Not that I compassed it. As I live, I would have given my own right hand that this had not happened! But now that it is done—let those who talk of justice look first in which scale of the balance it lies! Do you fancy, sir, that the people do not know their enemies from their friends? Do you fancy that the yare to sit with folded hands, while a puliant makes common cause with a profligate, to drag them back again into the very black gulf of outer darkness, ignorance, brutal lust, grinding slavery, from which the Son of God died to free them, from which they are painfully and slowly struggling upward to the light of day? You, sir, if you be a Christian catechumen, should know for yourself what would have been the fate of Alexandria had the devil's plot of twa days since succeeded. What if the people struck too truly? They struck in the right place. What if they have given the reins to passions fit only for heathens? Recall the centuries of heathendom which bred those passions in them, and blame not my teaching, but the teaching of their forefathers. That very Peter—'

What if he have for once given place to the devil, and avenged where he should have forgiven? Has he no memories which may excuse him for fancying, in a just paroxysm of dread, that idolatry and falsehood must be crushed at any risk?—He who counts back for now three hundred years, in persecution after persecution, martyrs, sir! martyrs—if you know what that word implies—of his own blood and kin, who, when he was but a seven years' boy, saw his own father made a sightless cripple to this day, and his elder sister, a consecrated nun, devoured alive by some in the open streets, at the hands of those who supported the very philosophy, the very gods, which Hypatia attempted yesterday to restore. God shall judge such a man, not I, nor you!'

'Let God judge him, then, by delivering him to God's minister.'

'God's minister? That heathen and apostate Prefect? When he has expiated his apostasy by penance, and returned publicly to the bosom of the Church, it will be time enough to obey him till then he is the minister of none but the devil. And no ecclesiastic shall suffer at the tribunal of an infidel. Holy Writ forbids us to go to law before the unjust. Let the world say of me what it will. I defy it and its rulers. I have to establish the kingdom of God in this city, and do it I will, knowing that other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ.'

'Wherefore you proceed to lay it afresh. A curious method of proving that it is laid already.'

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'What do you mean?' asked Cyril angrily. 'Simply that God's kingdom, if it exist at all, must be a sort of kingdom, considering Who is The King of it, which would have established itself without your help some time since, probably, indeed, if the Scriptures of my Jewish forefathers are to be believed, before the foundation of the world, and that your Empire was to believe that God was King of Alexandria, and had put the Roman law there to crucify all murderers, ecclesiastics included, and that crucified they must be accordingly, is high is Haman himself.'

'I will hear no more of this, sir. I am responsible to God alone, and not to you. Let it be enough that by virtue of the authority committed to me, I shall cut off these men from the Church of God, by solemn excommunication, for three years to come.'

'They are cut off, then, it seems, is not?'

'I tell you, sir, that I shall cut them all. Do you come here to doubt my word?'

'Not in the least, most august sir. But I should have fancied that, according to my carnal notions of God's Kingdom and the Church, they had cut off themselves most effectually already, from the moment when they cast away the Spirit of God, and took to themselves the spirit of murder and cruelty, and that all which your most just and indubitable excommunication could effect, would be to inform the public at that fact. However, farewell! My money shall be forthcoming in due time, and that is the most important matter between us at this moment. As for your client Peter and his fellows, perhaps the most fearful punishment which can befall them, is to go on as they have begun. I only hope that you will not follow in the same direction.'

'If?' cried Cyril, trembling with rage.

'Really I wish your Holiness well when I say so. If my notions seem to you somewhat secular, yours—forgive me—seem to me somewhat atheistic, and I advise you honestly to take care lest while you are busy trying to establish God's kingdom, you forget what it is like, by shutting your eyes to those of its laws which are established already. I have no doubt that with your Holiness's great powers you will succeed in establishing something. My only dread is, that when it is established, you should discover to your horror that it is the devil's kingdom and not God's.'

And without waiting for an answer, Raphael bowed himself out of the august presence, and sailing for Berytus that very day, with Eudemon and his negro wife, went to his own place, there to labour and to sweat, a sad and stern, and yet a loving and a much-loved man, for many a year to come.

And now we will leave Alexandria also, and taking a forward leap of some twenty years, see how all other persons mentioned in this history went, likewise, each to his own place.

A little more than twenty years after, the

wisest and holiest man in the East was writing of Cyril, just deceased—

'His death made those who survived him joyful, but it grieved most probably the dead, and there is cause to fear, lest, finding his presence too troublesome, they should send him back to us. May it come to pass, by your prayers, that he may obtain mercy and forgiveness, that the unmeasurable grace of God may prevail over his wickedness.'

So wrote Theodoret in days when men had not yet intercalated into Holy Writ that line of an obscure modern hymn, which proclaims to men the good news that 'There is no repentance in the grave.' Let that be as it may, Cyril has gone to his own place. What that place is in history is but too well known. What it is in the sight of Him unto whom all live for ever, is no concern of ours. May He whose mercy is over all His works, have mercy upon all, whether orthodox or unorthodox, Papist or Protestant, who, like Cyril, began by lying for the cause of truth, and setting on upon that evil road, armed singly, with the Scriks and Phantasies of old, sooner or later at their own place!

True, he and his monks had conquered; but Hypatia did not the unavenged. In the hour of that mighty victory, the Church of Alexandria received a deadly wound. It had admitted and sanctioned those habits of doing evil that good may come, of pious intrigue, and at last of open persecution, which are certain to creep in wheresoever men attempt to set up a merely religious empire, independent of human relationships and civil laws, to establish, in short, a 'theocracy,' and by that very act confess their secret disbelief that God is doing already. And the Egyptian Church grew, year by year, more lawless and inhuman. Fied from enemies without, and from the men which fear compels, it turned its ferocity inward, to prey on its own vitality, and to fortify itself in forces by a voluntary suicide, with mutual anathemas and exclusions, till it ended in a micro-chloric of idolatrous sects, persecuting each other for metaphysical propositions, which, true or false, were equally heretical in their mouths, because they used them only as watch-words of division. Orthodox or unorthodox, they knew not, fled, for they knew neither righteousness, nor love, nor peace. They hated their brethren, and walked on still in darkness, not knowing whether they were going.

till Ammon and his Mohammedans appeared, and whether they discovered the fact or not, they went to their own place.

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small. Though He stands and waits with patience, with exactness grinds He all—

'And so found, in due time, the philosophers as well as the ecclesiastics of Alexandria.'

Twenty years after Hypatia's death, philosophy was flinching down to the very socket Hypatia's murder was its death-blow. In language tremendous and unmistakable, philoso-

phers had been informed that mankind had done with them, that they had been weighed in the balances, and found wanting, that if they had no better Gospel than that to preach, they must make way for those who had. And they did make way. We hear little or nothing of them or their wisdom henceforth, except at Athens, where Proclus, Marinus, Isidore, and others kept up 'the golden chain of the Platonic succession,' and descended deeper and deeper, one after the other, into the mazes of confusion and confusion of the material with the spiritual, of the subject with the object, the moral with the intellectual, self-consistent in one thing only,—namely, in their excessive Pharisaism, utterly unable to proclaim any good news for man as man, or even to conceive of the possibility of such, and gradually looking with more and more complacency on all superstitions which did not involve that one idea, which alone they hated,—namely, the Incarnation, craving after signs and wonders, dubbing in magic, astrology, and herbarian letichisms, denouncing the Bible as, and barking querulously at every form of human thought except their own, winning pompous longevity, full of bad Greek, worse taste, and still worse miracles.

—That last day of no
Of covinous slath, and proud decrepitude
No faith, no art, no king, no priest, no
While round the freezing fountains of life
Crouched on the bare worn soil,
Huddling about the man turning spin,
And whining for dials of gold, who cannot save
The toothless systems shiver to their grave

The last scene of their tragedy was not without a touch of pathos. In the year 529, Justinian finally closed, by imperial edict, the schools of Athens. They had nothing more to tell the world, but what the world had yawned over a thousand times before—why should they break the blessed silence by any more such noises? The philosophers felt so themselves. They had no mind to be martyrs, for they had nothing for which to testify. They had no message for mankind, and mankind no interest for them. All that was left for them was to take care of their own souls, and fancying that they saw something like Plato's ideal republic in the pure monotheism of the Guebres, their philosophic emperor the Khosroo, and his holy caste of magi, seven of them set off to Persia, to forget the hateful existence of Christianity in that realised ideal. Alas for the facts! The purest monotheism, they discovered, was perfectly compatible with laziness and ferocity, luxury and tyranny, searls and bastings, incestuous marriages and corpses exposed to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and in reasonable fear for their own necks, the last seven Sages of Greece returned home weary-hearted, into the Christian Empire from which they had fled, fully contented with the permission, which the Khosroo had obtained for them from Justinian, to hold their peace, and die among decent people. So among decent people they died, leaving behind them, as their last

legacy to mankind, Simplicius's Commentaries on Epictetus's *Enchiridion*, an essay on the art of egotism, by obeying which, whosoever list may become as perfect a Pharisee as ever darkened the earth of God. Peace be to their ashes! They are gone to their own place.

Wulf, too, had gone to his own place, wherever that may be. He died in Spain, full of years and honours, at the court of Adolf and Placidia, having resigned his sovereignty into the hands of his lawful claimant, and having lived long enough to see Hlodare and his younger companions in arms settled with their Alcxandrian brides upon the sunny slopes from which they had expelled the Vandals and the Savi, to be the ancestors of 'bluest blooded' Castilian nobles. Wulf died, as he had lived, a heathen. Placidia, who loved him well, as she loved all righteous and noble souls, had succeeded once in persuading him to accept baptism. Adolf himself acted as one of his sponsors, and the old warrior was in the act of stepping into the font, when he turned suddenly to the lady, and asked where were the souls of his heathen ancestors? 'In hell,' replied the worthy prelate. Wulf drew back from the font, and threw his bearskin cloak around him. 'He would prefer, if Adolf had no objection, to go to his own people.' And so he died unbaptized, and went to his own place.

Victoria was still alive and busy. But Augustine's warning had come true—she had found trouble in the flesh. The day of the Lord had come, and Vandal tyrants were now the masters of the far coasts of Africa. Her father and brother were lying by the side of Raphael Abn-Ezza, beneath the mure walls of Hippo, slain, long years before, on the vain attempt to deliver their country from the invading swarms. But they had died the death of heroes, and Victoria was content. And it was whispered, among the down-trodden Catholics, who clung to her as an angel of mercy, that she, too, had endured strange misery and disgrace, that her delicate limbs bore the scars of fearful tortures, that a room in her house, into which none ever entered but herself, contained a young boy's grave, and that she passed long nights of prayer upon the spot, where lay her only child, martyred by the hands of Arian persecutors. Nay, some of the few who, having dared to face that fearful storm, had survived its fury, asserted that she herself, amid her own shame and agony, had cheered the shrinking boy on to his glorious death. But though she had found trouble in the flesh, her spirit knew none. Clear-eyed and joyful as when she walked by her father's side on the field of Ostia, she went in and fro among the victims of Vandal rapine and persecution, spending upon the maimed, the sick, the ruined, the small remnants of her former wealth, and winning, by her purity and her piety, the reverence and favour even of the barbarian conquerors. She had her work to do, and she did it, and

was content, and, in good time, she also went to her own place.

Abbot Pambo, as well as Arsenius, had been dead several years, the abbot's place was filled, in his own dying command, by a hermit from the neighbouring deserts, who had made himself famous for many miles round, by his extraordinary austerities, his ceaseless prayers, his loving wisdom, and, it was rumoured, by various cures which could only be attributed to miraculous powers. While still in the prime of his manhood, he was dragged, against his own entreaties, from a lofty cranny of the cliffs to preside over the Laura of Scetis, and ordained a deacon at the advice of Pambo, by the bishop of the diocese, who, three years afterwards, took on himself to command him to enter the priesthood. The elder monks considered it an indignity to be ruled by so young a man, but the monastery thrived and grew rapidly under his government. His sweetness, patience, and humility, and above all, his marvellous understanding of the doubts and temptations of his own generation, soon drew around him all whose sensitiveness or waywardness had made them unmanageable in the neighbouring monasteries. As to David in the mountains, so to him, every one who was discontented, and every one who was oppressed, gathered themselves. The neighbouring abbots were at first inclined to shrink from him, as one who ate and drank with publicans and sinners, but they held their peace, when they saw those whom they had driven out as reprobates labouring peacefully and cheerfully under Philammon. The elder generation of Scetis, too, saw, with some horror, the new influx of sinners, but their abbot had but one answer to their remonstrances—'Those who are whole need not a physician, but those who are sick.'

Never was the young abbot heard to speak harshly of any human being. 'When thou hast tried in vain for seven years,' he used to say, 'to convert a sinner, then only wilt thou have a right to suspect him of being a worse man than thyself.' That there is a seed of good in all men, a Divine Word and Spirit striving with all men, a gospel and good news which would turn the hearts of all men, if abbots and priests could but preach it aright, was his favourite doctrine, and one which he used to defend, when, at rare intervals, he allowed himself to discuss any subject from the writings of his favourite theologian, Clement of Alexandria. Above all, he stopped, by stern rebuke, any attempt to revile either heretics or heathens. 'On the Catholic Church alone,' he used to say, 'lies the blame of all heresy and unbelief for if she were but for one day that which she ought to be, the world would be converted before nightfall.' To one class of sins, indeed, he was inexorable—all but ferocious; to the sins, namely, of religious persons. In proportion to any man's reputation for orthodoxy and sanctity, Philammon's judgment of him was stern and pitiless. More than once events proved him to

have been unjust: when he saw himself to be so, none could confess his mistake more frankly, or humiliate himself for it more bitterly. But from his rule he never swerved; and the Pharisees of the Nile dreaded and avoided him, as much as the publicans and sinners loved and followed him.

One thing only in his conduct gave some handle for scandal, among the just persons who needed no repentance. It was well known that in his most solemn devotions, on those long nights of unceasing prayer and self-discipline, which won him a reputation for superhuman sanctity, there mingled always with his prayers the names of two women. And, when some worthy elder, taking courage from his years, dared to hint kindly to him that such conduct caused some scandal to the weaker brethren, 'It is true,' answered he, 'tell my brethren that I pray nightly for two women, both of them young, both of them beautiful, both of them beloved by me more than I love my own soul, and tell them, moreover, that one of the two was a harlot, and the other a heathen.' The old monk laid his hand on his mouth, and retired.

The remainder of his history it seems better to extract from an unpublished fragment of the *Hypologia Nilotica* of Gradiocodrus Tabernicius, the greater part of which valuable work was destroyed at the taking of Alexandria under Amun, A.D. 640.

'Now when the said abbot had ruled the monastery of Scetis seven years with uncommon prudence, resplendent in virtue and in miracles, it befell that one morning he was late for the Divine office. Whereon a certain ancient brother, who was also a deacon, being sent to ascertain the cause of so unwonted a defection, found the holy man extended upon the floor of his cell, like Balaam in the flesh, though still differing from him in the spirit, having fallen into a trance, but having his eyes open. Who, not daring to arouse him, sat by him until the hour of noon, judging rightly that something from heaven had befallen him. And at that hour, the saint arising without astonishment, said, "Brother, make ready for us the divine elements, that I may consecrate them." And he asking the reason wherefore, the saint replied, "That I may partake thereof with all my brethren, ere I depart hence. For know assuredly that, within the seventh day, I shall migrate to the celestial mansions. For this night stood by me in a dream, those two women, whom I love, and for whom I pray, the one clothed in a white, the other in a ruby-coloured garment, and holding each other by the hand, who said to me, "That life after death is not such a one as you fancy; come, therefore, and behold with us what it is like." Troubled at which words, the deacon went forth yet on account not only of holy obedience, but also of the sanctity of the blessed abbot, did not hesitate to prepare according to his command the divine elements: which the abbot having consecrated, distributed among his brethren,

reserving only a portion of the most holy bread and wine; and then, having bestowed on them all the kiss of peace, he took the paten and chalice in his hands, and went forth from the monastery towards the desert, whom the whole fraternity followed weeping, as knowing that they should see his face no more. But he, having arrived at the foot of a certain mountain, stopped, and blessing them, commanded them that they should follow him no further, and dismissed them with these words "As ye have been loved, so love. As ye have been judged, so judge. As ye have been forgiven, so forgive." And so ascending, was taken away from their eyes. Now they, returning astonished, watched three days with prayer and fasting but at last the eldest brother, being ashamed, like Elzaba before the entreaties of Elydi's disciples, sent two of the young men to seek their master.

'To whom befall a thing noteworthy and full of miracles. For ascending the same mountain where they had left the abbot, they met with a certain Moorish people, not averse to the Christian verity, who declared that certain days before a priest had passed by them, bearing a paten and chalice, and blessing them in silence, proceeded across the desert in the direction of the cave of the holy Anna.

'And they inquiring who this Anna might be, the Moors answered that some twenty years ago there had arrived in those mountains a woman more beautiful than had ever before been seen in that region, dressed in rich garments, who, after a short sojourn among their tribe, leaving distributed among them the jewels which she wore, had embraced the eremitic life, and sojourned upon the highest peak of a neighbouring mountain, till her garments failing her, she became invisible to mankind, saving to a few women of the tribe, who went up from time to time to carry her offerings of fruit and meal, and to ask the blessing of her prayers. To whom she rarely appeared, veiled down to her feet in black hair of exceeding length and splendour.

'Hearing these things, the two brethren doubted for awhile but at last, determining to proceed, arrived at sunset upon the summit of the said mountain.

'Where, behold a great miracle. For above an open grave, freshly dug in the sand, a cloud of vultures and obscene birds hovered, whom two lions, fiercely contending, drove away with their talons, as if from some sacred deposit therein enshrined. Towards whom the two brethren, fortifying themselves with the sign of the holy cross, ascended. Whereupon the lions, as having fulfilled the term of their guardianship, retired, and left to the brethren a sight which they beheld with astonishment, and not without tears.

'For in the open grave lay the body of Philammon the abbot: and by his side, wrapped in his cloak, the corpse of a woman of exceeding beauty, such as the Moors had described. Whom

embracing straitly, as a brother a sister, and joining his lips to hers, he had rendered up his soul to God, not without bestowing on her, as it seemed, the most holy sacrament, for by the grave-side stood the paten and the chalice emptied of their divine contents.

'Having beheld which things awhile in silence, they considered that the right understanding of such matters pertained to the judgment seat above, and was unnecessary to be comprehended by men consecrated to God. Whereon, filling in the grave with all haste, they returned weeping to the Laura, and declared to them the strange things which they had beheld, and whereof I the writer, having collected these facts from sacrosanct and most trustworthy mouths, can only say that wisdom is justified of all her children.

'Now, before they returned, one of the brethren searching the cave wherein the holy woman dwelt, found there neither food, furniture, nor other matters, saving one bracelet of gold, of large size and strange workmanship, engraved with foreign characters, which no one could decipher. The which bracelet, being taken home to the Laura of Scetis, and there dedicated in the chapel to the memory of the holy Anna, proved beyond all doubt the sanctity of its former possessor, by the miracles which its virtue worked, the same whereof spreading abroad throughout the whole Thebaid, drew innumerable crowds of suppliants to that holy relic. But it came to pass, after the Vandalic persecution wherein Hunceric and Genseric the king devastated Africa, and enriched the Catholic Church with innumerable martyrs, that certain wandering barbarians of the Vandalic race, imbued with the Arian pagany, and made insolent by success, boiled over from the parts of Mauritania into the Thebaid region. Who plundering and burning all monasteries, and insulting the consecrated virgins, at last arrived even at the monastery of Scetis, where they not only, according to their impious custom, defiled the altar, and carried off the sacred vessels, but also bore away that most holy relic, the chief glory of the Laura,—namely, the bracelet of the holy Anna, impiously pretending that it had belonged to a warrior of their tribe, and thus expounded the writing thereon engraven—

'For Annalis Aiala Son Smil Troll a Son Male M.

Wherein whether they spoke truth or not, yet their sacrilege did not remain unpunished, for attempting to return homeward toward the sea by way of the Nile, they were set upon while weighed down with wine and sleep, by the country people, and to a man miserably destroyed. But the pious folk, restoring the holy gold to its pristine sanctuary, were not unrewarded for since that day it grows glorious with ever fresh miracles—as of blind restored to sight, paralytics to strength, demons to sanity—to the honour of the orthodox Catholic Church, and of its ever-blessed saints.'

So be it. Pelagia and Philammon, like the rest, went to their own place, to the only place where such in such days could find rest, to the desert and the hermit's cell, and then forward into that fairy land of legend and miracle, wherein all saintly lives were destined to be enveloped for many a century thenceforth.

And now, readers, farewell. I have shown you New Foes under an old face—your own likenesses in toga and tunic, instead of coat and

bonnet. One word before we part. The same devil who tempted these old Egyptians tempts you. The same God who would have saved these old Egyptians if they had willed, will save you, if you will. Their sins are yours, their errors yours, their doom yours, their deliverance yours. There is nothing new under the sun. The thing which has been, it is that which shall be. Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone, whether at Hypatia or Pelagia, Miriam or Raphael, Cyril or Philammon.

THE END

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TWO YEARS AGO

TWO YEARS AGO

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY

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TWO YEARS AGO

INTRODUCTORY

It may seem a somewhat Irish method of beginning the story of *Two Years Ago* by a scene which happened but a month since. And yet, will not the story be on that very account a better type of many a man's own experiences? How few of us had learnt the meaning of 'Two years ago' until this late quiet autumn time, and till Christmas, too, with its eyes in the old ring of friendly faces, never to be filled up again on earth, began to teach us somewhat of its lesson.

Two years ago, while justice was hovering over us and ours, while the battle was ringing in our ears, who had time to think, to ask what all that meant, to seek for the deep lesson which we knew must be beneath? Two years ago was the time for work—for men to do with all their might whatsoever their hands found to do. But now the storm has lulled once more, the air has cleared while, and we can talk calmly over all the wonders of that sudden, strange, and sad 'Two years ago'.

So left, at least, two friends who went down just one week before Christmas Day, to Whitlany in Berkshire. Two years ago had come to one of them, as to thousands more, the crisis of his life, and he was talking of it with his companion, and was on his way, too, to learn more of that story which this book contains, and in which he had borne his part.

They were both of them men who would at first sight interest a stranger. The shorter of the two he might have seen before—at picture sales, Royal Academy meetings, dinner parties, evening parties, anywhere and everywhere in town, for Claude Mellot is a general favorite and a general guest.

He is a tiny, delicate-looking man, with a look of half-lazy enthusiasm about his beautiful face, which reminds you much of Shelley's portrait, only he has what Shelley had not, clustering Auburn curls, and a rich brown beard, soft as silk. You set him down at once as a man of delicate susceptibility, sweetness, thoughtfulness, probably (as he actually is) an artist.

His companion is a man of stouter stamp, tall, dark, and handsome, with a very large forehead. If the face has a fault, it is that the mouth is too small, that, and the expression

of face too, and the tone of voice, seem to indicate over-illumination, possibly a too aristocratic exclusiveness. He is dressed like a very fine gentleman indeed, and looks and talks like one. Aristocrat, however, in the common sense of the word, he is not, for he is a native of the Model Republic, and shipping partner in a great New York merchant firm.

He is chatting away to Claude Mellot, the artist, about Edmont's election, and on that point seems to be earnest enough, though pitiful and fluctuate.

'My dear Claude, our loss is great. The delay of the next four years was really necessary, that we might consolidate our party. And I leave you to judge if it has grown to its present size in but a few months, what dimensions it will have attained before the next election. We require the delay, too, to discover who are our really best men, not merely us cantors, but as workers, and you English ought to know, better than any nation, that the latter class of men are those whom the world most needs—that though Aaron may be an altogether unproved preacher, yet it is only slow-tongued, practical Moses, whose spokesman he is, who can deliver Israel from their taskmasters. Besides, my dear fellow, we really want the next four years "tell it not in Gath"—to look about us, and see what is to be done. Your wisest Englishmen justly complain of us, that our "platform" is as yet a merely negative one, that we define what the South shall not do, but not what the North shall. Ere four years be over, we will have a "positive platform," at which you shall have no cause to grumble.

'I still think with Marie, that your "positive platform" is already in use for you, plain as the sun in heaven, as the lightnings of Sinai. Free those slaves at once and utterly!'

'Impatient idealist! By what means? By law, or by force? Leave us to draw a *cordon sanitaire* round the United States, and leave the system to die a natural death, as it rapidly will if it be prevented from enlarging its field. Don't fancy that a dream of mine. None knew it better than the Southerners themselves. What makes them so very just now to risk honour, justice, even the common law of nations and humanity in the struggle for new slave territory? What but the consciousness

TWO YEARS AGO

that without virgin soil, which will yield rapid and enormous profit to slave labour, they and their institution must be ruined !

'The more reason for accelerating so desirable a consummation by freeing the slaves at once.'

'Humph !' said Stangrave, with a smile. 'Who so cruel at times as your too-benevolent philanthropist ? Did you ever count the meaning of those words ? Disunion of the Union, an invasion of the South by the North, and an intestine war, aggravated by the horrors of a general rising of the slaves, and such scenes as Hayti beheld sixty years ago ! If you have ever read them, you will pause ere you determine to repeat them on a vaster scale.'

'It is dreadful, Heaven knows, even in thought ! But, Stangrave, can any moderation on your part ward it off ? Where there is crime, there is vengeance, and without shedding of blood is no remission of sin.'

'God knows ! It may be true, but God forbid that I should ever do ought to hasten what may come. Oh, Claude, do you know that I, of all men, do not feel at moments the thirst for brute vengeance !'

Claude was silent.

'Judge for yourself, you who know all—what man among us Northerners can feel, as I do, what those hapless men may have deserved ! Who have day and night before me the brand of their cruelty, filling my heart with fire ? I need all my strength, all my reason, at times to say to myself, as I say to others—"Are not these slaveholders men of like passions with yourself ? What have they done which you would not have done in their place ?" I have never read that *Kry to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. I will not even read this *Dred*, admirable as I believe it to be.'

'Why should you ?' said Claude. 'Have you not a key to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* more pathetic than any word of man's or woman's !'

'But I do not mean that ! I will not read them, because I have the key to them in my own heart, Claude, because conscience has taught me to feel for the Southerner as a brother, who is lost what I might have been, and to sigh over his misdirected courage and energy, not with hatred, not with contempt, but with pity, all the more intense the more he scorns that pity, so long, not merely for the slaves' sake, but for the masters' sake, to see them—the once chivalrous gentlemen of the South—delivered from the meshes of a net which they did not spread for themselves, but which was round their feet, and round their fathers', from the day that they were born. You ask me to destroy these men. I long to save them from their certain doom !'

'You are right, and a better Christian than I am, I believe. Certainly they do need pity, if any sinners do, for slavery seems to be to judge from Mr. Brooks's triumph—a great moral curse, and a heavier degradation to the slaveholder himself, than it can ever be to the slave.'

'Then I would free them from that curse,

that degradation. If the negro asks, "Am I not a man and a brother !" have they no right to ask it also ? Shall I, pretending to love my country, venture on any rash step which may shut out the whole Southern white population from their share in my country's future glory ? No, have but patience with us, you comfortable liberals of the Old World, who find freedom ready made to your hands, and we will pay you all. Remember, we are but children yet, our sins are the sins of youth,—greediness, intemperance, petulance, self-conceit. When we are purged from our youthful sins, England will not be ashamed of her child.'

'Ashamed of you ? I often wish I could make Americans understand the feeling of England to you—the honest pride, as of a mother who has brought into the world the loveliest baby that ever this earth beheld, and is rather proud of its stamping about and beating her in its pretty pats. Only the old lady does get a little cross when she hears you talk of the wrongs which you have endured from her, and teaching your children to hate us as their ancient oppressors on the ground of a foolish war, of which every Englishman is utterly ashamed, and in the result of which he glories really as much as you do.'

Don't talk of "you," Claude ! You know well what I think on that point. Never did the nation make the *amende honorable* to another more fully and nobly than you have to us, and those who try to keep up the quarrel are I won't say what. But the truth is, Claude, we have had no real sorrows, and therefore we can afford to play with imaginary ones. God grant that we may not have our real ones that way, nor have to drink of the cup of which our great mother drank two years ago !'

'It was a wholesome letter for us, and it may be so for you likewise, but we will have no sad forebodings on the eve of the Ides of Christmas-tide. He lives, He lives, He reigns, and all is well, for we are His and He is ours !'

'Ah,' said Stangrave, 'when Emerson sneered at you English for believing your Old Testament, he little thought that that was the lesson which it had taught you, and that that same lesson was the root of all your greatness. That that belief in God's being, in some mysterious way, the living King of England and of Christendom, has been the very pole which has kept you in peace and safety now for many a hundred years, moving slowly on from good to better, not without many backslidings and many short comings, but still holding out, quickly enough, when you were in the wrong road, and not ashamed to retract your steps, and to reform, as brave strong men should dare to do, a people who have been for many an age in the vanguard of all the nations, and the champions of sure and solid progress throughout the world, because what is new among you is not patched artificially on to the old, but grows organically out of it, with a growth like that of your own English oak, whose every new-year's leaf-crop is

fed by roots which burrow deep in many a buried generation, and the rich soil of full a thousand years.

'Stay!' said the little artist. 'We are quite contented enough already, without your eloquent adulation, sir! But there is a tincture in your words. There is a better spirit roused among us, and that not merely of two years ago. I knew this part of the country well in 1846-7-8, and since then, I can bear witness, a spirit of self-reform has been awakened round here in many a heart which I thought once utterly frivolous. I find, in every circle of every class, men and women asking to be taught their duty, that they may go and do it, I find everywhere schools, libraries, and mechanics' institutes springing up, and rich and poor meeting together more and more in the faith that God has made them all. As for the outward and material improvements you know as well as I, that since free trade and emigration the labourers confess themselves better off than they have been for fifty years, and though you will not see in the chalk counties that rapid and enormous agricultural improvement which you will in Lancashire, Yorkshire, or the Lothians, yet you shall see enough to-day to settle for you the question whether we *English* country folk are in a state of decadence and decay. *Par exemple?*'

And Claude pointed to the clean large fields, with their neat close-set hedges-rows, among which here and there stood cottages, more than three-fourths of them new.

'Those well drained fallow fields, ten years ago, were poor clay pastures, fit to sleep in nine six months in this year, and accused in the eyes of my poor dear old friend, Spence Lavington, because they were so full of old moles' nests, that they threw all horses down. I am no firmer, but they seem surely to be somewhat altered since then.'

As he spoke, they turned off the main line of the rolling clays toward the foot of the chalk-hills, and began to brush through short cuttings of blue guilt and 'green sand,' so called by geologists, because its usual colours are bright brown, snow-white, and crimson.

Soon they get glimpses of broad silver Whit, as she shales, with divided streams, through bright water-meadows and stately groves of poplar, and alder, and pine, white, far above upon the left, the downs rise steep, crowned with black fir spinnies, and dotted with dark box and juniper.

Soon they pass old Whitford Priory, with its numberless gables nestling amid mighty clins, and the Nunpool flashing and roaring as of old, and the lowly shingle below sparkling and laughing in the low but bright December sun.

So shales on the noble river, be ever changing, and yet for ever the same—always fulfilling its errand, which yet is never fulfilled, said Stungarr, 'he was given to halt mystification, and hankering after Pagan mythology, learnt in the days when he worshipped Emerson,

and tried (but unsuccessfully) to worship Margaret Fuller Ossoli. 'Those old Greeks had a deep insight into nature, when they gave to each river not merely a name, but a semi-human personality, a river-god of its own. It may be but a collection of ever-changing atoms of water, what is your body but a similar collection of atoms, decaying and renewing every moment? Yet you are a person, and is not the river, too, a person—a live thing? It has an individual countenance which you love, which you would recognise again, meet it where you will, it marks the whole landscape, it determines probably the geography and the society of a whole district. It draws you, too, to itself by an indelible magnetic attraction. If you stop in a strange place, the first instinct of your ill half-hour is to lounge by the river. It is a person to you, you call it Scotchman too, at least she, and not it. How do you know that you are not philosophically correct, and that the river has a spirit as well as you?'

'Amph! ' said Claude, who talks mysticism himself by the hour, but smiles it in every one else. 'It has front, at least, and they stand, I suppose, for its soul, as the jansans do for those of Jean Paul's gaucy ideal bride and bridegroom and peripatetic baby.'

'Oh, you materialist English! sporting-mad all of you, from the duke who shooteth stags to the clown who peacheth rabbits!'

'And who therefore can fight Russians at Inkermann, duke and clown alike, and side by side, never better (says the chronicler of old) than in their last battle. I can neither fight nor fish, and on the whole I agree with you—but I think it proper to be as English as I can in the presence of an American.'

A whistle—*work—a jar*, and they stop at the little Watford station, where a carriage for the vile, far better than Claude was, made his appearance, in the person of Mark Armsworth, banker, railway director and *de facto* king of Whitham town, long since elected by universal suffrage (his own vote included) as permanent *locum tenens* of his gracious Majesty.

He hailed Claude cheerfully from the platform, as he waddles about with a face as of the rising sun, radiant with good fun, good humour, good deeds, good news, and good living. His coat was scarlet once, but purple now. His leathers and boots were doubtless clean this morning—but are now afflicted with elephantiasis being three inches deep in solid mud, which his old groom is scraping off as fast as he can. His rap is dimpled in, his buck tears fresh stains of peat, a gentle rain distils from the few angles of his person, and bedews the platform, for Mark Armsworth has 'been in Whit' to day.

All pointers and guards touch their hats to him, the station-master rushes up and down intricately, shouting, 'Where are those horse-boxes? Now then, look alive!' for Mark is chairman of the line, and everybody's friend beside, and as he stands there being scraped he finds time to enquire after every one of the

officials by turns, and after their wives, children, and sweethearts beside.

'What a fine specimen of your English squire,' says Stangrave.

'He is no squire, he is the Whitbury banker, of whom I told you.'

'Armsworth?' said Stangrave, looking at the old man with interest.

'Mark Armsworth himself. He is acting as squire, though, now, for he has hunted the Whitford Priors ever since poor old Lavington died.'

'Now then—those horse boxes!'

'Very sorry, sir, I telegraphed up, but we could get but one down.'

'Put the horses into that, then, and there's an empty carriage! Look, put the hounds into it, and they shall all go second class, as sure as I'm chairman!'

The grinning porters hand the strange passengers in, while Mark counts the couples with his whip point.

'Ravager! Roystoner! Melody—Gay lass, all right! Why, where's that old buff of a Good man?'

'Went over a gate as soon as he saw the couples, and wouldn't come in at my price, sir,' says the huntsman. 'Come home by himself, I expect.'

'Goodman, Goodman, boy!' And forthwith out of the station room slips the noble old hound, gray-nosed, gray-eyebrowed, who has hidden for purposes of his own, till he sees all the rest safe locked in.

Up he goes to Mark, and begins wringing against his knees, and looking up as only dogs can. 'Oh, want to go first class with me, eh? Jump in, then!' And in jumps the hound, and Mark struggles after him.

'Hello, sir! Come out! Here are your letters here before you,' as he sees Stangrave, and a fat old lady in the opposite corner.

'Oh no, let the dog stay!' says Stangrave.

'I shall wet you, sir, I'm afraid.'

'Oh no!'

And Mark settles himself, puffing, with the hound's head on his knees, and begins talking fast and loud.

'Well, Mr Mellot, you're a stranger here. Haven't seen you since poor Miss Honour died. Ah, sweet angel she was! Thought my Mary would never get over it. She's just such another, though I say it, baring the beards. Goodman, boy! You recollect old Goodman, son of Gallopier, that the old squire gave our old squire?'

Claude, of course, knows—as will do who know those parts—who the Old Squire is, long may he live, patriarch of the parish! The genealogy he does not.

'Ah, well—Miss Honour took to the pony, and used to walk him out, and a prince of a hound he is, so now he's old we let him have his own way, for her sake, and nobody'll ever bully you, will they, Goodman, my boy?'

'I want to introduce you to a friend of mine.'

'Proud to know any friend of yours, sir.'

'Mr Stangrave—Mr Armsworth. Mr Stangrave is an American gentleman, who is anxious to see Whitbury and the neighbourhood.'

'Well, I shall be happy to show it him, though I can't have a better guide, though I say it know everything by this time, and everybody, man, woman, and child, as I hope Mr Stangrave'll find when he gets to know old Mark.'

'You must not speak of getting to know you, my dear sir, I know you intimately already, I assure you, and more, am under very deep obligations to you, which, I regret to say, I can only repay by thanks.'

'Obligation to me, my dear sir?'

'Indeed I am. I will tell you all when we are alone.' And Stangrave glanced at the fat old woman, who seemed to be listening intently.

'Oh, never mind her,' says Armsworth, 'she is as quiet as a good woman, but so deaf she ought to speak to her though'—and, reaching a horse, to the infinite amusement of his companions, he roared in the fat woman's face, with a voice as of a speaking trumpet, 'Glad to see you, Mrs Grove! Got those dividends ready for your next time you come into town?'

'Ah!' screamed the hapless woman, who is the first to hear of it. 'What do you mean, frightening a lady in that way? Dear, indeed!'

'Why,' roared Mark again, 'ain't you Mrs Grove, of Dystown Dytwith?'

'No, not no acquaintance! What business it of your son, to be chattering in that way?'

'Well—but I'll swear if you ain't her, you're somebody else. I know you as well as the town clock.'

'Mr—If you must know, sir, I'm Mrs Pettigrew's mother, the hunchback's establishment, sir, a-going down for thirteen, sir!'

'Humph!' says Mark, 'you see—was sure I knew her—know everybody here. As I said, she wasn't Mrs Grove, she was somebody else. Even in these parts before?'

'Never—but I have heard a good deal of them, and very much chattered with them I am. I have seldom seen a more distinctive specimen of English scenery.'

'And how you are improving round here!' said Claude, who knew Mark's weak points, and wanted to draw him out. 'Your homesteads seem all new, three fields have been thrown into one, I fancy, over half the town.'

Mark broke out at once on his favourite topic. 'I believe you! I'm making the mare go here in Whitford, without the money too, sometimes. I'm steward now, barill! ha! ha! these four years past—to Mrs Lavington's Irish husband, I wanted him to have a regular agent, a county seat or Yorkshireman. Futh, the poor man couldn't afford it, and so full back on old Mark. Paddy loves a job, you know. So I've the votes and the tithing, and send him his rents, and manage all the rest pretty much my own way.'

When the name of Lavington was mentioned,

Mark observed Stangrave start, and an expression passed over his face difficult to be defined -- it seemed to Mark mingled pain and shame. He turned to Chundle, and said, in a low voice, but loud enough for Mark to hear, --

'Livington? Is this then country also? As I am going to visit the graves of my ancestors, I suppose I ought to visit those of hers.'

Mark caught the words which he was not enabled to --

'Eh? Sir, do you belong to these parts?'

'My family, I believe, lived in the neighbourhood of Whithorn, at a place called Stan --'

'I'm sure! Old farm-house now, fine old --' saying in it, though the old family must have been, a church full of their monuments. 'Hum, - ha! Well! that's pleasant work! I've often heard there were good old families away there in New England, never thought that there were Whithorn people among them! Hum! well! the world's not so large as people think, after all. And you spoke of the Livingtons! They are great folks here - or were --' He was going to rattle on, but he saw a pained expression on both the travellers' faces, and Stangrave stopped him somewhat abruptly.

'I know nothing of them, I assure you, or they of me. Your country here is certainly charming, and shows little of those signs of decay which some people in America impute to it.'

'Decay?' Mark went off at once. 'Decay! I longed for it! There's life in the old dog yet, sir! and old pigs are looking up since free trade and emigration. The upland and high wages now, and instead of hinds going out of cultivation, as they thought, bosh! there's a greater breadth down in what in the vale now than there ever was, and look at the roofs! Farmers must farm now, or sink, and, by George! they are farming, like sensible fellows, and a fig for that old grimy ghost of Protection! There was a fellow came down from the Cotton - you know what that is?' Stangrave bowed, and shrilled assent. 'From the Cotton, sir, two years since, and tried it on, till he fell in with old Mark. I told him a thing or two, among the rest, told him to his face that he was a liar - for he wanted to make farmers believe they were ruined, when he knew they were not, and that he'd got 'em back Protection, when he knew that he couldn't -- and what's more he didn't mean to. So he cut up rough, and wanted to call me out.'

'Did you get?' asked Stangrave, who was fast becoming amused with his man.

'I told him that that wasn't my line, unless he'd try Eley's greens at forty yards, and then I was his man! but if he had a finger on me, I'd give him as sound a horse-whipping, old as I am, as ever man had in his life. And so I would!' And Mark looked complacently at his own broad shoulders. 'And since then, my lord, and I have had it all our own way, and Munchampstead and Co. is the only firm in the

'What's become of a Lord Munchampstead, who used to live somewhere hereabouts? I used to meet him at Rome.'

'Rome?' said Mark solemnly. 'Yes, he was too fond of Rome, awhile back. Can't see what people want running into foreign parts to look at those poor idolaters, and then Punch and Judy plays. Pray for 'em, and keep clear of them, is the best rule. But he has married my lord's youngest daughter, and three pretty children he has, - ducks of children. Always comes to see me in my shop, when he drives into town. Oh! - he's doing pretty well. One of these new between-the-stools, Peaches they call them, - hope they'll be as good as the main. However, he's a free trader, because he can't help it. So we have his votes, and as to his Conservatism, let him conserve hops and haws if he chooses, like a politician. After all, why pull down anything, when it's tumbling on your head? By the bye, sir, as you're a man of money, there's that Stangrave and firm in the market now. Pretty little investment - I'd see that you got it cheap, and my lord wouldn't lad, against you, of course, as you're a liberal all Americans say, I suppose. And so you'd oblige us, as well as yourself, for it would give us another vote for the county.'

'Upon my word you tempt me. But I do not think that this is just the moment for an American to desert his own country and settle in England. I should not be here now, had I not this autumn done all I could for America in America, and so crossed the sea to save her, if possible, in England.'

'Well, perhaps not, especially at you're a freemason.'

'I am, I assure you.'

'Thought as much, by your looks. Don't see what else an honest man can be just now.'

Stangrave laughed. 'I hope every one thinks so in England.'

'Just as for that, sir! We know a man when we see him here, I hope they'll do the same across the water.'

There was silence for a minute or two, and then Mark began again.

'Look! - there's the farm, that's my lord's. I should like to show you the shorthorns there, sir! all my Lord Duncie's and Sir Edward Knightley's stock. Bought a bull calf of him the other day myself for a cool hundred odd fool that I am. Never mind spreads the word. And here are mules - four pair of new stones. Old What don't know her self again. But I dare say they look smart enough to you, sir, after your American water power.'

'What of that? It is just as honourable in you to make the most of a small river, as in us to make the most of a large one.'

'You speak like a book, sir. By the bye, if you think of taking home a calf or two to improve your New England breed, there me a good many gone across the sea in the last few years. I think we could find you three or four

boasties, not so very dear, considering the labour.

'Thanks, but I really am no farmer.'

'Well, no offence, I hope, but I am like your Yankees in one thing, you see, always have an eye to a bit of business. If I didn't, I shouldn't be here now.'

'How very tasteful! our own American shrubs! what a pity that they are not in flower! What is this,' asked Stangrave—'one of your noblemen's parks?'

And they began to run through the cutting in Minchamstead Park, where the owner has concealed the banks of the rail for nearly half a mile in a thicket of azaleas, rhododendrons, and clambering roses.

'Ah! isn't it pretty?' His lordship let us have the land for a song, only bargained that we should keep low, not to spoil his view, and so we did, and he's planted our cutting for us. I call that a present to the county, and a very pretty one too! Ah, give me these new houses that sweep clean!

'Your old brooms, like Lord Vauxhous, were new brooms once, and swept well enough five hundred years ago,' said Stangrave, who had that fatal reverence for English antiquity which sets so gracefully upon many highly educated and far-sighted Americans.

'Worn to the stumps now, too many of them, sir, and want new-heading, as our broomsquines would say, and I doubt whether most of them are worth the cost of a fresh head. Not that I can say that of the young lord. He's foremost in all that's good, if he had but money, and when he hasn't, he gives brains. Gave a lecture in our institute at Whitford, last winter, on the late great Poets. "Shot over my head a little, and other people's too," but my May—my daughter, sir—thought it beautiful, and there's nothing that she don't know.'

'It is very hopeful to see your aristocracy joining in the general movement, and bringing their taste and knowledge to bear on the lower classes.'

'Yes, sir! We're going all right now in the old country. Only have to steer straight, and not put on too much steam. But give me the newcomers, after all. They may be close men of business, how else could one live? But when it comes to giving, I'll back them against the old ones for generosity, or taste either. They've then proper pride, when they get hold of the land, and they like to show it, and quite right they. You must see my little place too. It's not in such bad order, though I say it, and am but a county banker, but I'll back my flowers against half the squires round my May's, that is—and my fruit, too. See, there! There's my lord's new schools, and his model cottages, with more comforts in them, saving the size, than my father's house had, and there's his hammock, as he calls it, for the unmarried men, reading-room and dining-room in common, and a library of books, and a sleeping-room for each.'

'It seems strange to complain of prosperity,' said Stangrave, 'but I sometimes regret that in America there is so little room for the very highest virtues, all are so well off that one never needs to give, and what a man does here for others, they do for themselves.'

'So much the better for them. There are other ways of being generous, besides putting your hand in your pocket, sir! By Jove! there'll be room enough (if you'll excuse me) for an American to do fine things, as long as those poor negro slaves

'I know it, I know it,' said Stangrave, in the tone of a man who had already made up his mind on a painful subject, and wished to be no more of it. 'You will excuse me, but I am come here to learn what I can of England. Of my own country I know enough, I trust, to do my duty in it when I return.'

Mark was silent, seeing that he had touched a tender place, and pointed out one object of interest after another, as they ran through the flat park, past the great house with its Dutch gables, which the eighteenth century had raised above the quiet cell of the Minchamstead recluses.

'It is very ugly,' said Stangrave, and truly.

'Could it be enough, though? and, as somebody said, "people live inside their houses, and not outside 'em." You should see the pictures there, though, while you're in the country. I can show you one or two, too, I hope. Never grudge money for good pictures. The pleasantest furniture in the world, as long as you keep them, and if you're tired of them, always fetch double their price.'

After Minchamstead, the rail leaves the sands and clays, and turns up between the chalk hills, along the large river, which it has reduced useless, save as a superfluous trout stream, and then along Whit, now flowing clearer and clearer, as we approach its springs and the lofty downs. On through more wild meadows, and rows of pollard willow, and peat-purcell with tall golden reeds, and such dykes each in summer a floating flower-bed, while Stangrave looks out of the window, has been lighting up with curiosity.

'How perfectly English! At least, how perfectly un-American! It is just Tennyson's beautiful dream.

"On either side the river he
Long fields of barley and of rye,
Which rattle the wheat and meadow below;
And through the middle stream comes by,
To many towers a white

'Why, what is this?' as they stop again at a station, where the board bears, in large letters, 'Shalott.'

'Shalott? Where are the

"Four grey walls and four grey towers"

which overlook a space of flowers?'

Then, upon the little island, are the castle ruins, now converted into a useful house-museum. 'And the lady?—is that she?'

It was only the miller's daughter, fresh from a boarding-school, gardening in a broad straw hat.

'At least,' said Claude, 'she is tending far prettier flowers than ever the lady saw, while the lady herself, instead of weaving and dreaming, is reading Miss Yonge's novels, and becoming all the wiser thereby, and teaching poor children in Hemmelford National School.'

'And where is her fairy knight?' asked Stungrave, 'whom one half hopes to see riding down from that grand old house which sulks there above among the beech-woods, as if frowning on all the change and civilisation below?'

'You do old Sidriestane injustice. Vieuxbons descends from thence, nowadays, to lecture at localism's institutes, instead of the fairy knight, toiling along in the blazing summer weather, sweating in burning metal, like poor Pallas in his own bull.'

'Then the fairy knight is extinct in England?' asked Stungrave, smiling.

'No man less, only he (not Vieuxbons, but his younger brother) has found a wide awake colder than an iron kettle, and travels by rail when he is at home, and, when he was in the Crimea, rode a shaggy pony, and smoked coffee-dish all through the battle of Inkermann.'

'He showed himself the old Sir Lancelot then,' said Stungrave.

'He did. Wherefore the lady married him when the Guards came home, and he will breed prize pigs, and sit at the board of guardians, and take in the *Times*, clothed, and in his right mind, for the old Berserk spirit is gone out of him, and he is become respectable, in a respectable age, and is nevertheless just as laconic a fellow as ever.'

'And so all things are changed, except the river, which still -'

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dash and shiver
On the stream that runneth ever.

'And,' said Claude, smiling, 'the descendants of medieval trout snip at the descendants of medieval fish, spinning about upon just the same sized and coloured wings on which their forfathers spun a thousand years ago, having become, in all that while, neither bigger nor wiser.'

'But is it not a grand thought,' asked Stungrave, 'the silence and permanence of nature and the perpetual flux and noise of human life? - a grand thought that one generation goeth, and another cometh, and the earth abideth for ever?'

'At least it is so much the worse for the poor old earth, if her doom is to stand still, while man improves and progresses from age to age.'

'May I ask one question, sir?' said Stungrave, who saw that their conversation was puzzling their jolly companion. 'Have you heard any news yet of Mr. Thurnall?'

Mark looked him full in the face.

'Did you know him?'

'I did, in past years, most intimately.'

'Then you know the finest fellow, sir, that ever walked mortal earth.'

'I have discovered that, sir, as well as you. I am under obligations to that man which my heart's blood will not repay. I shall make no secret of telling you what they are at a fit time.'

Mark held out his broad red hand and grasped Stungrave's till the joints cracked. His face grew as red as a turkey cock's, his eyes filled with tears.

'His father must hear that! Hang it, his father must hear that! And Grace too!'

'Grace?' said Claude, 'and is she with you?'

'With the old man, the angel! tending him night and day.'

'And as beautiful as ever?'

'Sir!' said Mark solemnly, 'when any one's soul is as beautiful as hers is, one never thinks about her face.'

'Who is Grace?'

'A saint and a heroine!' said Claude. 'You shall know all, for you ought to know. But you have no news of Tom, and I have none either. I am losing all hope now.'

'I'm not, sir!' said Mark fiercely. 'Sir, that boy's not dead, he's not! He's more alive than a cat, and if you know anything of him, you ought to know that.'

'I have good reason to know it, none more but -'

'But, sir. But what? Harm come to him, sir? The Lord wouldn't harm him, for his father's sake, and as for the devil! I tell you, sir, if he tried to fly away with him, he'd have to drop him before he'd gone a mile.' And Mark began blowing his nose violently, and getting so red that he seemed on the point of going into a fit.

'Tell you what it is, gentlemen,' said he at last, 'you come and stay with me, and see his father. It will comfort the old man and will comfort me too, for I get down hearted about him at times.'

'Strange affliction there was about that man,' says Stungrave, *softly*, to Claude.

'He was like a son to him.'

'No, gentlemen. Mr. Mellot, you don't hint.'

'No, thank you,' said Claude.

'Mr. Stungrave does, I'll warrant.'

'I have at various times, both in England and in Virginia.'

'Ah! Do they keep up the real sport there, eh? Well, that's the best thing I've heard of them. Sir! - my horses are yours.' A friend of that boy, sir, is welcome to lunge the whole lot, and I won't grumble. Three days a week, sir. Breakfast at eight, dinner at 5.30 - none of your late London hours for me, sir, and after it the best bottle of port, though I say it, short of my friend S - - at Reading.'

You must accept,' whispered Claude, 'or he will be angry.'

So Stungrave accepted, and all the more readily because he wanted to hear from the good banker many things about the lost Tom Thurnall.

'Here we are,' cries Mark. 'Now, you must excuse me—see to yourselves. I see to the puppies. Dinner at 5.30, mind! Come along, Goodman, hoy!'

'Is this Whitbury?' asks Stangrave.

It was Whitbury, indeed. Pleasant old town, which slopes down the hillside to the old church, just 'restored,' though, by Lords Munchamstead and Venebians, not without Mark Armsworth's help, to its ancient beauty of grey flint and white church chequer-work, and quaint wooden spire. Pleasant churchyard round it, where the dead lie looking up to the bright southern sun, among huge black yews, upon their knoll of white chalk above the ancient stream. Pleasant white wooden bridge, with its row of arches dropping hints upon the noses of elephantine tourists, or fishing over the rail with crooked piers, while hapless gadgones come dangling upward between stream and sky with a look of sheepish surprise and shame, as of a schoolboy caught stealing apples, in their foolish vagrancy. Pleasant new national schools at the bridge end, whether the mimes scurried at the sound of the swan's bell. Though it be an ugly pole enough of larch red brick, it is doing its work, as Whitbury folk know well by now. Pleasant, too, though still more ugly, those long red arms of new houses which Whitbury is stretching out along its fine turnpikes, especially up to the railway station beyond the bridge, and to the smart new hotel, which hopes (but hopes in vain) to out rival the ancient 'Angler's Rest.' Away thither, and not to the Railway Hotel, they trundle in a fly, leaving Mark Armsworth all but angry because they will not sleep, as well as breakfast, lunch, and dine with him daily, and settle in the good old inn, with its three white gables overhanging the pavement, and its long lattice window barred deep beneath them, like so Stangrave says to a shrewd kindly eye under a bland white forehead.

No, good old inn, not such shall be thy fate as long as trout are trout, and men have wit to catch them. For art thou not a sacred house? Art thou not consecrated to the Whitbury brotherhood of anglers? Is not the wainscot of that long low parlour inscribed with many a famous name? Are not its walls hung with many a famous countenance? Has not its oak-ribbed ceiling rung, for now a hundred years, to the laughter of painters, sculptors, grave divines (unbending at least there), great lawyers, statesmen, wits, even of Foote and Quin themselves, while the sleek landlord wiped the cobwebs off another mug of that grand old port, and took in all the wisdom with a quiet twinkle of his sleepy eye? He rests now, good old man, among the yews beside his forefathers, and on his tomb his lengthy epitaph, writ by himself, for Barker was a poet in his way.

Some people hold the said epitaph to be irreverent, because in a list of Barker's many blessings occurs the profane word 'trout' but those

trout, and the custom which they brought him, had made the old man's life comfortable, and enabled him to leave a competence for his children, and why should not a man honestly thank Heaven for that which he knows has done him good, even though it be but fish?

He is gone, but the Whiff is not, nor the Whitbury Club, nor will, while old Mark Armsworth is king in Whitbury, and sits every evening in the May-fly season at the table head, relating good stories of the great anglers of his youth, names which you, reader, have heard many a time, and who could do many things besides handling a fish-line. But though the club is not what it was fifty years ago,—before Norway and Scotland became easy of access, yet it is still an important institution of the town, to the members whereof all good subjects touch their hats, for does not the club bring into the town good money, and take out again only fish, which cost nothing in the breeding? Did not the club present the Town-hall with a portrait of the renowned fishing sculptor? and did it not (only stipulating that the school should be built beyond the bridge to avoid noise) give fifty pounds to the said school but two years ago, in addition to Mark's own hundred?

But enough of this—only may the Whitbury club, in recompense for my thus handling them down to immortality, give me another day next year, as they gave me this, and may the May fly be strong on, and a south west gale blowing!

In the course of the next week, in many a conversation, the three men compared notes as to the events of two years ago, and each supplied the other with new facts, which shall be duly set forth in this tale, saving and excepting, of course, the real reason why everybody did everything. For as everybody knows who has watched life—the fine springs of all human action are generally those which fools will not see, which wise men will not mention, so that in order to present a credible tragedy of *Humbly* you must always 'omit the part of Humbly' and probably the ghost and the queen into the bargain.

CHAPTER I

POETRY AND PROSE

Now, to tell my story, if not as it ought to be told, at least as I can tell it. I must go back sixteen years, to the days when Whitbury boasted of forty coaches per diem, instead of one railway, and set forth how in its southern suburb there stood two pleasant houses side by side, with their gardens sloping down to the Whiff, and parted from each other only by the high black fruit-wall, through which there used to be a door of communication, for the two occupiers were fast friends. In one of these two houses, sixteen years ago, lived our friend Mark Armsworth, banker, solicitor, land-agent, church

warden, guardian of the poor, justice of the peace,—in a word, viceroy of Whitbury town, and far more potent therein than her gracious majesty Queen Victoria. In the other lived Edward Thurnall, esquire, doctor of medicine, and consulting physician of all the country round. These two men were as brothers, and had been as brothers for now twenty years, though no two men could be more different, save in the two common virtues which bound them to each other, and that was, that they both were honest and kind-hearted men. What Mark's character was, and is, I have already shown, and enough of it, I hope, to make my readers like the good old banker—as for Doctor Thurnall, a pious or gentle soul never entered a sick-room, with patient wisdom in his brain and patient tenderness in his heart. Beloved and trusted by rich and poor, he had made to himself a practice large enough to enable him to settle two sons well in his own profession, the third and youngest was still in Whitbury. He was something of a geologist, too, and a botanist, and an antiquarian, and Mark Armsworth, who knew, and knows still, nothing of science looked up to the doctor as an inspired sage, quoted him, defended his opinions, right or wrong, ~~and~~ thrust him forward at public meetings, and in all places and seasons, much to the mock doctor's discomfort.

The good doctor was sitting in his study on the morning on which my tale begins, having just brushed his breakfast, and settled to his microscope in the bay-window, opening on the lawn.

A beautiful October morning it was, one of those in which Dame Nature, healthily tired with the revelry of summer, is composing herself, with a quiet satisfied smile, for her winter's sleep. Sheets of dappled cloud were sliding slowly from the west, long bars of hazy blue hung over the southern chalk downs, which gleamed pearly gray beneath the low south-eastern sun. In the vale below, soft white flakes of mist still hung over the water meadows, and bared the dark trunks of the huge elms and poplars, whose fast yellowing leaves came showering down at every rustle of the western breeze, spotting the grass below. The river swirled along, glossy no more, but dingy gray with autumn rains and rotting leaves. All beyond the golden tides of autumn, bright and peaceful, even in decay, but up the sunny slope of the garden itself, and to the very window-sill, summer still lingered. The beds of red viburns and geraniums were still brilliant, though choked with fallen leaves of acacia and plum, the canary plant, still untouched by frost, twined its delicate green leaves, and more delicate yellow blossoms, through the crimson lacework of the Virginia creeper, and the great yellow nosegay swung its long canes across the window, filling all the air with fruity fragrance.

And the good doctor, lifting his eyes from his microscope, looked out upon it all with a quiet satisfaction, and though his lips did not

move, his eyes seemed to be thanking God for it all, and thanking Him, too, perhaps, that he was still permitted to gaze upon that fair world outside. For as he gazed he started, as if with sudden pain, and passed his hand across his eyes, with something like a sigh, and then looked at the microscope no more, but sat, seemingly absorbed in thought, while upon his delicate, frail-worn features, and high, blank, unwrinkled forehead, and the few soft gray locks which not time for he was scarcely fifty-five—but long labour of brain, had spared to him, there lay a hopeful calm, as of a man who had nigh done his work, and felt that he had not altogether done it all, an antinatal calm, resigned, yet full of cheerfulness, which harmonised fitly with the quiet beauty of the decaying landscape before him.

'I say, daddy, you must drop that microscope, and put on your shade. You are running those dear old eyes of yours again, in spite of what Alexander told you.'

The doctor took up the green shade which lay beside him, and replaced it with a sigh and a smile.

'I must use the old things now and then, till you can take my place at the microscope, Tom, or till we have, as we ought to have, a first-rate analytical chemist settled in every county town, and paid, in part at least, out of the county rates.'

The 'Tom' who had spoken was one of two youths of eighteen, who stood in opposite corners of the bay window, gazing out upon the landscape, but evidently with thoughts as different as were their complexions.

Tom was of that bull-terrier type so common in England, sturdy, and yet not coarse, middle-aged, deep-chested, broad shouldered, with small well-kent hands and feet, large jaw, bright gray eyes, crisp brown hair, a heavy projecting brow, his face full of shrewdness and good nature, and of humour withal, which might be at times a little sally and sarcastic, to judge from the glances which he sent forth from the corners of his wicked eyes at his companion on the other side of the window. He was evidently prepared for a day's shooting, in velvet jacket and leather gaiters, and stood feeling about in his pockets to see whether he had forgotten any of his tackle, and muttering to himself amid his whistling, 'Capital day. How the birds will be. Where on earth is old Mark? Why must he wait to smoke his pipe after breakfast? Couldn't he have had it in the t'n up, the blessed old chimney that he is.'

The other lad was somewhat taller than Tom, awkwardly and plainly dressed, but with a highly developed hyacinth turn down collar, and long black curling locks. He was certainly handsome, as far as the form of his features and brow, and would have been very handsome, but for the bad complexion which at his age so often accompanies a sedentary life and a melancholic temper. One glance at his face was sufficient to tell that he was moody, shy,

restless, perhaps discontented, perhaps ambitious and vain. He held in his hand a volume of Percy's *Reliques*, which he had just taken down from Thurnall's shelves, yet he was looking, not at it, but at the landscape. Nevertheless, as he looked, one might have seen that he was thinking not so much of it as of his own thoughts about it. His eye, which was very large, dark, and beautiful, with heavy lids and long lashes, had that dreamy look so common among men of the poetic temperament, conscious of thought, if not conscious of self, and as his face kindled, and his lips moved more and more earnestly, he began muttering to himself half aloud, till Tom Thurnall burst into an open laugh.

'There's Jack at it again! making poetry, I'll bet my head to a China orange.'

'And why not?' said his father, looking up quietly, but reprovably. Jack winced and blushed, and a dark shade of impatience passed across his face.

'Oh! it's no concern of mine. Let everybody please themselves. The country looks very pretty, no doubt, I can tell that, only my notion is, that a wise man ought to go out and enjoy it—as I am going to do—with a gun on his shoulder, instead of poking at home like a yard-dog, and belabouring himself in poetry,' and Tom lifted up his voice into a doleful mawfall's howl.

'Then be as good as your word, Tom, and let every one please themselves,' said the doctor, but the dark youth broke out in sudden passion.

'Mr Thomas Thurnall! I will not endure this! Why are you always making me your butt,—insulting me, sir, even in your father's house? You do not understand me, and I do not care to understand you. "If my presence" is disagreeable to you, I can easily relieve you of it!' and the dark youth turned to go away, like Naaman, in a rage.

'Stop, John,' said the doctor. 'I think it would be the more courteous plan for Tom to relieve you of his presence. Go and find Mark, Tom, and please to remember that John Briggs is my guest, and that I will not allow any rudeness to him in my house.'

'I'll go, gladly, to the world's end, if you like, provided you won't ask me to write poetry. But Jack takes offence so soon. Give us your hand, old tinder-box! I meant no harm, and you know it.'

John Briggs took the proffered hand silkily enough, and Tom went out of the glass door, whistling as merry as a cricket.

'My dear boy,' said the doctor, when they were alone, 'you must try to curb this temper of yours. Don't be angry with me, but—'

'I should be an ungrateful brute if I was, sir. I can bear anything from you. I ought to, for I owe everything to you, but—'

'But my dear boy—"better is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city".'

John Briggs tapped his foot on the ground impatiently. 'I cannot help it, sir. It will

drive me mad, I think, at times,—this contrast between what I might be, and what I am. I can bear it no longer—mixing mediocres here, when I might be educating myself, distinguishing myself for I can do it, have you not said as much yourself to me again and again?'

'I have, of course, but—'

'But, sir, only hear me. It is in vain to ask me to command my temper while I stay here. I am not fit for this work, not fit for the dull country. I am not appreciated, not understood, and I shall never be, till I can get to London, till I can find congenial spirits, and take my rightful place in the great Parliament of mind. I am Pegasus in harness, here!' cried the vain discontented youth. 'Let me but once get there, amid art, civilisation, intellect, and the company of men like that old Mermaid Club, to hear and to answer—'

"Words,
No noble, and so full of noble flame,
As one had put his whole soul in a jest,"

and then you shall see whether Pegasus has not wings, and can use them too!' And he stopped suddenly, choking with emotion, his nostrils and chest dilating, his foot stamping impatiently on the ground.

The doctor watched him in a sad smile.

'Do you remember the devil's temptation of our Lord? "Cast thyself down from hence, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee"?''

'I do, but what has that to do with me?'

'Throw away the safe station in which God has certainly put you, to seek, by some desperate venture, a new, and, as you fancy, a grander one for yourself? Look out of that window, lad, is there not poetry enough, beauty and glory enough, in that sky, those fields—ay, in every fallen leaf, to employ all your powers, considerable as I believe them to be? Why spin the pure, quiet, country life, in which such men as Wordsworth have been content to live and grow old?'

The boy shook his head like an impatient horse. 'Too slow—too slow for me, to wait and wait, as Wordsworth did, through long years of obscurity, misconception, ridicule. No! What I have, I must have at once, and, if it must be, like Chatterton—if only, like Chatterton, I can have my little day of success, and make the world confess that another prout of the beautiful has arisen among men.'

Now, it can scarcely be denied that the good doctor was guilty of a certain amount of weakness in listening patiently to all this rant. Not that the rant was very blamable in a lad of eighteen, for have we not all, while we are going through our course of Shelley, talked very much the same abominable stuff, and thought ourselves the grandest fellows upon earth, on account of that very length of ear which was patent to all the world save our precious selves, blinded by our self-conceit, and wondering in wrath why everybody was laughing at us? But the truth is, the doctor was

easy and indulgent to a fault, and dreaded nothing so much, save telling a lie, as hurting people's feelings, beside, as the acknowledged wise man of Whitbury, he was a little proud of playing the Mæcenas, and he had, and not unjustly, a high opinion of John Briggs's powers. So he had lent him books, corrected his taste in many matters, and, by dint of petting and humouring, had kept the wayward youth half a dozen times from running away from his father, who was an apothecary in the town, and from the general practitioner, Mr Bolus, under whom John Briggs fulfilled the office of co-assistant with Tom Thurnall. Plenty of trouble had both the lads given the doctor in the last five years, but of very different kinds. Tom, though he was in everlasting hot water, as the most incorrigible scapegrace for ten miles round, contrived to confine his naughtiness strictly to play-hours, while he learnt everything which was to be learnt with marvellous quickness, and so ably fulfilled the ideal of a bottle boy (for of him, too, as of all things, I presume, an ideal exists eternally in the supra-sensual Platonic universe), that Bolus told his father, 'In hours, so he takes care of my business as well as I could myself, but out of hours, sir, I believe he is possessed by seven devils.'

John Briggs, on the other hand, aimed in the very opposite direction. Too proud to learn his business, and too proud also to play the scapegrace as Tom did, he neglected alike work and amusement for lazy mooming over books, and the dreams which books called up. He made perpetual mistakes in the shop, and then considered himself mislaid by an 'inferior spirit,' if poor Bolus called him to account for it. Indeed, had it not been for many applications of that 'precious oil of unity,' with which the good doctor daily anointed the creaking wheels of Whitbury society, John Briggs and his master would have long ago 'broken out of gear, and parted company in mutual wrath and tury. And now, indeed, the critical moment seemed come at last, for the lad began afresh to declare his deliberate intention of going to London to seek his fortune, in spite of parents and all the world.

'To live on here, and never to rise, perhaps, above the post of correspondent to a country newspaper! To publish a volume of poems by subscription and have to go round, hat in hand, begging five shillings' worth of patronage from every stupid country squire intolerable! I must go! Shakespeare was never Shakespeare till he fled from miserable Stratford, to become at once the friend of Sidney and Southampton.'

'But John Briggs will be John Briggs still, if he went to the moon,' shouted Tom Thurnall, who had just come up to the window. 'I advise you to change that name of yours, Jack, to Sidney, or Percy, or Walker if you like, anything but the illustrious surname of Briggs the osseuer!'

'What do you mean, sir?' thundered John,
T. Y. A.

while the doctor himself jumped up, for Tom was red with rage.

'What is this, Tom?'

'What's that?' screamed Tom, bursting, in spite of his passion, into tears of laughter. 'What's that?' and he held out a phial. 'Smell it! taste it! Oh, if I had but a gallon of it to pour down your throat! That's what you brought Mark Arnsworth last night, instead of his cough mixture, while your brains were wool-gathering after poetry!'

'What is it?' gasped John Briggs.

'Miss Twiddle's black dose, — strong enough to rive the gizzard out of an old cock!'

'It's not!'

'It is!' roared Mark Arnsworth from behind, as he rushed in, in shooting-jacket and gaiters, his red face redder with fury, his red whiskers standing on end with wrath like a tiger's, his left hand upon his hairless hypogastric region, his right brandishing an empty glass, which smelt strongly of brandy and water. 'It is! And you've given me the cholera, and spoilt my day's shooting, and if I don't serve you out for it there's no law in England!'

'And spoilt my day's shooting, too, the first I shall get before I'm off to Paris! To have a day in Lord Muchminstead's preserves, and to be baulked of it in this way!'

John Briggs stood as one astounded.

'If I don't serve you out for this!' shouted Mark.

'If I don't serve you out for it!' You shall never hear the last of it!' shouted Tom. 'I take to writing, after all. I'll put it in the papers. I'll make the name of Briggs the persecutor in abomination in the land!'

John Briggs turned smilled.

'Well!' said Mark, 'I must spend my mooming at home, I suppose. So I shall just sit and chat with you, doctor.'

'And I shall go and play with Molly,' said Tom, and walked off to Arnsworth's garden.

'I don't care for myself so much,' said Mark, 'but I'm sorry the boy's lost his last day's shooting.'

'Oh, you will be well enough by noon, and can go then, and as for the boy, it is just as well for him not to grow too fond of sports in which he can never indulge.'

'Never indulge? Why not? He vows he'll go to the Rocky Mountains, and shoot a grizzly bear, and he'll do it!'

'He has a great deal to do before that, poor fellow, and a great deal to learn!'

'And he'll learn it! You're always down-hearted about the boy, doctor!'

'I can't help feeling the parting with him, and for Paris, too, such a seat of temptation. But it is his own choice, and, after all, he must see temptation wherever he goes!'

'Bless the man! if a boy means to go to the land, he'll go just as easily in Whitbury as in Paris. Give the lad his head, and never let him fall on his legs like a cat, I'll warrant him, whatever happens. He's as steady as old Tim,

I tell you, there's a gray head on green shoulders there'

'Steady!' said the doctor, with a smile and a shrug

'Steady, I tell you, at heart, as prudent as you or I, and never lost you a farthing, that you know. Hang good boys! I gave me one who knows how to be naughty in the right place, I wouldn't give sixpence for a good boy. I never was one myself, and have no faith in them. Give me the lad who has more steam up than he knows what to do with, and must needs blow off a little in larks. When once he settles down on the rail, it'll send him along as steady as a luggage train. Did you never hear a locomotive puffing and roaring before it gets under way? Well, that's what your boy is doing. Look at him now, with my poor little Molly.'

Tom was cantering about the garden with a little weakly child of eight in his arms. The little thing was looking up in his face with delight, screaming at his jokes.

'You are right, Mark, the boy's heart cannot be in the wrong place while he is so fond of little children.'

'Poor Molly! How she'll miss him! Do you think she'll ever walk, doctor?'

'I do not.'

'Hm! ah! well! if she grows up, doctor, and don't go to join her poor dear mother up there, I don't know that I'd wish her a better husband than your boy.'

'It would be a poor enough match for her.'

'But! she'll have the money, and he the brains. Mark my words, doctor, that boy'll be a credit to you, he'll make a name in the world, or I know nothing. And if his fancy holds seven years hence, and he wants still to turn traveller, let him. If he's inclined to go round the world, I'll back him to get somehow or other, or I'll eat my head, Ned Thurnall.'

The doctor acquiesced in this hopeful theory, partly to save an argument, for Mark's reverence for his opinion was confined to scientific matters, and he made up to his own self-respect by patronising the doctor, and, indeed, taking him sometimes pretty sharply to task on practical matters.

'Best fellow alive is Thurnall, but not a man of business, poor fellow. None of your gentlemen are. Don't know what he'd do without me.'

So Tom curled May about all the morning, and went to Much unstead in the afternoon, and got three hours' good shooting, but in the evening he vanished, and his father went into Arisworth's to look for him.

'Why do you want to know where he is?' replied Mark, looking sly. 'However, as you can't stop him now, I'll tell you. He is just about this time sewing up Briggs's coat-sleeves, putting copperas into his water-jug and powdered galls on his towel, and making various other little returns for this morning's favour.'

'I dislike practical jokes.'

'So do I, especially when they come in the

form of a black dose. Sit down, old boy, and we'll have a game at cribbage.'

In a few minutes Tom came in. 'Here's a good riddance. The poisoner has fabricated his pilgrim's staff, to speak scientifically, and perambulated his calcareous strata.'

'What!'

'Cut his stick, and walked his chalks, and is off to London.'

'Poor boy,' said the doctor, much distressed.

'Don't cry, daddy, you can't bring him back again. He's been gone these four hours. I went to his room at Bolus's about a little business, and saw at once that he had packed up, and curled off all he could. And, looking about, I found a letter directed to his father. So to his father I took it, and really I was sorry for the poor people. I left them all crying in choirs.'

'I must go to them at once,' and up rose the doctor.

'He's not worth the trouble you take for him—the addle-headed, ill-tempered covecomb,' said Mark. 'But it's just like your soft heartedness. Tom, sit down, and finish the game with me.'

Tom rushed from Whitbury, with all his aspirations, poor John Briggs, and gave an occasional letter to his parents, telling them that he was alive and well, and heard anything of him for many a year. The doctor tried to find him out in London, again and again, but without success. His letters had no address upon them, and no clue to his whereabouts could be found.

And Tom Thurnall went to Paris, and became the best pistol-shot and billiard player in the Quarter Latin, and then went to St. Mary's Hospital in London, and became the best boxer therein, and captain of the eight-oar, besides winning prizes and certificates without end, and becoming in due time the most popular house surgeon in the hospital. But nothing could keep him permanently at home. Still dining in London he would not settle down in a country practice he would not. So he started forth into the wide world with nothing but his wife and his secure, is anatomy professor to a new college in some South American republic. Unfortunately, when he got there, he found that the annual revolution had just taken place, and that the party who had founded the college had been killed the week before. Whereat he whistled, and started off again, no man knew whither.

'Having got round half the world, daddy,' he wrote home, 'it's hard if I don't get round the other half. So don't expect me till you see me, and take care of your dear old eyes.'

With which he vanished into infinite space, and was only heard of by occasional letters dated from the Rocky Mountains (where he shot a grizzly bear), the Spanish West Indies, Otaheite, Singapore, the Falkland Islands, and all manner of unexpected places, sending home

valuable notes (sometimes accompanied by valuable specimens), zoological and botanical, and informing his father that he was doing very well, that work was plentiful, and that he always found two fresh jobs before he had finished one old one.

His eldest brother, John, died meanwhile. His second brother, William, was in good general practice in Manchester. His father's connections supported him comfortably, and if the old doctor ever longed for Tom to come home, he never hinted it to the wanderer, but bade him go on and prosper, and become (which he gave high promise of becoming) a distinguished man of science. Nevertheless the old man's heart sank at last, when month after month and at last two full years, had passed without any letter from Tom.

At last, when full four years were passed and gone since Tom started for South America, he descended from the box of the day-mail, with a serene and healthful countenance, and with no more look of interest in his face than if he had been away on a two days' visit, shouldered his carpet-bag, and started for his father's house. He stopped, however, as there appeared from the inside of the mail a face which he must surely know. A *seigneur's* old man that was none other than John Briggs. But how altered! He had grown up into a very handsome man—tall and delicate-featured, with long black curls and a black moustache. There was a slight stoop about his shoulders, as of a man accustomed to too much sitting and writing, and he carried an eye-glass, whether for fashion's sake, or for his eyes' sake, was uncertain. He was wrapped in a long Spanish cloak, new and good, wore well-cut trousers, and (what Tom, of course, examined carefully) French boots, very neat, and very thin. Moreover, he had lavender kid gloves on. Tom looked and wondered, and walked half round him, sniffing like a dog when he examines into the character of a fellow-dog.

'Him! his mark seems to be at present P P—prosperous party—so there can be no harm in renewing our acquaintance. What trade on earth does he live by, though? Editor of a newspaper? or keeper of a gambling-table? Begging his pardon, he looks a good deal more like the latter than the former. However—'

And he walked up and offered his hand, with 'How d'ye do, Briggs? Who would have thought of our falling from the skies against each other in this fashion?'

Mr Briggs hesitated a moment, and then took coldly the offered hand.

'Excuse me, but the circumstances of my visit here are too painful to allow me to wish for society.'

And Mr Briggs withdrew, evidently glad to escape.

'Has he vamped with the contents of a till, that he wishes so for solitude?' asked Tom, and, shouldering his carpet-bag a second time, with a grim inward laugh, he went to his father's house, and hung up his hat in the hall, just as

if he had come in from a walk, and walked into the study, and not finding the old man, stepped through the garden to Mark Armaworth's, and in at the drawing-room window, frightening out of her wits a short, pale, ugly girl of seventeen, whom he discovered to be his old play-fellow, Mary. However, she soon recovered her equanimity—he certainly never lost his.

'How d'ye do, darling? How you are grown! and how well you look! How's your father? I hadn't anything particular to do, so I thought I'd come home and see you all, and get some fishing.'

And Mary, who had longed to throw her arms round his neck, as of old, and was restrained by the thought that she was grown a great girl now, called in her father and all the household, and after a while the old doctor came home, and the fatted calf was killed, and all made merry over the return of this altogether unrepentant prodigal son, who, whether from affection, or from that blunted sensibility which often comes by continual change and wandering, took all their affection and delight with the most provoking coolness.

Nevertheless, though his feelings were not 'demonstrative,' as fine ladies say nowadays, he evidently had some left in some corner of his heart, for after the fatted calf was eaten, and they were all settled in the doctor's study, it came out that his carpet-bag contained little but presents, and those valuable ones—rare minerals from the Ural for his father, a pair of Circassian pistols for Mark, and for little Mary, to her astonishment, a Russian malachite bracelet, at which Mary's eyes opened wide, and old Mark said:

'Pretty fellow you are, to go fooling your money away like that! What did that gunrack cost, pray, sir?'

'That is no concern of yours, sir, or mine either, for I didn't pay for it.'

'Oh!' said Mary doubtfully.

'No, Mary—I killed a giant, who was carrying off a beautiful princess, and thus you see, he wore as a ring on one of his fingers, so I thought it would just suit your wrist.'

'Oh, Tom—Mr Thrumall—what nonsense!'

'Come, come,' said his father, 'instead of telling us these sort of stories, you ought to give an account of yourself as you seem quite to forget that we have not heard from you for more than two years.'

'When I wrote,' said Tom, 'whenever I could. However, you can have all my letters in one now.'

So they sat round the fire, and Tom gave an account of himself, while his father marked with pride that the young man had grown and strengthened in body and in mind, and that under that nonchalant, almost cynical outside, the heart still beat honest and kindly. For before Tom began, he would needs draw his chair closer to his father's, and half-whispered to him,—

'This is very jolly. I can't be sentimental,

you know. Knocking about the world has beat all that out of me—but it is very comfortable, after all, to find oneself with a dear old daddy and a good coal fire.

'Which of the two could you best do without?'

'Well, one takes things as one finds them. It don't do to look too deeply into one's feelings. Like chemicals, the more you analyse them, the worse they smell.'

So Tom began his story.

'You heard from me at Bombay, after I'd been up to the Himalaya with an old Munjeem's friend.'

'Yes.'

'Well, I worked my way to Suez on board a ship whose doctor had fallen ill, and then I must needs see a little of Egypt, and there rubbed was I, and nearly murdered too, but I took a good deal of killing.'

'I'll warrant you do,' said Mark, looking at him with pride.

'So I heggled my way to Cairo, and there I picked up a Yankee—a New Yorker, made of money, who had a yacht at Alexandria, and travelled *en prime*—and I thought would be him but I must go with him to Constantinople, but there he and I quarrelled more fools, both of us! I wrote to you from Constantinople.'

'We never got the letter.'

'I can't help that. I wrote. But there I was on the wide world again. So I took up with a Russian prince, whom I met at a gambling table in Pera, a mere boy, but such a plucky one, and went with him to Circassia, and up to Astrakhan, and on to the Kughris steppe, and there I did see snakes.'

'Snakes!' says Mary. 'I should have thought you had seen plenty of Indian snakes.'

'Yes, Mary! but these were snakes spiritual and unphonetic. For, poking about where we had no business, Mary, the Tartars caught us, and tied us to their horses' tails, after giving me this scar across the cheek, and taught us to drink mares' milk, and to do a good deal of dirty work besides. So there we stayed with them six months, and observed their manners, which were none, and their customs, which were disgusting, as the midshipman said in his diary, and had the honour of visiting a most little place in No-man's Land, called Khiva, which you may find in your atlas, Mary, and at very nearly being sold for slaves into Persia, which would not have been pleasant, and at last, Mary, we ran away—or rather, rode away, on two razor-backed Cossack ponies and got back to Russia, and Orenburg, for which cannot your atlas again, so the young prince was restored to the bosom of his afflicted family, and a good deal of trouble I had to get him safe there, for the poor boy's health gave way. They wanted me to stay with them, and offered to make me my fortune.'

'I'm so glad you didn't,' said Mary.

'Well—I wanted to see little Mary again, and two worthy old gentlemen beside, you see. However, these Russians are generous enough

They filled my pockets, and heaped me with presents, that bracelet among them. What's more, Mary, I've been introduced to old Nick himself, and can testify, from personal experience, to the correctness of Shakespeare's opinion that the prince of darkness is a gentleman.'

'And now you are going to stay at home?' asked the doctor.

'Well, if you'll take me in, daddy, I'll send for my traps from London, and stay a month or so.'

'A month,' cried the forlorn father.

'Well, daddy, you see, there is a chance of more fighting in Mexico, and I shall see such practice there, besides meeting old friends who were with me in Texas. And—and I've got a little commission, too, down in Georgia, that I should like to go and do.'

'What is that?'

'Well, it's a long story and a sad one, but there was a poor Yankee sergeant with the army in Circassia—a Southerner, and a very good fellow, and he had taken a fancy to some colored girl at home—poor fellow, he used to go half mad about her sometimes, when he was talking to me, for fear she should have been sold. So it is the New Orleans market, or some other devilry, and what? I say to come to him? Well, he got his mittens by one of Schamyl's bullets, and, when he was dying, he made me promise (I hadn't the heart to refuse) to take all his savings, which he had been hoarding for years for no other purpose, and see if I couldn't buy the girl, and get her away to Canada. I was a fool for promising. It was no concern of mine, but the poor fellow wouldn't die in peace else. So what must be, must.'

Oh, gu! gu!" said Mary. 'You will let him go, Doctor Thorneil, and set the poor old free?' 'Think how dreadful it must be to be a slave.'

'I will, my little Miss Mary, and for more reasons than you think of. Little do you know how dreadful it is to be a slave.'

'Hum!' said Mark Amisworth. 'That's a queer story, Tom, have you got the poor fellow's money? Didn't lose it when you were taken by those Tartars?'

'Not I. I wasn't so green as to carry it with me. It ought to have been in England six months ago. My only fear is, it's not enough.'

'Hum!' said Mark. 'How much more do you think you'll want?'

'Heaven knows. There is a thousand dollars, but it she be half as beautiful as poor Wyse used to say she was, I may want more than double that.'

'If you do, pay it, and I'll pay you again. No, by George!' said Mark, 'no one shall say that while Mark Amisworth had a dollar at his bankers' he let a poor girl—well, need I bring Mary's presence, he finished his sentence by sundry stamps and thumps on the table.

'You would soon exhaust your balance if you set to work to free all poor girls who are in the same case in Georgia,' said the doctor.

'Well, what of that? Then I don't know of, and so I ain't responsible for them, but this one I do know of, and so—there, I can't aigne, lint, Tom, if you want the money, you know where to find it.'

'Very good. By the bye I forgot it till this moment—who should come down in the coach with me but the lost John Briggs.'

'He is come too late, then?' said the doctor. 'His poor father died this morning.'

'Ah! then Briggs knew that he was ill? That explains the Manfredian mystery and gloom with which he greeted me.'

'I cannot tell. He has written from time to time, but he has never given any address, so that no one could write in return.'

'He may have known. He looked very downcast. Perhaps that explains his cutting me dead.'

'Cut you?' cried Mark. 'I dare say he's been doing something he's ashamed of, and don't want to be recognised. That fellow has been after me good all this while, I'll warrant. I always say he's connected with the swell mob, or crummed at a gambling-table, or something of that kind. Don't you think it's likely, now?'

Mark was in the habit of so saying for the purpose of making the doctor—who held steadily to his old belief, that John Briggs was a very clever man, and would turn up some day as a distinguished literary character.

'Well,' said Tom, 'honest or not, he's thriving, came down inside the coach, dressed in the distinguished foreign style, with lavender kid gloves, and French boots.'

'Just like a swell pickpocket,' said Mark. 'I always told you so, Thurnall.'

'He had the old Byron collar, and Raphael hair, though.'

'Nasty, effeminate, un-English foppery,' grumbled Mark, 'so he may be in the scribbling line after all.'

'I'll go and see if I can find him,' quoth the doctor.

'Bother you,' said Mark, 'always running out at night after somebody else's business, instead of having a jolly evening. You stay, Tom, like a sensible fellow, and tell me and May some more travellers' lies. Had much sporting, boy?'

'Hun! I've shot and hunted every beast, I think, shootable and huntable, from a hummingbird to an elephant, and I had some splendid fishing in Canada, but, after all, give me a Wiltshire trout, on a single-handed Chevalier. We'll at them to-morrow, Mr. Armsworth.'

'We will, my boy! I never so many fish in the river as this year, or in season so early.'

The good doctor returned, but with no news, which could throw light on the history of the now mysterious Mr. John Briggs. He had locked himself into the room with his father's corpse, evidently in great excitement and grief, spent several hours in walking up and down there alone, and had then gone to an attorney in the town, and settled everything about the

funeral 'in the handsomest way,' said the man of law, 'and was quite the gentleman in his manner, but not much of a man of business, never had even thought of looking for his father's will, and was quite surprised when I told him that there ought to be a fair sum—eight hundred or a thousand, perhaps—to come in to him, if the stock and business were properly disposed of. So he went off to London by the evening mail, and told me to address him at the post-office in some street off the Strand. Queer business, Mr. wa't it?'

John Briggs did not reappear till a few minutes before his father's funeral, witnessed the ceremony evidently with great sorrow, bowed off skulkingly all who attempted to speak to him, and returned to London by the next coach, leaving matter for much babble among all Wiltshire gossip. One thing at least was plain, that he wished to be forgotten in his native town, and forgotten he was, in due course of time.

Tom Thurnall stayed his month at home, and then went to America, whence he wrote home, in about six months, a letter, of which only one paragraph need interest us.

'Toll Mark I have no need for his dollars. I have done the deed, and, thanks to the underground railway, done it nicely gratis, which was both cheaper than buying her, and infinitely better for me, so that she has all poor Wye's dollars to start with afresh in Canada. I write this from New York. I could accompany her no further, for I must get back to the South in time for the Mexican expedition.'

Then came a long and anxious silence, and then a letter, not from Mexico, but from California, one out of several which had been posted and then letters more regularly from Australia. Sicken with Californian life, he had crossed the Pacific once more, and was hard at work in the diggings, doctoring and gold-mining by turns.

'A rolling stone gathers no moss,' said his father.

'He has the pluck of a hound, and the cunning of a fox,' said Mark, 'and he'll be in credit to you yet.'

And May prayed every morning and night for her old playfellow, and so the years slipped on till the autumn of 1853.

As no one has heard of Tom now for eight months and more (the pulse of Australian postage being of a somewhat intermittent type), we may as well go and look for him.

A sheet of dark rolling ground, quarried into a gigantic rabbit burrow, with hundreds of tents and huts dotted about among the heaps of rubbish, dark overgreen forests in the distance, and, above all, the great volcanic mountain of Banuoyong towering far aloft—these are the 'Black Hills of Ballarat', and that windlass at that shaft's mouth belongs in part to Thomas Thurnall.

At the windlass are standing two men, whom we may have seen in past years, self-satisfied in

countenance, and spotless in array, sauntering down Preshill any July afternoon, or lounging in Haggis's stable-yard at Cambridge any autumn morning. Alas! how changed from the fast young undergraduates, with powers of enjoyment only equalled by their powers of running into debt, are those two black-bearded and mud-bespattered ruffians, who once were Smith and Brown of Trinity. Yet who need pity them, as long as they have stouter limbs, healthier stomachs, and clearer consciences than they have had since they left Eton at seventeen? Would Smith have been a happier man as a briefless barrister in a dingy hulk of law, peering now and then into third-rate London Society, and scribbling for the daily press? Would Brown have been a happier man had he been forced into those holy orders for which he never felt the least vocation, to pay off his college debts out of his curate's income, and settle down on his knees, at last, in the family living of Nonmarsham-cum-Chayhole, and support a wife and five children on five hundred a year, exclusive of rates and taxes? Let them dig, and be men.

The windlass rattles, and the rope goes down. A shout from the bottom of the shaft proclaims all right, and in due time, sitting in the noose of the rope, up comes Thomas Thurnall, bare-footed and bare-headed, in flannel trousers and red jersey, begrimed with slush and mud, with a mahogany face, a brick-red neck, and a lugubrious beard, looking, to use his own expression, 'as jolly as a sandboy.'

'A letter for you, doctor, from Europe.'

Tom takes it, and his countenance falls, for it is black-edged and black-sealed. The handwriting is Mary Arnsworth's.

'I suppose the old lady who is going to leave me a fortune is dead,' says he drily, and turns away to read.

'Bad luck, I suppose,' he says to himself. 'I have not had any for full six months, so I suppose it is time for Dame Fortune to give me a sly stab again. I only hope it is not my father, for, begging the dame's pardon, I can bear any trick of hers but that.' And he sets his teeth doggedly, and reads.

'My dear Mr. Thurnall—My father would have written himself, but he thought, I don't know why, that I could tell you better than he. Your father is quite well in health.'—Thurnall breathes freely again—'but he has had heavy trials since your poor brother William's death.'

Tom opens his eyes and sets his teeth more firmly. 'Will's dead?' 'I suppose there is a letter lost better so, better to have the whole lot of troubles together, and so get them sooner over. Poor Will!'

'Your father caught the scarlet fever from him, while he was attending him, and was very ill after he came back. He is quite well again now, but if I must tell you the truth, the disease has affected his eyes. You know how weak they always were, and how much worse they have grown of late years, and the doctors are afraid

that he has little chance of recovering the sight, at least of the left eye.'

'Recovering? He's blind, then.' And Tom set his teeth more tightly than ever. He felt a sob rise in his throat, but choked it down, shaking his head like an impatient bull.

'Wait a bit, Tom,' said he to himself, 'before you have it out with Dame Fortune. There's more behind, I'll warrant. News like this lies in pockets, and not in single nuggets.' And he read on—

'And—for it is better you should know all—something has happened to the railroad in which he had invested so much. My father has lost money in it also, but not much, but I fear that your poor dear father is very much straitened. My father is dreadfully vexed about it, and thinks it all his fault in not having watched the matter more closely, and made your father sell out in time, and he wants your father to come and live with us, but he will not bear of it. So he has given up the old house, and taken one in Water Street, and oh! I need not tell you that we are there every day, and that I am trying to make him as happy as I can, but what can I do?' And then followed kind, womanly, commonplace, which Tom hurried over with three impatient glances.

'He wants you to come home, but my father has entreated him to let you stay. You know, while we are here, he is safe, and my father begs you not to come home, if you are succeeding as well as you have been doing.'

There was much more in the letter, which I need not repeat, and, after all, a short postscript by Mark himself followed—

'Stay where you are, boy, and keep up heart while I live a pound, your father shall have half of it, and you know Mark Arnsworth.'

He walked away slowly into the forest. He felt that the crisis of his life was come, that he must turn his hand henceforth to quite new work, and as he went he 'took stock,' as it were, of his own soul, to see what point he had attained—what he could do.

Fifteen years of adventure had hardened into wrought metal a character never very ductile. Tom was now, in his own way, an altogether accomplished man of the world, who knew (at least in all companies and places where he was likely to find himself) exactly what to say, to do, to make, to seek, and to avoid. Shifty and thifty as old Greek, or modern Scout, there were few things he could not invent, and perhaps nothing he could not endure. He had watched human nature under every disguise, from the pomp of the ambassador to the war-paint of the savage, and formed his own clear, hard, shallow, practical estimate thereof. He looked on it as his raw material, which he had to work up into existence and comfort for himself. He did not wish to live on men, but live by them; he must, and for that purpose he must study them, and especially their weaknesses. He would not cheat them, for there was in him an innate vein of honesty, as surly and explosive,

at times, as to give him much trouble. The severest part of his self-education had been the repression of his dangerous inclination to call a sham a sham on the spot, and to answer fools according to their folly. That youthful rashness, however, was now well-nigh subdued, and Tom could flatter and bully also, when it served his turn—as who cannot? Let him that is without sin among my readers cast the first stone. Self-conscious he was, therefore, in every word and action, not from morbid vanity, but a necessary consequence of his mode of life. He had to use men, and therefore to watch how he used them, to watch every word, gesture, tone of voice, and, in all times and places, do the fitting thing. It was hard work, but necessary for a man who stood alone and self-poised in the midst of the universe, fashioning for himself everywhere, just as far as his arm could reach, some not intolerable condition, depending on nothing but himself, and caring for little but himself and the father whom, to do him justice, he never forgot. If I wished to define Tom Thurnall by one epithet, I should call him specially an ungodly man—were it not that scriptural epithets have, nowadays, such a together conventional and official nearness, that one fears to (disturb), using them, some notion quite foreign to the truth. Tom was certainly not one of those ingenuously whom David had to deal with of old, who robbed the widow, and put the fatherless to death. His morality was as high as that of the average, his sense of honour far higher. He was generous and kind-hearted. No one ever heard him tell a lie, and he had a blunt honesty about him, half real, because he liked to be honest, and yet half affected too, because he found it pay in the long run, and because it threw off then guard the people whom he intended to make his tools. But of godliness in its true sense—of belief that any Being above cared for him, and was helping him in the daily business of life—that it was worth while asking that Being's advice, or that any advice would be given if asked for, of any practical notion of a Heavenly Father, or a Divine education—Tom was as ignorant as thousands of respectable people who go to church every Sunday, and read good books, and believe firmly that the Pope is Antichrist. He ought to have learnt it, no doubt, for his father was a religious man, but he had not learnt it, any more than thousands learn it, who have likewise religious parents. He had been taught, of course, the common doctrines and duties of religion; but early remembrances had been rubbed out, as off a schoolboy's slate, by the mere current of new thoughts and objects, in his continual wanderings. Disappointments he had had, and dangers in plenty, but only such as rouse a brave and cheerful spirit to bolder self-reliance and invention, not those deep sorrows of the heart which leave a man helpless in the lowest pit, crying for help from without, for there is none within. He had seen men of all creeds, and had found in all alike (so he

held) the many rogues and the few honest men. All religions were, in his eyes, equally true and equally false. Superior morality was owing principally to the influences of race and climate, and devotional experiences (to judge, at least, from American camp-meetings and popish cities) the results of a diseased nervous system.

Upon a man so hard and strong this fearful blow had fallen, and, to do him justice, he took it like a man. He wandered on and on for an hour or more, up the hills, and into the forest, talking to himself.

'Poor old Willy! I should have liked to have looked into his honest face before he went, it only to make sure that we were good friends. I used to plague him sadly with my tricks. But what is the use of wishing for what cannot be? I recollect I had just the same feeling when John died, and yet I got over it after a time, and was as cheerful as if he were alive again, or had never lived at all. And so I shall get over this. Why should I give way to what I know will pass, and is meant to pass? It is my father I feel for. But I couldn't be there, and it is no fault of mine that I was not there. No one told me what was going to happen, and no one could know, so again,—why grieve over what can't be helped?'

And then, to give the lie to all his cool arguments, he sat down among the ferns, and burst into a violent fit of crying. 'Oh, my poor dear old daddy!'

Yes, beneath all the hard crust of years, that fountain of life still lay pure as when it came down from heaven, love for his father.

'Come, come, this won't do, this is not the way to take stock of my goods, either mental or worldly. I can't cry the dear old man out of this scrape.'

He looked up. The sun was setting. Beneath the dark roof of evergreens the eucalyptus boles stood out, like black pillars, black against a background of burning flame. The flying foxes shot from tree to tree, and moths as big as sparrows whirled about the trunks, one moment black against the glare beyond, and vanishing the next, like mips of darkness, into their native gloom. There was no sound of living thing around, save the ghostly rattle of the dead bark tassels which swung from every tree, and, far away, the faint chinking of the diggers at their work, like the rustle of a gigantic ant-hill. Was there one among them all who cared for him? who would not forget him in a week with—'Well, he was pleasant company, poor fellow,' and go on digging without a sigh? What if it were his fate to die, as he had seen many a stronger man, there in that lonely wilderness, and sleep for ever, unhonoured and unknown, beneath that awful forest roof, while his father looked for bread to others' hands?

No man was less sentimental, no man less superstitious, than Thomas Thurnall, but crushed and softened—all but terrified (as who would not have been?)—by that day's news, he could

not struggle against the weight of loneliness which fell upon him. For the first and last time, perhaps, in his life, he felt fear, a vague, awful dread of unseen and inevitable possibilities. Why should not calamity fall on him, wave after wave? Was it not falling on him already? Why should he not grow sick to-morrow, break his leg, his neck—why not? What guarantee had he in earth or heaven that he might not be 'smothered out silently,' as he had seen hundreds already, and die and leave no sign? And then spinning up in him at once the intensest yearning after his father and the haunts of his boyhood, and the wildest dread that he should never see them. Might not his father be dead ere he could return? If ever he did return. That twelve thousand miles of sea looked to him a gulf impassable. Oh, that he were safe at home! that he could start that moment! And for one minute a helplessness, as of a lost child, came over him.

Perhaps it had been well for him had he given that feeling vent, and, confessing himself a lost child, cried out of the darkness to a Father, but the next minute he had dashed it proudly away.

'Pretty baby I am! to get frightened, at my time of life, because I find myself in a dark wood—and the sun shining all the while as jolly as ever away there in the west! It is morning somewhere or other now, and it will be morning here again to-morrow. "Good times and bad times, and all times pass over,"—I learnt that lesson out of old Bewick's vignettes, and it has stood me in good stead this many a year, and shall now. Die? Nonsense! I take more killing than that comes to. So for one more bout with old Dame Fortune. If she throws me again, why, I'll get up again, as I have any time these fifteen years. Mark's right! I'll stay here and work till I make a bit, or luck runs dry, and then home and settle, and, meanwhile, I'll go down to Melbourne to-morrow, and send the dear old man two hundred pounds, and then back again here, and to it again.'

And with a faint defiant smile, half bitter and half cheerful, Tom rose and went down again to his mates, and stopped their inquiries by 'What's done can't be mended, and needn't be mentioned, whining won't make me work the harder, and harder than ever I must work.'

Strange it is, how mortal man, 'who cometh up and is cut down like the flower,' can thus harden himself into stonical security, and count on the morrow, which may never come. Yet so it is, and, perhaps, if it were not so, no work would get done on earth,—at least by the many who know not that God is guiding them, while they fancy that they are guiding themselves.

CHAPTER II

STILL LIFE

I MUST now, if I am to bring you to 'Two years ago,' and to my story, as it was told to me,

ask you to follow me into the good old West Country, and set you down at the back of an old harbour pier, thirty feet of gray and brown boulders, spotted aloft with bright yellow lichens, and black drops of tar, polished lower down by the surge of centuries, and towards the foot of the wall roughened with crusts of barnacles, and mussel-nests in crack and cranny, and festoons of coarse dripping weed.

On a low rock at its foot, her back resting against the Cylopean wall, sits a young woman of eight-and-twenty, soberly, almost primly dressed, with three or four tiny children clustering round her. In front of them, on a narrow spit of sand between the rocks, a dozen little girls are laughing, romping, and pattering about, turning the stones for 'shannies' and 'bullies,' and other luckless fish left by the tide, while the party beneath the pier wall look steadfastly down into a little rock-pool at their feet, full of the pink and green and purple cut-work of delicate weeds and corals, and starred with great sea-dahlias, crimson and brown and gray, and with the waving snake-larks of the Cerens, pale blue, and rose tipped like the fingers of the dawn. One delicate Melchior is sliding across the pool, by slow paintings of its crystal bell, and on the eyes of the whole group are fixed—for it seems to be the subject of some story which the village schoolmistress is finishing in a sweet, half abstracted voice—

'And so the cruel soldier was changed into a great rough red staghorn, who goes about killing the poor mussels, while nobody loves him, or cares to take his part, and the poor little girl was changed into a beautiful bright jelly-fish, like that one, who swims about all day in the pleasant sunshine, with a red cross stamped on its heart.'

'Oh, mistress, what a pretty story! cry the little ones, with tearful eyes. "And what shall we be changed to when we die?"'

'If we will only be good we shall go up to Jesus, and be beautiful angels, and sing hymns. Would that it might be soon, soon, for you and me, and all!' And she draws the children to her, and looks upward, as if longing to bear them with her aloft.

Let us leave the conversation where it is, and look into the face of the speaker, who, young as she is, has already meditated so long upon the mystery of death that it has grown lovely in her eyes.

Her figure is tall, graceful, and slight, the severity of its outlines suiting well with the severity of her dress, with the brown stuff gown and plain gray whittle. Her neck is long, almost too long, but all defects are forgotten in the first look at her face. We can see it fully, for her bonnet lies beside her on the rock.

The masque, though thin, is perfect. The brow, like that of a Greek statue, looks lower than it really is, for the hair springs from below the bend of the forehead. The brain is very long, and sweeps backward and upward in grand

curves, till it attains above the ears a great expanse and height. She should be a character more able to feel than to argue, full of all a woman's veneration, devotion, love of children, perhaps, too, of a woman's anxiety.

The nose is slightly aquiline, the sharp-cut nostrils indicate a reserve of compressed strength and passion, the mouth is delicate, the lips, which are full and somewhat heavy, not from coarseness, but rather from languor, show somewhat of both the upper and the under teeth. Her eyes are bent on the pool at her feet, so that we can see nothing of them but the large sleepy lids, fringed with lashes so long and dark that the eye looks as if it had been painted, in the Eastern fashion, with minium, the dark lashes, dark eyebrows, dark hair, crimped (as West-country hair so often is) to its very roots, increase the almost ghost-like paleness of the face, not sallow, not snow-white, but of a clean, bloodless, waxen hue.

And now she lifts her eyes—dark eyes, of preternatural largeness, brilliant, too, but not with the sparkle of the diaphan, brilliant as deep clear wells are, in which the mellow moonlight sleeps fathom-deep between black walls of rock, and round them, and round the wide-opened lips, and the no eyebrow, and slightly wrinkled forehead, hangs an air of melancholy thought, vague doubt, almost of stultified ten, then that expression passes, and the whole face collapses into a languor of patient sadness, which seems to say, 'I cannot solve the mystery. Let Him solve it as it seems good to Him.'

The pier has, as usual, two stages, the upper and narrower for a public promenade, the lower and broader one for business. Two tough collier lads, strangers to the place, are lounging on the wall above, and begin, out of mere mischief, dropping pebbles on the group below.

'Hillo! you young rascals,' calls an old man lounging like them on the wall, 'if you don't stop that, you're likely to get your heads broken.'

'Will you do it?'

'I would thirty years ago, but I'll find a dozen in five minutes who will do it now. Here, lads! here's two Welsh vagabonds pelting our schoolmistress.'

This is spoken to a group of Sea Titans, who are sitting about on the pier-way behind him, in red caps, blue jackets, striped jerseys, bright brown trousers, and all the picturesque comfort of a fisherman's costume, superintending the mending of a boat.

Up jumped half a dozen, off the logs and bankings, where they have been squatting, doubled up knee to nose, after the fashion of their class, and a volley of execrations, like a storm of grape, almost blows the two offenders off the wall. The holder, however, hurls, anathematising in turn, whereon a black-bearded youth, some six foot four in height, catches up an oar, makes a sweep at the shins of the lad above his head, and brings him writhing down upon the upper pier-way, whence he

walks off howling, and muttering threats of 'taking the law.' In vain, there is not a magistrate within ten miles, and custom, lynch-law, and the coastguard lieutenant settle all matters in Aberllynva town, and do so easily enough, for the petty crimes which fill our gaols are all unknown among those honest Vikings' sons, and any man who covets his neighbour's goods, instead of stealing them has only to go and borrow them, on condition, of course, of lending in his turn.

'What's that collier lad hollering about, Captain Willis?' asks Mr Tardrew, steward to Lord Scoutbush, landlord of Aberllynva, as he comes up to the old man.

'Gentleman I'm out him over, for pelting the schoolmistress below here.'

'Serve him right, he'll have to out over that curate next, I reckon.'

'Oh, Mr Tardrew, don't you talk so, the young gentleman is as kind a man as I ever saw, and comes in and out of our house like a lamb.'

'Wolf in sheep's clothing,' growls Tardrew. 'What d'ye think he says to me last week? Wanted to turn the schoolmistress out of her place because she went to chapel sometimes.'

'I know, I know,' replied Willis, in the tone of a man who wished to avoid a painful subject. 'And what did you answer, then, Mr Tardrew?'

'I told him he might if he liked, but he'd make the place too hot to hold him, if he hadn't done it already, with his howlings and his crossings, and his chantings, and his popish Gregories and tells one he's no papist, called him Pope Gregory himself. What do we want with popes' tunes here, instead of the Old Hundred and Martyrdom? I should like to see any pope of the lot make a tune like them.'

Captain Willis listened with a face half sad, half slyly amused. He and Tardrew were old friends, being the two most notable persons in the parish, save Jones the lieutenant, Heale the doctor, and another gentleman, of whom we shall speak presently. Both of them, too, were thorough-going Protestants, and, though Churchmen, walked sometimes into the Buanite chapel on an afternoon, and thought it no sin. But each took the curate's 'Puseyism' in a different way, being two men as unlike each other as one could well find.

Tardrew—steward to Lord Scoutbush, the absentee landlord—was a shrewd, hard bitten, choleric old fellow, of the shape, colour, and consistence of a red brick, one of those English types which Mr Emerson has so well hit off in his rather confused and contradictory *Traits*—

'He hides virtues under vices, or, rather, under the semblance of them. It is the misshapen, hairy Scandinavian Troll again who lifts the cart out of the mire, or threshes the corn which ten day-labourers could not end, but it is done in the dark, and with muttered maledictions. He is a churl with a soft place in his heart, whose speech is a brush of bitter waters, but who loves to help you at a pinch. He says, No, and serves you, and his thanks

disgust you' Snah was Tarlton—a true British bull-dog, who lived pretty faithfully up to his Old Testament, but had, somehow, forgotten the existence of the New.

Willis was a very different and a very much nobler person, the most perfect specimen which I ever have met (for I knew him well, and loved him) of that type of British sailor which good Captain Marryat has painted in his *Masterman Ready*, and painted far better than I can, even though I do so from life. A tall and graceful old man, though stooping much from lumbago and old wounds, with snow-white hair and whiskers, delicate aquiline features, the manners of a nobleman, and the heart of a child. All children knew that latter fact, and clung to him instinctively. Even 'the Boys,' that terrible Berserk-trike, self-organised, self-dependent, and bound together in common infirmities and the dread of common retribution, who were in Aberlona, as all fishing towns, the terror and terror of all dunces feigns, male and female—even 'the Boys,' I say, respected Captain Willis, so potent was the influence of his gentleness; nailed not up his shutters, nor tied fishing-lis across his doorway, tail-piped out his dog, nor sent his cat to sea on a barrel-stave, put not live eels into his pocket, nor dead dog-fish into his well, yea, even when judgment, too long provoked, made bare her red right hand, and the lieutenant vowed by his commission that he would send half a dozen of them to the treadmill, they would send up a deputation to 'beg Captain Willis to beg the schoolmistress to beg them off.' For between Willis and that fair young creature a friendship had grown up, easily to be understood. Willis was one of those rare natures upon whose purity no mire can cling, who pass through the furnace, and yet not even the smell of fire has passed upon them. Bred, almost born, on board a smuggling cutter, in the old war-times, then hunting, in the old coast-blockade service, the smugglers among whom he had been trained, watching the slow horrors of the Watchmen, fighting under Collingwood and Nelson, and many another valiant captain, lounging away years of temptation on the West-Indian station, as sailing master of a ship-of-the-line, pensioned comfortably now for many a year in his native town, he had been always the same gentle, valiant, righteous man, sober in life, strict in duty, and simple in word, a soul as transparent as crystal, and as pure. He was the oracle of Aberlona now, and even Lieutenant Brown would ask his opinion—non-communished officer though he was—in a time which was all the more patronising, because he stood a little in awe of the old man.

But why, when the boys wanted to be begged off, was the schoolmistress to be their advocate? Because Grace Harvey excused, without intending anything of the kind, an almost mesmerising influence on every one in the little town, Goodness rather than talent had given her wisdom, and goodness rather than courage a

power of using that wisdom, which, to those simple, superstitious folk, seemed altogether an inspiration. There was a mystery about her, too, which worked strongly on the hearts of the West-country people. She was supposed to be at times 'not right', and wandering intellect was with them, as with many primitive peoples, an object more of awe than of pity. Her deep melancholy alternated with bursts of wild eloquence, with fantastic fables, with entreaties and warnings against sin, full of such pity and pathos that they melted, at times, the hardest hearts. A whole world of strange tales, half false, half true, had grown up around her as she grew. She was believed to spend whole nights in prayer, to speak with visitors from the other world, even to have the power of scintillating futurity. The intensity of her imagination gave rise to the belief that she had only to will, and she could see whom she would, and all that they were doing, even across the seas; her exquisite sensibility, it was whispered, made her feel every bodily suffering she witnessed as acutely as the sufferer's self, and in the very hush in which he suffered. Her deep melancholy was believed to be caused by some dark fate—by some agonising sympathy with evil-doers, and it was 'me' 'in Aberlona.' 'Don't do that, for poor Grace's sake. She bears the sins of all the parish.'

So it befell that Grace Harvey governed, she knew not how or why, all hearts in that wild simple fishing town. Rough men, fighting on the quay, shook hands at Grace's bidding. Wives who could not hire their husbands from the beer-shop, sent Grace in to fetch them home, sobbed by shame, and wept to the stranger who fancied that her entrance into that noisy den gave him a right to say a rough word to the fair girl. The mudlarks, instead of envying her beauty, made her the confidante of all their loves, for though many a man would gladly have married her, to woo her was more than any dared, and Gentleman Jan himself, the rightful bully of the quay, as being the handsomest and biggest man for many a mile, besides owning a tidy trawler and two good mackerel boats, had said openly, that if any man had a right to her, he supposed he had, but that he should as soon think of asking her to marry him, as of asking the moon.

But it was in the school, in the duty which lay nearest to her, that Grace's inward loveliness shone most lovely. Whatever dark cloud of melancholy lay upon her own heart, she took care that it should never overshadow one of those young innocents, whom she taught by love and ruled by love, always tender, always cheerful, even gay and playful, punishing, when she rarely punished, with tears and kisses. To make them as happy as she could in a world where there was nothing but temptation, and disappointment, and misery, to make them 'fit for heaven,' and then to pray that they might go thither as speedily as possible, this had been her work for now seven years, and

that Manichæism which has driven darker and harder natures to destroy young children, that they might go straight to bliss, took in her the form of outpourings of gratitude (when the first natural tears were dried), as often as one of her little lambs was 'delivered out of the miseries of this sinful world.' But as long as they were in the world, she was their guardian angel, and there was hardly a mother in Abberlona who did not confess her debt to Grace, not merely for her children's scholarship, but for their characters.

Frank Headley the curate, therefore, had touched altogether the wrong chord when he spoke of discharging Grace. And when, that same afternoon, he sauntered down to the parsonage, wearied with his parish work, not only did Tardlow stump away in silence as soon as he appeared, but Captain Willis's face assumed a grave and severe look, which was not often to be seen on it.

'Well, Captain Willis?' said Frank, solitary and sad, lounging for a talk with some one, and not quite sure whether he was welcome.

'Well, sir?' and the old man lifted his hat, and made one of his princely bows. 'You look lively, sir, I am afraid you're doing too much.'

'I shall have to do some,' said the curate, his eye glancing towards the schoolmistress, who, disturbed by the noise above, was walking slowly up the beach, with a child holding to every finger, and every fold of her dress.

Willis saw the direction of his eye, and came it once to the point, in his gentle, straightforward fashion.

'I hear you have thoughts of taking the school from him, sir?'

'Why—indeed—I shall be very sorry, but if she will persist in going to the chapel, I cannot overlook the sin of sinning.'

'She takes the children to church twice a Sunday, don't she? And teaches them all that you tell her?'

'Why—yes—I have taken the religious instruction almost into my own hands now.'

Willis smiled quietly.

'You'll excuse an old sailor, sir, but I think that's more than mortal man can do. There's no hour of the day but what she's teaching them something. She's telling them Bible stories now, I'll warrant, if you could hear her.'

Frank made no answer.

'You wouldn't stop her doing that? Oh, sir,' and the old man spoke with a quiet earnestness which was not without its effect, 'just look at her now, like the Good Shepherd with His lambs about His feet, and think whether that's not much too pretty a sight to put an end to, in a poor sinful world like this.'

'It is my duty,' said Frank, hardening himself. 'It pains me exceedingly, Willis, I hope I need not tell you that.'

'If I know aught of Mr. Headley's heart by his ways you needn't mislead, sir.'

'But I cannot allow it. Her mother a class

leader among these Dissenters, and one of the most active of them, too. The school next door to her house. The preacher, of course, has influence there, and must have. How am I to instil Church principles into them, if he is counteracting me the moment my back is turned? I have made up my mind, Willis, to do nothing in a hurry. Lady-day is past, and she must go on till Midsummer, then I shall take the school into my own hands, and teach them myself, for I can pay no mistress or master, and Mr. St. Just—'

Frank checked himself as he was going to speak the truth, namely, that his sleepy old absentee rector, Lord Southbush's uncle, would yawn and grumble at the move, and wondering why Frank 'had not the sense to leave all alone,' would give him no manner of assistance beyond hisittance of eighty pounds a year, and five pounds at Christmas to spend on the poor.

'Excuse me, sir, I don't doubt that you'll do your best in teaching, as you always do; but I tell you honestly, you'll get no children to teach.'

'No children?'

'Their mothers know the worth of Grace too well, and the children too, sir, and they'll go to her all the same, do what you will, and never a one of them will enter the church door from that day forth.'

'On their own heads be it!' said Frank, a little testily, 'but I should not have lauded Miss Harvey the sort of person to set up herself in defiance of me.'

'The more reason, sir, if you'll forgive me, for your not putting upon her.'

'I do not want to put upon her or any one. I will do everything I will—I do—work day and night for these people, Mr. Willis. I tell you, as I would my own father. I don't think I have another object on earth—if I have, I hope I shall forget it—than the parish—but Church principles I must carry out.'

'Well, sir, certainly no man ever worked here as you do. If all had been like you, sir, there would not be a Dissenter here now, but excuse me, sir, the Church is a very good thing, and I keep to mine, having served under her Majesty, and her Majesty's forefathers, and learnt to obey orders, I hope, but don't you think, sir, you're taking it as the Pharisees took the Sabbath-day?'

'How then?'

'Why, as if man was made for the Church, and not the Church for man.'

'That is a shrewd thought, at least. Where did you pick it up?'

'Tis none of my own, sir, a bit of wisdom that my man let fall, and it has stuck to me strangely ever since.'

'Your man?'

'Yes, Grace there. I always call her my maid, having no father, poor thing, she looks up to me as one, pretty much—the dear soul. Oh sir! I hope you'll think over this again,

before you do anything. It's done in a day but years won't undo it again.

So Grace's sayings were quoted against him. Her power was formidable enough, if she dare use it. He was silent awhile, and then

'Do you think she has heard of this—of my

'Honesty's the best policy, sir, she has, and that's the truth. You know how things get round.'

'Well, and what did she say?'

'I'll tell you her very words, sir, and they were these, if you'll excuse me. "Poor dear gentleman," says she, "if he thinks chapel-going so wrong, why does he dare drive folks to chapel? I wonder, every time he looks at that deep sea, he don't remember what the Lord said about it, and those who canse his little ones to offend."

Frank was somewhat awed. The thought was new, the application of the text, as his own scholarship taught him, even more exact than Grace had fancied.

'Then she was not angry?'

'She, sir? You couldn't anger her if you tore her in pieces with hot pincers, as they did those old martyrs she's always telling about.'

'Good-bye, Willis,' said Frank, in a hopeless tone of voice, and sauntered to the pier-end, down the steps, and along the lower pier-way, burdened with many thoughts. He came up to the knot of chatting sailors. Not one of them touched his cap, or moved out of the way for him. The boat lay almost across the whole pier-way, and he stopped, awkwardly enough, for there was not room to get by.

'Will you be so kind as to let me pass?' asked he, meekly enough. But no one stirred.

'Why don't you get up, Tom?' asked one.

'I be laze.'

'So be I.'

'The gentleman can step over me, if he likes,' said big Jan, a proposition the impossibility whereof raised a horse-laugh.

'Am't you ashamed of yourselves, lads?' said the severe voice of Willis, from above. The men rose sulkily, and Frank hastened on, as ready to cry as ever he had been in his life. Poor fellow! he had been labouring among these people for now twelve months, as no man had ever laboured before, and he felt that he had not won the confidence of a single human being,—not even of the old women, who took his teaching for the sake of his charity, and who scouted popery, all the while, in words in which there was no popery, and in doctrines which were just the same, on the whole, as those of the dissenting preacher, simply because he would sprinkle among them certain words and phrases which had become 'suspect,' as party badges. His church was all but empty, the general excuse was, that it was a mile from the town, but Frank knew that that was not the true reason, that all the parish had got it into their heads that he had a leaning to popery, that he was

going over to Rome; that he was probably a Jesuit in disguise.

Now, be it always remembered, Frank Headley was a good man, in every sense of the word. He had nothing, save the outside, in common with those undesirable eccentrics who have not been bred by the High Church movement, but have taken refuge in its cracks, as they would have done forty years ago in those of the Evangelical,—youths who hide their crass ignorance and darkness under the cloak of Church infallibility, and having neither wit, manners, learning, humanity, nor any other dignity whereon to stand, talk loud, *pour pis aller*, about the dignity of the priesthood. Such men Frank had met at neighbouring clerical meetings, over bearing and out-talking the elder and the wise members, and finding that he got no good from them, had withdrawn into his parish work, to eat his own heart, like Bellerophon of old. For Frank was a gentleman, and a Christian, if ever one there was. Dilicate in person, all but consumptive, graceful and refined in all his words and ways, a scholar, elegant rather than deep, yet a scholar still; full of all love for painting, architecture, and poetry, he had come down to bury himself in this remote curacy, in the honest desire of doing good. He had been a curate in a fashionable London church, but finding the atmosphere thereof not over wholesome to his soul, he had had the courage to throw off St. Neponne's, its brotherhoods, sisterhoods, and all its gorgeous and highly-organised appliances for enabling five thousand rich to take tolerable care of two hundred poor, and had fled from 'the holy virgins' (as certain old ladies, who do twice then work with half their noise, call them) into the wilderness of Bethnal Green. But six months' brilliant work there, with gallant men (for there are High Churchmen there who are an honour to England), brought him to death's door. The doctors commanded some soft western air. Frank, as chivalrous as a knight errant of old, would fain have died in his host, but his mother interfered, and he could do no less than obey her. So he had taken this remote West-country curacy, all the more willingly because he knew that nine tenths of the people were Dissenters. To recover that place to the Church would be something worth living for. So he had come, and laboured late and early, and behold, he had failed utterly, and seemed further than ever from success. He had opened, too hastily, a crusade against the Dissenters, and denounced where he should have conciliated. He had overlooked—indeed he hardly knew—the sad truth, that the mere fact of his being a clergyman was no passport to the hearts of his people. For the onrars who preceded him had been an old man, mean, ignorant, intemperate, remaining there simply because nobody else would have him, and given to brandy and water as much as his flock. The rector for the last fifteen years, Lord Seontbush's uncle, was a cypher. The rector before him had notoriously earned the living by a marriage with a

lady who stood in some questionable relation to Lord Scoutbush's father, and who had never had a thought above his dinner and his titles, and all that the Aberlva fishermen knew of God or righteousness, they had learnt from the *sedes* disciples of John Wesley. So Frank Headley had to make up, at starting, the arrears of half a century of base neglect, but instead of doing so, he had contrived to awaken against himself that dogged hatred of popery which lies unarticulate and confused, but deep and firm, in the heart of the English people. Poor fellow! if he made a mistake, he suffered for it. There was hardly a sadder soul than poor Frank, as he went listlessly up the village street that afternoon, to his lodging at Captain Willis's, which he had taken because he preferred living in the village itself to occupying the comfortable refectory a mile out of town.

However, we cannot set him straight,—after all, every man must pursue that office for himself. So the best thing we can do, as we landed, naturally, at the pier head, is to walk up street after him, and see what sort of a place Aberlva is.

Beneath us, to the left hand, is the quay-pool, now lying dry, in which a dozen trawlers are loquacious over their 'cogles' their red sails drying in the sun, the tails of the trawls hauled up to the topmast heads, while the more hasty of their owners are getting on board by ladders, to pack away the said red sails, for it will blow to-night. In the long throws which their keels have left, and in the shallow muddy pools, lie unnumberable fragments of excremented minds (not human ones, pitiful reader, but belonging to the order Pisces, and the family Rana), and some twenty non-excremented ray-dogs and piked dogs (Angler, dog-fish), together with a blue basking shark, at least nine feet long, out of which the kneeling Mr. George Thomas, clothed in pilot cloth patches of every hue, bright scarlet, blue, and brown (not to mention a large square of white canvas which has been let into that part of his trousers which is no appearance), is dissecting the liver, for the purpose of grasping his 'sheaves' with the fragment of thereof. The pools in general are bedded with black mud, and crusted over with oily flakes, which may proceed from the tar on the vessels' sides, and may also from 'decomposing animal matter,' as we euphemise it nowadays. The hot pebbles, at high tide mark, crowned with a long black row of herring and mackerel boats, laid up in ordnance for the present,—are beautifully variegated with mackerels' heads, gurnets' tus, old hag, lobworm, and mussel-boats, and the moulds of a whole ichthyological museum, save at one spot where the *Clonca Maxima* and Port Esquima of Aberlva town (small enough, considering the place holds fifteen hundred souls) immure themselves in a gray stone arch toward the sea, not untroubled with deasil rats and cats, who, their ancient fend forgotten, combine lovingly at last in increasing the health of the blue translucent urchins who are sailing upon that Acherontic

stream bits of board with a feather stuck in it, or of their tiny sisters, who are dancing about in the dirtiest pool among the trawlers in a way which (if your respectable black coat be seen upon the pier) will elicit from one of the balconied windows above, decked with reeking shirts and linen, some such shriek as—

'Patience Penberthy, Patience Penberthy—a! You nasty, dirty, little indecent hussy—a! What be playing in the quay-pool for—a! A jailing up your pesticoats before the quality—a!' Each exclamation being followed with that drowning grunt, with which the West-country folk, after having screamed their lungs empty through their noses, recover their breath for a fresh burst.

Never mind, it is no nosegay, certainly, as a whole—but did you ever see sturdier, rozier, nobler-looking children, rounder faces, raven hair, bright gray eyes, full of fun and tenderness? As for the dirt, that cannot harm them, poor people's children must be dirty—why not? Look on fifty yards to the left. Between two ridges of high pebble bank some twenty yards apart, comes Alva river rushing to the sea. On the opposite ridge, a low white house, with three or four white canvas covered boats, and a flag-staff with sloping cross-yard, betokens the coastguard station. Beyond it rise black jagged hills, mile after mile of iron bound wall and here and there, at the glens' mouths, great banks and dunes of shifting sand. In front of it, upon the beach, are half a dozen great green and gray heaps of Welsh limestone, behind it, at the hill foot, is the lime-kiln, with its white dusty heaps and brown dusty men, its quivering mirage of hot air, its strings of patient hay-mulching donkeys, which look as if they had just awakened out of a flour bin. Above, a green down stretches up to bright yellow firze crofts far aloft. Behind, a reedy marsh, covered with red cattle, paves the valley till it closes in, the steep sides of the hills are clothed in oak and ash covert, in which, three months ago, you could have shot more cocks in one day than you would in Baskin in a year. Pleasant little glimpses there are, too, of gray stone furnaces, nestling among sycamore and birch, bright green meadows, alder-fringed, squares of rich red fallow held, parted by lines of golden firze, all cut out with a peculiar blackness and clearness, soft and tender withal, which betokens a climate surcharged with rain. Only, in the very bosom of the valley, a soft mist hangs, increasing the sense of distance, and softening back one hill and wood behind another, till the great brown moor which backs it all seems to rise out of the empty air. For a thousand feet it ranges up, in huge sheets of brown heather, in gray taurus and screes of granite, all sharp and black-edged against the pale blue sky, and all suddenly cut off above by one long horizontal line of dark gray cloud, which seems to hang there motionless, and yet is growing to whirlwind, and dying to leeward, for ever rushing out of the invisible into night, and into the

invisible again, at railroad speed. Out of nothing the moor rises, and into nothing it ascends—a great dark phantom between earth and sky, boding rain and howling tempest, and perhaps fearful wreck—for the ground-swell moans and thunders on the beach behind us, louder and louder every moment.

Let us go on, and up the street, after we have rambled through the usual labyrinth of timber-baulks, rusty anchors, boats which have been dragged, for the purpose of mending and tarring, into the very middle of the road, and old spars stowed under walls, in the vain hope that they may be of some use for something some day, and have stood the stares and welcomes of the livery grooms who are sitting about upon them, black-headed, black-bearded, with ruddy, wholesome faces, and eyes as bright as diamonds, men who are on their feet on ground, and know it, who will not touch their caps to you, or pull the short black pipe from between their lips as you pass, but expect you to prove yourself a gentleman, by speaking respectfully to them, which, if you do, you will find them as hearty, intelligent, brave fellows as ever walked this earth, capable of anything, now working the naval-brigade guns at Sevastopol down to running up to a hundred miles in a cockleshell lugger, to forestall the early mackerel market. God be with you, my brave lads, and with your children after you, for as long as you are what I have known you, Old England will rule the seas, and many a land beside!

But in going up Aberalva Street, you remark several things, first, that the houses were all whitewashed yesterday, except where the snowy white is picked out by buttresses of pink and blue, next, that they all have bright green palings in front, and bright green window-sills and frames, next, that they are all roofed with shining gray slate, and the spaces between the window and the pales flagged with the same, next, that where such space is not flagged, it is full of flowers and shrubs which stand the winter only in our greenhouses. The fuchsias are ten feet high, laden with ripe purple berries running over (for there are no birds to pick them off) and there, in the front of the coast-guard lieutenant's house, in Cobaa mandina, covered with purple claret-glasses, as it has been ever since Christmas for Aberalva knows no winter, and there are grown-up men in it who never put on a skate, or made a snowball in their lives. A most cleanly, bright-coloured, foreign-looking street, is that long straggling one which runs up the hill towards Ponalva Court only remark, that this cleanliness is gained by making the gutter in the middle street the common sewer of the town, and tread clear of cabbage-leaves, pickard bones, *et id genus omne*. For Aberalva is like Paris (if the answer of a celebrated sanitary reformer to the Emperor be truly reported), 'fair without but foul within'.

However, the wind is blowing dull and hollow from south-west, the clouds are rolling faster and faster up from the Atlantic, the sky to

westward is brassy green, the glass is falling fast, and there will be wind and rain enough to-night to sweep even Aberalva clean for the next week.

Grace Harvey sees the coming storm, as she goes slowly homewards, dismissing her little flock, and she lingers long and sadly outside her cottage door, looking out over the fast blackening sea, and listening to the hollow thunder of the ground-swell against the back of the point which shelters Aberalva Cove.

Far away on the horizon, the masts of stately ships stand out against the sky, driving fast to the eastward with shortened sail. They, too, know what is coming, and Grace prays for them as she stands, in her wild way, with half-uttered words.

All those gallant ships, dear Lord! and so many beautiful men in them, and so few of them ready to die, and all those gallant souls going to the war,—Lord, wilt thou not have mercy? Spare them for a little time before—Is not that cruel, man-devouring sea full enough, Lord, and brave men's bones enough, strewn up and down all rocks and sands? And is not that dark place full enough, O Lord, of poor souls that go off in a moment, as my two went? Oh, not to-night, dear Lord! Do not call any one to-night—give them a day more, one chance more, poor fellows—they have had so few, and so many temptations, and, perhaps, no schooling. They go to sea so early, and young things will be young things, Lord! Spare them but one night more—and yet He did not spare my two—they had no time to repent, and have no time for ever, evermore!

And she stands looking out over the sea, but she has lost sight of everything, save her own sad imaginings. Her eyes open wider and wider, as if before some unseen horror, the eyebrows contract upwards, the cheeks sharpen, the mouth parts, the lips draw back, showing the white teeth, as if in intensest agony. Thus she stands long, motionless, awe-frozen, save when a shudder runs through every limb, with such a common sense that 'fair terror' of which Shelley sang—

'Its horror and its beauty are divine,
Upon its lips and eyelids seem to lie
The light of heaven, and the light of hell,
The light of heaven, and the light of hell.'

Her mother comes out from the cottage door behind, and lays her hand upon the girl's shoulder. The spell is broken, and hiding her face in her hands, Grace bursts into violent weeping.

'What are you doing, my poor child, here, in the cold night air?'

'My two, mother, my two!' said she, 'and all the poor souls at sea to-night!'

'You mustn't think of it. Haven't I told you not to think of it? One would lose one's wits if one did too often.'

'If it is all true, mother, what else is there worth thinking of in heaven or earth?'

And Grace goes in with a dull, heavy look of utter exhaustion, bodily and mental, and quietly gets the things for supper, and goes about her cottage work, as one who bears a heavy chain, but has borne it too long to let it hinder the daily drudgery of life.

Grace had reason to pray at least for the soldiers who were going to the war. For as she prayed, the *Orinoco*, *Ilipon*, and *Matilla* were steaming down Southampton Water, with the Guards on board, and but that morning little Lord Southbush, left behind at the depot, had bid farewell to his best friend, opposite Buckingham Palace, while the bargains were on the lay-out-points, with

'Well, old fellow, you have the sun, after all, and I the work,' and had been answered with

'Fun? there will be no fighting, and I shall only have lost my season in town.'

Was there, then, no man among them that day, who,

'As the trees began to whisper and the wind began to roll,
Heard in the wild March morning the angels call his soul'?

Verily they no more come down to India on many stalwart souls of heroes.

CHAPTER III

ANYTHING BUT STILL LIFE

PISALVA COURT, about half a mile from the quay, is 'like a house in a story', a house of seven gables, and those very shaky ones, a house of useless long passages, useless turrets, vast lumber attics where mice and ghosts, lofty garden and yard walls of grey stone, round which the wind and rain are fishing through the dreary darkness, low oak-tiled ceilings, windows which once were mullioned with stone, but now with wood painted white, walls which were once oak-wooded, but have been painted like the millions, to the disgust of Elsley Vavasour, poet, its occupant in March 1814, who forgot that, while the oak was left dark, no man could have seen to read in the rooms a yard from the window.

He has, however, little reason to complain of 'his one drawing-room, where he and his wife are sitting, so pleasant has she made it look, in spite of the plainness of the furniture. A bright log-fire is burning on the hearth. There are a few good books too, and a few handsome prints, while some really valuable knick-knacks are set out, with pardonable ostentation, on a little table covered with crimson velvet. It is only cotton velvet, if you look close at it, but the things are pretty enough to catch the eye of all visitors, and Mrs. Heale, the doctor's wife (who always calls Mrs. Vavasour 'my lady,' though she does not love her), and Mrs. Treboove, of Treboove, always finger them over when they

have any opportunity, and whisper to each other half contemptuously, 'Ah, poor thing! there's a sign that she has seen better days.'

And better days, in one sense, Mrs. Vavasour has seen. I am afraid, indeed, that she has more than once regretted the morning when she ran away in a hack-cab from her brother Lord Southbush's house in Eaton Square, to be married to Elsley Vavasour, the gifted author of *A Soul's Agonies, and other Poems*. He was a lion then, with foolish women running after him, and turning his head once and for all, and Lucia St. Just was a wild Irish girl, new to London society, all feeling and romance, and literally all, for there was little real intellect underlying her passionate sensibility. So when the sensibility burnt itself out, as it generally does, and when children, and the weak health which comes with them, and the cares of a household, and money difficulties, were absorbing her little powers, Elsley Vavasour began to fancy that his wife was a very commonplace person who was fast losing even her good looks and her good temper. So, on the whole, they were not happy. Elsley was an affectionate man, and honourable to a fantastical nicety, but he was vain, capricious, over-sensitive, craving for admiration and distinction, and it was not enough for him that his wife loved him, bore him children, kept his accounts, mended and mended all day long for him and his, he wanted her to act the public for him exactly when he was hungry for praise, and that not the actual, but an altogether ideal, public, to worship him as a deity, 'live for him and him alone,' 'realise' his poetic dreams of marriage bliss, and talk sentiment with him, or listen to him talking sentiment to her, when she would much sooner lie idle in bed, biding all the petty cares of the day, and the pain in his back too, poor thing! in sound sleep, and so it befell that they often quarrelled and wrangled, and that they were quarrelling and wrangling this very night.

Who cares to know how it began? Who cares to hear how it went on,—the stupid, aimless skirmish of bitter words, between two people who had forgotten themselves? I believe it began with Elsley's being vexed at her springing up two or three times, fancying that she heard the children cry, while he wanted to be quiet, and sentimentalise over the roaring of the wind outside. Then she thought of nothing but those children. Why did she not take a book and occupy her mind? To which she had her pert, though just answer, about her mind having quite enough to do to keep clothes on the children's backs, and so forth,—let who list imagine the miserable little squabble?—till she says,—'I know what has put you out so tonight, nothing but the news of my sister's coming.' He answers, 'That her sister is as little to him as to any man, as welcome to come now as she has been to stay away these three years.'

'Ah, it's very well to say that, but you have been a different person ever since that letter came,' And so she torments him into an angry

self-justification (which she takes triumphantly as a confession) that 'it is very disagreeable to have his thoughts broken in on by one who has no sympathy with him and his parents—and who——' and at that point he wisely stops short, for he was going to throw down a very ugly gage of battle.

'Thrown down or not, Lucia snatches at it. 'Ah, I understand, poor Valentin! You always hated her.'

'I did not—but she is so brusque, and excited, and

'Be so kind as not to abuse my family. You may say what you will of me, but

'And what have your family done for me, pray?'

'Why, considering that we are now living rent-free in my brother's house, and——' She stops in her turn for her pride and her prudence also will not let her tell him that Valentin has been clothing her and the children for the last three years. He is just the man to forbid her on the spot to receive any more presents, and to sacrifice her comfort to his own pride. But what she has said is quite enough to bring out a very angry answer, which, she is expecting, mis in the end by—

'For goodness' sake, don't speak so loud, I don't want the servants to hear.'

'I am not speaking loud' (he has not yet opened his lips). 'That is your old trick to prevent my defending myself, while you are driving me mad. How dare you taunt me with being a pensioner on your brother's bounty? I'll go up to town again and take lodgings there. I need not be beholden to any aristocrat of them all. I have my own station in the real world,—the world of intellect, I have my own friends. I have made myself a name without his help, and I can live without his help, he shall find!'

'Which name were you speaking of?' rejoins she, looking up at him, with all her native Irish humour flashing up for a moment in her naughty eyes. The next minute she would have given her hand not to have said it, for, with a very terrible word, Elsie springs to his feet and dashes out of the room.

She hears him catch up his hat and cloak, and hurry out into the rain, slamming the door behind him. She springs up to call him back, but he is gone,—and she dashes herself on the floor and bursts into an agony of weeping over 'young bliss never to return!' Not in the least. Her principal fear is, lest he should catch cold in the rain. She takes up her work again, and stitches away in the comfortable certainty that in half an hour she will have recovered her temper, and he also, that they will pass a sulky night, and to-morrow, by about mid-day, without explanation or formal reconciliation, have become as good friends as ever. 'Perhaps,' says she to herself, with a woman's sense of power, 'if he be very much ashamed and very wet, I'll pity him, and make friends to-night.'

Miserable enough are these little squabbles.

Why will two people, who have sworn to love and cherish each other untily, and who, on the whole, do what they have sworn, behave to each other as they dare for very shame behave to no one else? Is it that, as every beautiful thing has its hideous antitype, this mutual shamelessness is the devil's ape of mutual confidence? Perhaps it cannot be otherwise with beings compact of good and evil. When the veil of reserve is withdrawn from between two souls, it must be withdrawn for evil, as for good, till the two natures, which ought to seek rest, each in the other's inmost depths, may at last spring apart, confronting each other recklessly with—'There, you see me as I am, you know the worst of me, and I of you, take me as you find me—what care I?'

Elsie and Lucia have not yet arrived at that terrible crisis, though they are on the path toward it, the path of little carelessnesses, rudenesses, ungoverned words and tempers, and worst of all, of that half-confidence, which is certain to avenge itself by irritation and quarrelling, for if two married people will not tell each other in love what they ought, they will be sure to tell each other in anger what they ought not. It is plain enough already that Elsie has her weak point, which must not be touched—something about 'a name,' which Lucia is to be expected to ignore,—as if anything which really exists could be ignored while two people live together night and day, for better for worse. Till the thorn is out, the wound will not heal, and till the matter (whatever it may be) is set right by confession and absolution, there will be no peace for them, for they are living in a hell, and unless it be a very little one indeed, better, perhaps, that they should go on to that terrible crisis of open denunciations. It may end in disgust, hatred, in madness, but it may, too, end in each falling again upon the other's bosom, and sobbing out through holy tears—'Yes, you do know the worst of me, and yet you love me still! This is happiness, to find oneself most loved when one most hates oneself! God, help us to confess our sins to Thee, as we have done to each other, and to begin life again like little children, struggling hand in hand out of this lowest pit, up the steep path which leads to life and strength, and peace.'

Heaven grant that it may so end! But now Elsie has gone raging out into the raging darkness, trying to prove himself to himself the most injured of men, and to hate his wife as much as possible, though the fool knows the whole time that he loves her better than any thing on earth, even than that 'fame,' on which he tries to fatten his lean soul, snapping greedily at every scrap which falls in his way, and in default snapping at everybody and everything else. And little comfort it gives him. Why should it? What comfort, save in being wise and strong? And is he the wiser or stronger for being told by a reviewer that he has written two novels, or has failed in writing them; or to have silly women writing to ask for his auto-

graph, or for leave to set his songs to music? Nay,—shocking as the question may seem,—is he the wiser and stronger man for being a poet at all, and a genius?—provided, of course, that the word *genius* is used in its modern meaning, of a person who can say prettier things than his neighbours. I think not. Be it as it may, away goes the poor genius, his long cloak, picturesque enough in calm weather, fluttering about uncomfortably enough, while the rain washes his long curls into swabs, out through the old garden, between storm-swept barrels, beneath dark groaning pines, and through a door in the wall which opens into the lane.

The road leads downward, on the right, into the village. He is in no temper to meet his fellow-creatures—even to see the comfortable gleam through their windows, as the sailors close round the fire with wife and child, so he turns to the left, up the deep stone-banked lane, which leads towards the cliff, dark now as pitch, for it is overhanging, right and left, with deep oak-wood.

It is no easy matter to proceed, though, for the wind puns down the lane as through a funnel, and the road is of slippery bare slate, worn here and there into puddles of greasy clay, and Elsley slips back half of every step. His wrath, as he moves, comes out of his heels. Moreover, those dark trees above him, tossing their heads impatiently against the scarlet-leafed dark sky, strike an awe into him, a sense of loneliness, almost of awe. An uncanny, bird-like night it is, and he is out on a lone errand, and he knows it, and wishes that his wife were home again. He does not believe, of course, in those 'spirits of the storm,' about whom he has so often written, any more than he does in a great deal of his line imagery, but still, in such characters as his, the sympathy between the moods of nature and those of the mind is most real and important, and Dame Nature's equinoctial night wail is weird, gruesome, crushing, and can be laid (if it must be laid) in real comfort only when one is going on an errand of mercy, with a clear conscience, a light heart, a good leg, and plenty of unacknowledged.

So, ere Elsley had gone a quarter of a mile, he turned back, and resolved to go in, and take up his book once more. Perhaps Lucia might beg his pardon, and if not, why, perhaps he might beg hers. The rain was washing the spirit out of him, as it does out of a thin-coated horse.

Stay! What was that sound above the roar of the gale? A cannon?

He listened, turning his head right and left to escape the howling of the wind in his ears. A minute, and another boom rose and rang aloft. It was near, too. He almost fancied that he felt the concussion of the air.

Another, and another, and then, in the village below, he could see lights hurrying to and fro. A wreck at sea? He turned again up the lane. He had never seen a wreck. What an opportunity for a poet, and on such a night too! It would be magnificent if the moon would but

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come out! Just the scene, too, for his excited temper! He will work on upward, let it blow and ram as it may. He is not disappointed. Ere he has gone a hundred yards, a mass of dripping oilskins runs full butt against him, knocking him against the bank, and, by the clank of weapons, he recognises the coast-guard watchman.

'Hillo—who's that? Beg your pardon, sir,' as the man recognises Elsley's voice.

'What is it?—what are the guns?'

'God knows, sir! Overnight the Clough and Crow, on 'em, I'm assured. There they go again!—hard up, poor souls! God help them!' and the man runs shouting down the lane.

Another gun, and another, but long ere Elsley reaches the cliff, they are silent, and nothing is to be heard but the noise of the storm, which, loud as it was below among the wood, is almost intolerable now that he is on the open down.

He struggles up the lane toward the cliff, and there pauses, gasping, under the shelter of a wall, trying to analyse that enormous mass of sound which fills his ears and brain and flows through his nostrils like mad-drumming wine. He can bear the sight of the dead grass on the hill edge, weary, feeble, expostulating with its old tormentor the gale, then the fierce screams of the blasts as they rush up across the layers of rock below, like hounds leaping up at their prey, and, far beneath, the horrible, confused battle-ruin of that great leaguer of waves. He cannot see them, as he strains his eyes over the wall into the blank depth,—nothing but a confused welter of a jumbled an, and ram, and spay, as if the very atmosphere were writhing in the clutch of the gale. But he can hear,—what can he not hear? It would have needed a less vivid brain than Elsley's to fancy another *Madagascar* beneath. There it all is.

The rush of columns to the beach, officers cheering them on, pauses, breaks, wild cries, upbraiding calls, whispering consultations, fresh rush on rush, now here, now there, fierce shouts above, below, behind—shocks of agony, choked groans and gasps of dying men,—scaling-ladders hauled down with all their rattling freight, dull mine explosions, ringing cannon thunder, as the old fortress blasts back its besugars pell-mell into the deep. It is all there—truly enough there, at least, to unhide yet more Elsley's wild angry brain, till he tries to add his shouts to the great battle cries of land and sea, and finds them as little audible as an infant's wail.

Suddenly, far below him, a faint glimmer, and, in a moment, a blue-light reveals the whole scene, in ghastly hues,—blue leaping breakers, blue weltering sheets of foam, blue rocks, crowded with blue figures, like ghosts, flitting to and fro upon the brink of that blue seething Phlegethon, and rushing up toward him through the air, a thousand flying blue foam sponges, which drive over the brow of the hill and vanish, like delusive faeries fleeing.

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before the wrath of the gale—but where is the wreck? The blue light cannot pierce the gray veil of mingled mist and spray which hangs to seaward, and her guns have been silent for half an hour and more.

Elsley hurries down, and finds half the village collected on the long sloping point of down below. Sailors wrapped in pilot-cloth, oil-skinned coast-guardsmen, women with their gowns turned over their heads, staggering restlessly up and down, and in and out, while every moment some fresh comer stumbles down the slope, thrusting himself into his clothes as he goes, and asks, 'Where's the wreck?' and gets no answer, but a sully advice to 'hold his nose,' as if they had hope of hearing the wreck which they cannot see, and kind women, with their hearts full of mothers' instincts, declare that they can hear little children crying, and are pooh-poohed down by kind men, who, man's fashion, don't like to believe anything too painful, or, if they believe it, to talk of it.

'What were the guns from, then, Brown?' asks the lieutenant of the head boatman.

'Off the Clough and Crow, I thought, sir (God grant not)!'.

'You thought, sir,' says the great man, willing to vent his vexation on some one. 'Why didn't you make sure?'

'Why, just look, lieutenant,' says Brown, pointing into the 'black height of the dark', 'and I was on the pier too, and couldn't see, but the look-out man here says—' A shift of wind, a drift of cloud, and the moon flashes out a moment. 'There she is, sir'.

Some three hundred yards out at sea lies a long curved black line, beautiful, severe, and still, and those white wild leaping hills. A murmur from the crowd, which swells into a roar, as they surge aimlessly up and down.

Another moment, and it is cut in two by a whiteline—covered—lost—all hold their breath. No, the sea passes on, and still the black curve is there, enduring.

'A terrible big ship!'

'A Liverpool clipper, by the lines of her'.

'God help the poor passengers, then!' sobs a woman. 'They're past our help—she's on her beam ends'.

'And her deck upright towards us'.

'Silence! Out of the way, you loafing long-shores!' shouts the lieutenant. 'Brown—the rockets!'

What though the lieutenant be somewhat given to strong liquors, and stronger language. He wears the Queen's uniform, and what is more, he knows his work and can do it, all make a silent rug while the fork is planted, the lieutenant, throwing away the end of his cigar, kneels and adjusts the stick, Brown and his mates examine and shake out the coils of line.

Another minute, and the magnificent creature rushes forth with a triumphant roar, and soars aloft over the waves in a long stream of fire, defiant of the gale.

Is it over her? No! A fierce gust, which all but hurls the spectators to the ground, the fiery stream sweeps away to the left, in a grand curve of sparks, and drops into the sea.

'Try it again!' shouts the lieutenant, his blood now up. 'We'll see which will beat, wind or powder'.

Again a rocket is fixed, with more allowance for the wind, but the black curve has disappeared, and he must wait awhile.

'There it is again!' Fly swift and sure, cries Elsley, 'thou fiery angel of mercy, bearing the saviour-line! It may not be too late yet.'

Full and true the rocket went across her, and 'Three cheers for the lieutenant!' rose above the storm.

'Silence, lads! Not so bad, though,' says he, rubbing his wet hands. 'Hold on by the line, and watch for a bite, Brown'.

Five minutes pass. Brown has the line in his hand waiting for any signal touch from the ship—but the line sways limp in the surge.

Ten minutes. The lieutenant lights a fresh cigar, and paces up and down, smoking fiercely.

A quarter of an hour, and yet no response. The moon is shining clearly now. They can see her—her masts, the stumps of her masts, great tangles of rigging swaying and lashing down across her deck, and that delicate black upper curve is becoming more ragged after every wave, and the tide is rising fast.

'There's a jill!' shouts Brown. 'No, there ain't! God have mercy, sir! She's going!'

The black curve boils up, as if a mine had been sprung on board, leaps into arches, jagged peaks, black bars crossed and tangled, and then all melts away into the white soothing waste, while the line floats home helplessly, as if disappointed, and the billows plunge more sullenly and sadly towards the shore, as it in remorse for their dark and reckless deed.

All is over. What shall we do now? Go home, and pray that God may have mercy on all drowning souls? Or think what a picture unique and tragical scene it was, and what a beautiful poem it will make, when we have thrown it into an artistic form, and bedizened it with conceits and analogies stolen from all heaven and earth by our own self-willed fancy?

Elsley Vavasour—through whose spectacles, rather than with my own eyes, I have been looking at the wreck, and to whose account, not to mine, the metaphors and similes of the last two pages must be laid—took the latter course, not that he was not awed, calmed, and even humbled, as he felt how poor and petty his own troubles were, compared with that great tragedy, but in his fatal habit of considering all matters in heaven and earth as bricks and mortar for the poet to build with, he considered that he had 'seen enough', as if men were sent into the world to see, and not to act, and going home too excited to sleep, much more to go and kiss forgiveness to his sleeping wife, sat up all night, writing 'The Wreck.'

which may be (as the reviewer in *The Parthenon* asserts) an exquisite poem, but I cannot say that it is of much importance.

So the delicate genius sat that night, scribbling verses by a warm fire, and the rough lieutenant settled himself down in his mackintoshes, to sit out those weary hours on the bare rock, having done all that he could do, and yet knowing that his duty was not to leave the place as long as there was a chance of saving not a life, for that was past all hope—but a chest of clothes or a stick of timber. There he settled himself, grumbling yet faithful, and filled up the time with sleepy maledictions against some old admiral, who had— or had not—taken a squire to him in the West Indies thirty years before, else he would have been a post-captain by now, comfortably in bed on board a crack frigate, instead of sitting all night out on a rock, like an old cornorant, etc. etc. Who knows not the woes of ancient coast-guard lieutenants?

But as it befell, Elsie Vavasour was justly punished for going home, by losing the most 'poetical' incident of the whole night.

For with the coast-guardsmen many sailors stayed. There was nothing to be earned by staying, but still, who knew but they might be wanted? And they hung on with the same feeling which tempts you to linger round a grave ere the earth is filled in, loth to give up the last sight, and with it the last hope. The ship herself, over and above her lost crew, was in their eyes a person to be loved and regretted. And Gentleman Jan spoke, like a true sailor—

'Ah, poor And she such a beauty, Mr Brown, as any one might see by her lines, even that way off. Ah, poor dear!'

'And so many brave souls on board, and, perhaps, some of them not ready, Mr Brown, says the serious elderly chief boatman 'Eli, Captain Willis?'

'The Lord has had mercy on them, I don't doubt,' answers the old man, in his quiet sweet voice. 'One can't but hope that He would give them time for one prayer before all was over, and having been drowned myself, Mr Brown, three times, and taken up for dead—that is, once in Gibraltar Bay, and once when I was a total wreck in the old *Seahorse*, that was in the hurricane in the Indies, after that, when I fell over quay-head here, fishing for bass,—why, I know well how quick the prayer will run through a man's heart, when he's a-drowning, and the light of conscience, too, all one's life in one minute, like—'

'It ain't the men I care for,' says Gentleman Jan, 'they're gone to heaven, like all brave sailors do as dies by wreck and battle. But the poor dear ship, d'ye see, Captain Willis, she ain't no heaven to go to, and that's why I feel fur her so.'

Both the old men shake their heads at Jan's doctrine, and turn the subject off.

'You'd better go home, captain, 'fear of the

rheumatics. It's a rough night for your years; and you've no call, like me.'

'I would, but for my maid there, and I can't get her home, and I can't leave her.' And Willis points to the schoolmistress, who sits upon the flat slope of rock, a little apart from the rest, with her face resting on her hands, gazing intently out into the wild waste.

'Make her go, it's her duty—we all have our duties. Why does her mother let her out at this time of night? I keep my maids tighter than that, I warrant.' And disciplinarian Mr Brown makes a step towards her.

'Ah, Mr Brown, don't now! She's not one of us. There's no saying what's going on there in her. Maybe she's praying, maybe she sees more than we do, over the sea there.'

'What do you mean? There's no living body in those breakers, be sure!'

'There's more living things about on such a night than have bodies to them, or than any but such as she can see. If any one ever talked with angels, that maid does; and I've heard her, too, I can say I have certain of it. Those that like may call her an innocent, but I wish I were such an innocent, Mr Brown. I'd be nearer heaven then, here on earth, than I fear sometimes I ever shall be, even after I'm dead and gone.'

'Well, she's a good girl, married or not, but look at her now! What's she after?'

The girl had raised her head, and was pointing, with one arm stretched stiffly out toward the sea.

Old Willis went down to her, and touched her gently on the shoulder.

'Come home, my maid, then, you'll take cold, indeed,' but she did not move or lower her arm.

The old man, accustomed to her fits of fixed melancholy, looked down under her bonnet, to see whether she was 'past,' as he called it. By the moonlight he could see her great eyes steady and wide open. She motioned him away, half impatiently, and then sprang to her feet with a scream.

'A man! a man! Save him!'

As she spoke, a huge wave rolled in, and shot up the sloping end of the point in a broad sheet of foam. And out of it struggled, on hands and knees, a human figure. He looked wildly up, and round, and then his head dropped again on his breast, and he lay clinging with outspread arms, like Homer's polydus in the *Odyssey*, as the wave drained back, in a thousand roaring cataracts, over the edge of the rock.

'Save him!' shrieked she again, as twenty men rushed forward and stopped short. The man was fully thirty yards from them, but close to him, between them and him, stretched a long ghastly crack, some ten feet wide, cutting the point across. All knew it its slippery edge, its polished upright sides, the seething cauldrons within it, and knew, too, that the next wave would boil up from it in a hundred jets, and suck in the strongest to his doom, to fall, with brains

dashed out, into a chasm from which was no return.

Ere they could nerve themselves for action, the wave had come. Up the slope it went, one half of it burying the wretched mariner, and fell over into the chasm. The other half rushed up the chasm itself, and spouted forth again to the moonlight in columns of snow, in time to meet the wave from which it had just parted, as it fell from above, and then the two boiled up, and round, and over, and swirled along the smooth rock to their very feet.

The schoolmistress took one long look, and as the wave retired, rushed after it to the very brink of the chasm, and flung herself on her knees.

'She's *in*!' said

'No, she's not!' almost screamed old Willy, in mingled pride and terror, as he rushed after her. 'The wave has carried him across the rock, and she's got him!' And he spring upon her, and caught her round the waist.

'Now, if you be men!' shouted he, as the rest hurried down.

'Now, if you be men, before the next wave comes!' shouted big Jan. 'Hands together, and make a line!' and he took a grip with one hand of the old man's waistband, and held out the other for who would to seize.

Who took it? Frank Headley, the inmate, who had been watching all sally apart, longing to do something which no one could mistake.

'Be you man enough?' asked big Jan doubtfully.

'Try,' said Frank.

'Really, you won't, sir,' said Jan, civilly enough. 'Means no offence, sir, your heart's stout enough, I see, but you don't know what it'll be.' And he caught the hand of a fifth fellow next him, while Frank shrank sally back into the darkness.

Strong hand after hand was clasped, and strong knee after knee dropped almost to the rock, to meet the coming rush of water, and all who knew their business took a long breath, they might have need of one.

It came, and surged over the man, and the girl, and up to old Willy's throat, and round the knees of Jan and his neighbour, and then followed the returning out-drift, and every limb quivered with the strain, but when the cataraet had disappeared, the chain was still unbroken.

'Saved!' and a cheer broke from all lips, save those of the girl herself, she was as senseless as he whom she had saved. They hurried her and him up the rock ere another wave could come, but they had much ado to open her hands, so firmly clenched together were they round his waist.

Gently they lifted each, and laid them on the rock, while old Willy, having recovered his breath, set to work crying like a child, to restore breath to 'his maiden.'

'Ran for Dr Heale, some good Christian!'

But Frank, longing to escape from a company

who did not love him, and to be of some use ere the night was out, was already half-way to the village on that very errand.

However, ere the doctor could be stirred out of his boozy slumbers, and thrust into his clothes by his wife, the schoolmistress was safe in bed at her mother's house, and the man, weak, but alive, carried triumphantly up to Heale's door, which having been kicked open the sailors insisted in carrying him right up stairs, and depositing him on the best spare bed.

'If you won't come to your patients, doctor, your patients shall come to you. Why were you asleep in your liquor, instead of looking out for poor wretches, like a Christian? You see whether his bones be broke, and gi' 'em his medicines proper, and then go and see after the schoolmistress, she's worth a dozen of any man, and a thousand of you! We'll pay for our like men, and if you don't, we'll break every bottle in your shop.'

To which, what between bodily fear and red good nature, old Heale assented, and so ended that eventful night.

CHAPTER IV

PHYSIC, PILLOW, AND PAIN.

About nine o'clock the next morning, Gentleman Jan strolled into Dr Heale's surgery, pipe in mouth, with an attendant satellite, for even here, poor as well as rich, in country as in town, must needs have his jackal.

Heale's surgery—or, in plain English, shop—was a dreadful hole enough in such dirt and confusion as might be expected from a drunken occupant, with a practice which was only not decaying because there was no rival in the field. But monophony made the old man, as it makes most men, all the more lazy and careless, and there was not a drug on his shelves which could be warranted to work the effect set forth in that sanguine and too trustful book, the *Pharmacopœia*, which, like Mr Pecksniff's England, expects every man to do his duty, and is, accordingly (as the *Lawyer* and Dr Lethely know too well), grievously disappointed.

In this kennel of evil savours Heale was slowly trying to poke things into something like order, and dragging out a few old drugs with a shaky hand, to see if any one would buy them, in a vague expectation that something must needs have happened to somebody the night before, which would require somewhat of his art.

And he was not disappointed. Gentleman Jan, without taking his pipe out of his mouth, dropped his huge elbows on the counter, and his black-fringed chin on his fists, took a look round the shop, as if to find something which would suit him; and then—

'I say, doctor, gi' some tackleum.'

'Some diachylum plaster, Mr Beer!' says Heale meekly. 'What for, then?'

'To tackle my shins. I barked 'em cruel against King Arthur's nose last night. Hard in the bone he is,—wish I was as hard.'

'How much diachylum will you want, then, Mr Beer?'

'Well, I don't know. Let's see!' and Jan pulls up his blue trousers, and pulls down his gray rig and furrows, and considers his broad and shaggy shins.

'Matter of four pennies' worth, two to each leg,' and then replaces his oilskins, and smokes on.

'I say, doctor, that 'ero curate came out well last night. I shall go to church next Sunday.'

'What,' asks the satellite, 'after you upset to that fashion yesterday?'

'I don't care what you think,' says Jan, who of course, bullies his jackal like most boys.

'But I goes to church. He's a good 'un, say I, little and good, like a Welshman's cow, and clapped me on the back when we'd got the man and the mull safe, and says, "Well done on side, old fellow!" and stands something hot all round, what's more, in at the Manner's Rest—I say, doctor, where's he as we hauled 'em out? I'll go up and see 'em.'

'Not now then, Mr Beer. Now, then, He's sleeping, indeed he is, like any child.'

'So much the better.' 'We won't be bothered with his hollering. But go up I will. Do ye let me now, I'll be as still as a maid.'

And Jan kicked off his shoes, and marched on tiptoe through the ship, while Dr Heale, morning professional ejaculations, showed him the way.

The shipwrecked man was sleeping sweetly, and little was to be seen of his face, so covered was it with dark tangled curls and thick beard.

'Ah! a 'Stralian digger, by the beard of him, and his red jersey,' whispered Jan, as he bent tenderly over the poor fellow, and put his head on one side to listen to his breathing. 'Beautiful he sleeps, to be sure!' said Jan, 'and a tidy-looking chap, too. 'Tis a pity to wake 'em, poor wretch, and he, perhaps, with a sweetheart aboard, and drowned, or else all his kit lost. Let 'em sleep so long as he can. He'll find all out soon enough, God help him!'

And big Jan stole down the stairs gently and reverently, like a true sailor, and took his diachylum, and went off to plaster his shins.

About ten minutes afterwards, Heale was made aware that his guest was awake by snoring grunts and ejaculations, which ended in a series of long and doleful whistles; and then broken out into a song. So he went up, and found the stranger sitting upright in bed, combing his curls with his fingers, and chanting unto himself a cheerful ditty.

'Good morning, doctor,' quoth he, as his host entered. 'Very kind of you, this. Hope I haven't turned a better man than myself out of his bed.'

'Delighted to see you so well. Very near

drowned, though. We were pumping at your lungs for a full half hour.'

'Ah! nothing, though, for an experienced professional man like you!'

'Him!' speaks well for your discrimination,' says Heale, flattered. 'Very well-spoken young person, though his beard is a bit wild. How did you know, then, that I was a doctor?'

'By the reverend looks of you, sir. Besides, I smelt the rhubarb and senna all the way upstairs, and knew that I'd fallen among professional brethren.'

"Oh, then this valiant mariner,
Which sailed a rose the sea,
He came home to his own sweetheart
With his heart so full of glee,

"With his heart so full of glee, sir,
And his pockets full of gold,
And his bag of druggist with many a nugget,
As heavy as he could hold."

'Don't you wish yours was, doctor?'

'Eh, eh, eh,' suggested Heale.

'Mine was last night. Now, doctor, let's have a glass of brandy and water, hot with, and in hour's more sleep, and then kick me out, and into the workhouse. Was anybody else saved from the wreck last night?'

'Nobody, sir,' said Heale, and said 'so' because, in spite of the stranger's rough looks, his accent,—or rather, his no accent—showed him that he had fallen in with a very different and probably a very superior stamp of man to himself, in the light of which conviction (and being withal a good-natured old soul), he went down and mixed him a still glass of brandy-and-water, answering his wife's remonstrances by

'The party upstairs is a bit of a frantic party, certainly, but he is certainly a very superior party, and has the true gentleman about him, any one can see. Besides, he's shipwrecked, as you and I may be any day, and what's like brandy-and-water?'

'I should like to know when I'm like to be shipwrecked, or you either,' says Mrs Heale, in a tone slightly savouring of indignation and contempt. 'You think of nothing but brandy-and-water.' But she let the doctor take the glass upstairs, nevertheless.

A few minutes afterwards Frank came in, and inquired for the shipwrecked man.

'Well enough in body, sir, and rather requires your skill than mine,' said the old time server. 'Won't you walk up?'

So up Frank was shown.

The stranger was sitting up in bed. 'Capital your brandy is, doctor,—Ah, sir,' seeing Frank, 'it is very kind of you, I am sure, to call on me. I presume you are the clergyman?'

But before Frank could answer, Heale had broken forth into loud praises of him, setting forth how the stranger owed his life entirely to his superhuman strength and courage.

'Pon my word, sir,' said the stranger, looking them both over and over through and through, as if to settle how much of all this he was to believe, 'I am deeply indebted to you for your

gallantry I only wish it had been employed on a better subject.

'My good sir,' said Frank, blushing, 'you owe your life not to me. I would have helped if I could, but was not thought worthy by our sows of Anak here. Your actual preserver was a young girl.'

And Frank told him the story.

'Whew! I hope she won't expect me to marry her as payment. Handsome!'

'Beautiful,' said Frank.

'Money!'

'The village schoolmistress.'

'Clever?'

'A sort of half-baked body,' said Heale.

'A very puzzling intellect,' said Frank.

'Ah—well—that's a fair excuse for declining the honour. I can't be expected to marry a lunatic party, as you called me downstairs just now, doctor.

'I, sir?'

'Yes, I heard, no offence, though, my good sir, but I've the ears of a fox. I hope really, though, that she is none the worse for her heroic flights.'

'How is she this morning, Mr. Heale?'

'Well—poor thing, a little light-headed last night—but kindly when I went in last.'

'Whew! I hope she has not fallen in love with me. She may fancy me her property—a private waif and stray. Better send for the coast-guard officer, and let him claim me as belonging to the Admiralty, as floater, jetsom, and legend, for I was all three last night.'

'You were indeed, sir,' said Frank, who began to be a little tired of this levity, 'and very thankful to Heaven you ought to be.'

Frank spoke thus in a somewhat professional tone of voice, at which the stranger arched his eyebrows, screwed his lips up, and laid his ears back, like a horse when he meditates a kick.

'You must be better acquainted with my affairs than I am, my dear sir, if you are able to state that fact. Doctor! I hear a patient coming into the surgery.'

'Extraordinary power of hearing, to be sure,' said Heale, toddling downstairs, while the stranger went on, looking Frank full in the face.

'Now that old fog's gone downstairs, my dear sir, let us come to an understanding at the beginning of our acquaintance. Of course, you're bound by your cloth to say that sort of thing to me, just as I am bound by it not to swear in your company—but you'll allow me to remark, that it would be rather trying even to your faith, if you were thrown ashore with nothing in the world but an old jersey and a bag of tobacco, two hundred miles short of the port where you hoped to land with fifteen hundred well-earned pounds in your pocket.'

'My dear sir,' said Frank, after a pause, 'whatsoever comes from our Father's hand must be meant in love. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away".'

A quaint wince passed over the stranger's face.

'Father, sir! That fifteen hundred pounds

was going to my father's hand, from whosoever hand it came, or the loss of it. And now what is to become of the poor old man, that busy Dame Fortune only knows—if she knows her own mind an hour together, which I very much doubt. I worked early and late for that money, sir, up to my knees in mud and water. Let it be enough for your lofty demands on poor humanity, that I take my loss like a man, with a whistle and a laugh, instead of howling and cursing over it like a baboon. Let's talk of something else, and lend me five pounds and a suit of clothes. I shan't run away with them, for as I've been thrown ashore here, here I shall stay.'

Frank almost laughed at the free and easy request, though he felt at once pained by the man's irreligion, and abashed by his stoicism,—would he have behaved even as well in such a case?

'I have not five pounds in the world.'

'Good! we shall understand each other better.'

'But the suit of clothes you shall have at once.'

'Good again! Let it be your oldest, for I must do a little rick-scrabbling here, for purposes of my own.'

So off went Frank to fetch the clothes, pulling over his new parishioner. The man was not altogether with Frank, either in voice or manner, but there was an ease, a confidence, a sense of power, which made Frank feel that he had fallen in with a very strong nature, and one which had seen many men, and many lands, and profited by what it had seen.

When he returned, he found the stranger busy at his ablutions, and gradually appearing as a somewhat dapper, handsome fellow, with a bright gray eye, a short nose, a firm, small mouth, a broad and upright forehead, across the left side of which ran a fearful scar.

'That's a shrewd mark,' said he, as he caught Frank's eye fixed on it, while he sat coolly arranging himself on the bedside. 'I got it in fair fight, though, by a Crow's tomahawk in the Rocky Mountains. And here's another token' (lifting up his black curls), 'which a Greek robber gave me in the Morea. I've another under my head, for which I have to thank a Tartar, and one or two more little remembrances of flood and field up and down me. Perhaps they may explain to you why I take life and death so coolly. I've looked too often at the little razor-bridge which parts them, to care much for either. Now, don't let me trouble you any longer. You have your flock to see to, I don't doubt. You'll find me at church on Sunday. I always do at Rome as Rome does.'

'Then you will stay away,' said Frank, with a sad smile.

'Ah! No. Church is respectable and aristocratic, and there one don't get sent to a place unmentionable, ten times an hour, by some inspired tinker. Beside, country people like the doctor to go to church with their betters, and the very fellows who go to the Methodist meeting themselves would think it *infra dig.* in me

to walk in there. Now, good-bye—though I haven't introduced myself—not knowing the name of my kind preserver.

'My name is Frank Headley, curate of the parish,' said Frank, smiling though he saw the man was rattling on for the purpose of preventing his talking on serious matters.

'And mine is Tom Thurnall, F.R.C.S., Licentiate of the Universities of Paris, Glasgow, and whilome surgeon of the good clipper *Hesperus*, which you saw wrecked last night. So, farewell!'

'Come over with me, and have some breakfast.'

'No, thanks, you'll be busy. I'll screw some out of old bottles here.'

'And now,' said Tom Thurnall to himself, as Frank left the room, 'to begin life again with an old penknife and a pound of honey-dew. I wonder which of them got my grille. I'll stick here till I find out that one thing, and stop the notes by to-day's post if I can but recollect them all,—if I could but stop the nugget, too!'

So saying, he walked down into the surgery, and looked round. Everything was in confusion. Cobwebs were over the bottles, and armies of mites played at hop-peep behind them. He tried a few drawers, and found that they stuck fast, and when he at last opened one, its contents were two old dried-up horse-halls, and a dirty tobacco-pipe. He took down a jar marked *Epsom salts*, and found it full of Welsh snuff, the next, which was labelled *cinamon*, contained blue vitriol. The spatula and pill-roller were crusted with deposits of every hue. The pill-box drawer had not a dozen whole boxes in it, and the counter was a quarter of an inch deep in deposit of every vegetable and mineral matter, including ends of string, tobacco ashes, and broken glass.

Tom took up a dirty duster, and set to work coolly to clear up, whistling away so merrily that he brought in Heale.

'I'm doing a little in the way of business, you see.'

'Then you really are a professional practitioner, sir, as Mr Headley informs me though, of course, I don't doubt the fact!' said Heale, summoning up all the little courage he had to ask the question with.

'F.R.C.S. London, Paris, and Glasgow. Easy enough to write and ascertain the fact. Have been medical officer to a poor law union, and to a Brazilian man-of-war. Have seen three cholerae, two army fevers, and yellow-jack without end. Have doctor'd gunshot wounds in the two Texan wars, in one Paris revolution, and in the Schleswig-Holstein row, beside a cadent practice in every country from California to China, and round the world and back again. There's a fine nest of Mr Weekes's friend (if not creation), *Acarus Horridus*, and Tom went on dusting and arranging.

Heale had been fairly taken aback by the imposing list of acquirements, and looked at his guest awhile with considerable awe suddenly a suspicion flashed across him, which caused him (not unseen by Tom) a start and a look of

self-congratulatory wisdom. He next darted out of the shop, and returned as rapidly, rather redder about the eyes, and wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.

'But, sir, though, though,'—began he—'but, of course, you will allow me, being a stranger—and as a man of business—all I have to say is, it—that is to say—'

'You want to know why, if I've had all these good businesses, why I haven't kept them?'

'Ex—exactly,' stammered Heale, much relieved.

'A very sensible and business-like question but you needn't have been so delicate about asking it as to want a screw before beginning.'

'Ah, you're a wag, sir, keekled the old man.'

'I'll tell you frankly, I have an old father, sir,—a gentleman, and a scholar, and a man of science, once in as good a country practice as man could have, till, God help him, he went blind, sir, and I had to keep him, and have still. I went over the world to make my fortune, and never made it, and sent him home what I did make, and little enough too. At last, in my despair, I went to the diggings, and had a pretty haul. I needn't say how much. That matters little now, for I suppose it's at the bottom of the sea. There's my story, sir, and a poor one enough it is,—for the dear old man, at least. And Tom's voice trembled so as he told it, that old Heale believed every word, and what is more, being—like most hard drinkers—not 'unused to the melting mood,' wiped his eyes fervently, and went off for another drop of comfort, while Tom dusted and arranged on, till the shop began to look quite smart and business-like.

'Now, sir!—when the old man came back. "Business is business, and beggars must not be choosers. I don't want to meddle with your practice, I know the rules of the profession but if you'll let me sit here, and mix your medicines for you, you'll have the more time to visit your patients, that's clear,"—and perhaps (thought he) to drink your brandy and-water,—and when any of them are poisoned by me, it will be time to kick me out. All I ask is bed and board. Don't be frightened for your spirit-bottle—I can drink water, I've done it many a time for a week together in the prairies, and been thankful for a half-pint in the day.'

'But, sir, your dignity as a—'

'Fiddlesticks for dignity, I must live, sir. Only lend me a couple of sheets of paper and two queen's heads, that I may tell my friends my whereabouts,—and go and talk it over with Mrs. Heale. We must never act without consulting the ladies.'

That day Tom sent off the following epistle—

'To CHARLES SHUTTER, Esq., M.D., St. *Mumpsimus's* Hospital, London.

'DEAR CHARLEY—'

"I do assure thee, by old pleasant days,
Quarrier Latin, and neatly shod grannies,
By all our wanderings in quaint by-ways,
By ancient frocks, and by ancient debts,"

go to the United Bank of Australia forthwith, and stop the notes whose numbers—all, alas! which I can recollect—are enclosed. Next, lend me five pounds. Next, send me down, as quick as possible, five pounds' worth of decent drugs, as paracetamol, and—if you can borrow me one—a tolerable microscope, and a few natural history books, to astonish the yokels here with. For I was shipwrecked here last night, after all at a dirty little West country port, and what's worse, robbed of all I had made at the diggings, and at that far, and more, to run against cruel Dame Fortune, as Colson did against the Indians, without a shirt to my back. Don't be a hospitable fellow, and ask me to come up and camp with you. Munitions and all old fairs would be a great temptation, but here I must stick till I hear of my money, and plyme the natives to my daily bread'.

To his father he wrote thus, not having the heart to tell the truth—

'To EDWARD THURNALL, Esq., M.D.,
Whitbury

'MY DEAREST AND FATHER. I hope to see you again in a few weeks, as soon as I have settled a little business here, where I have found a capital opening for a medical man. Meanwhile let Mark or Mary write and tell me how you are, and for sending you every penny I can spare, trust me. I have not had all the luck I expected, but am as hearty as a bull, and as merry as a cricket, and fall on my legs, as of old, like a cat. I long to come to you, but I mustn't yet. It is now three years since I had a sight of that blessed white head, which is the only thing I care for under the sun, except Mark and little Mary.—By Mary I suppose she is now, and engaged to be married to some "Idealist Aristocrat." Best wishes to all Mark Armesworth. Your affectionate son,
T. T.'

'Mr Heale,' said Tom next, 'are we Whigs or Tories here?'

'Why, ahem, sir, my Lord Skontbush, who owns most hereabouts, and my Lord Munchampstead, who has bought Cartmel moors above,—very old Whig connections, both of them, but Mr Treloar, id Treloar, he, again, thorough-going Tory—very good patient he was once, and may be again—ha! ha! Gay young man, sir—lurches of his health, so you see us a medical man, sir—'

'Which is the liberal paper? This one? Very good.' And Tom wrote off to the liberal paper that evening a letter, which here frint on the wreck's end, in the shape of five columns, headed thus—

'WRECK OF THE "Hesperus."

'The following detailed account of this lamentable catastrophe has been kindly contributed by the graphic pen of the only survivor, Thomas Thurnall, Esquire, F.R.C.S., etc etc, etc, late surgeon on board the ill-fated vessel.' Which five columns not only put a couple of guineas

into Tom's pocket, but, as he intended they should, brought him before the public as an interesting personage, and served as a very good advertisement to the practice which Tom had already established in fancy.

Tom had not worked long, however, before the coast-guard lieutenant blisted in. He had trotted home to shave and get his breakfast, and was trotting back again to the shore.

'Hillo, Heale! can I see the fellow who was saved last night?'

'I am that fellow,' says Tom.

'The dukens you are! you seem to have fallen on your legs quickly enough.'

'It's a trick I've had occasion to learn, sir,' says Tom. 'Can I prescribe for you this morning?'

'Medicine?' roars the lieutenant, laughing. 'Cute me at it! No, I want you to come down to the shore, and help to identify goods and things. The wind has chipped up north, and is blowing dead on, and, with this tide, we shall have a good deal on shore. So, if you're strong enough—'

'I'm always strong enough to do my duty,' said Tom.

'Him! Very good sentiment, young man. Always strong enough in duty. Him! worthy of Nelson, and pretty much the same didn't he? something about duty, I know it was, and always thought it unexceptionable. Now, then, what can you tell me about this business?'

It was a sad story, but no sadder than hundreds besides. They had been struck by the gale to the westward two days before, with the wind south, had lost their foretopmast and bowsprit, and become all but unmanageable, had tried during a lull to rig a jury-mast, but were prevented by the gale, which burst on them with fresh fury from the south-west, with very heavy rain and fog, had passed a light in the night, which they took for Sully, but which must have been the Longships, had still fancied that they were safe, running up Channel with a wide berth, when, about sunset, the gale had chopped again to north-west,—and Tom knew no more. 'I was standing on the poop with the captain about ten o'clock. The last words he said to me were, "If this lasts, we shall see Bristol harbour to-morrow," when she struck, and stopped dead. I was clunked down off the poop, and nearly overboard, but brought up in the mizen rigging. Where the captain went, poor fellow, Heaven alone knows, for I never saw him after. The mainmast went like a carrot. The mizen stood. I ran round to the cabin doors. There were four men steering, the wheel had broke out of the poor fellows' hands, and knocked them over,—broken their skulls, I believe. I was stooping to pick them up, when a sea came into the waist, and then at, washing me in through the saloon-boards, among the poor half-dressed women and children. Queer sight, lieutenant! I've seen a good many, but never worse than that. I bolted to my cabin, tied my notes and gold round me, and out again.'

'Didn't desert the poor things!'

'Couldn't if I'd tried, they clung to me like a swarm of bees. 'Gad, sir, that was hard lines, to have all the pretty women one had waltzed with every evening through the Trades, and the little children one had been making playthings for, holding round one's knees, and screaming to the doctor to save them. And how the was I to save them, sir?' cried Tom, with a sudden burst of feeling, which, as in so many Englishmen, exploded in anger to avoid melting in tears.

'Ought to be a law against it, sir,' growled the lieutenant, 'against women-folk and children going to sea. It's murder and cruelty I've been wrecked, scores of times, but it was with honest men, who could shift for themselves, and if they were drowned, drowned, but didn't screech and catch hold—I couldn't stand that! Well!'

'Well, there was a pretty little creature, an officer's widow, and two children. I caught her under one arm, and one of the children under the other, and, "I can't take you all at once, I'll come back for the rest, one by one." Not that I believed it, but anything to stop the screaming, and I did hope to put some of them out of the reach of the sea, if I could get them forward. I knew the forecastle was dry, for the chief officer was firing there. You heard him?'

'Yes, five or six times, and then he stopped suddenly.'

He had reason. We got out. I could see her nose up in the air forty feet above us, covered with fore-cabin passengers. I warped the lady and the children upward—Heaven knows how, for the sea was breaking over us very sharp till we were at the mainmast stump, and holding on by the wreck of it. I felt the ship stagger as if a whale had struck her, and heard a roar and a swish behind me, and looked back just in time to see mizzen and poop, and all the poor women and children in it, go bodily, as if they had been slaved off with a knife. I suppose that altered her balance, for before I could turn again she dived forward, and then rolled over upon her beam ends to leeward, and I saw the sea walk in over her from stem to stern like one white wall, and I was washed from my hold, and it was all over.

'What became of the lady?'

'I saw a white thing flash by to leeward, what's the use of asking?'

'But the child? you held?'

'I didn't let it go till there was good reason.'

'Eh?'

Tom tapped the points of his fingers smartly against the side of his head, and then went on, in the same cynical drawl, which he had affected throughout—

'I heard that—against a piece of timber us we went overboard. And, as a medical man, I considered, after that, that I had done my duty. Pretty little boy it was, just six years old, and such a fancy for drawing.'

The lieutenant was quite puzzled by Tom's seeming nonchalance.

'What do you mean, sir? Did you leave the child to perish?'

'Confound you, sir! If you will have plain English, here it is. I tell you I heard the child's skull crack like an egg-shell! There, let's talk no more about it, or the whole matter. It's a bad business, and I'm not answerable for it, or you either, so let's go and do what we are answerable for, and identify—'

'Sir! you will be so good as to recollect,' said the lieutenant, with puffed plumes.

'I do, I do.' I beg your pardon a thousand times, I'm sure, for being so rude, but you know as well as I, sir, there are a good many things in the world which won't stand too much thinking over, and last night was one.'

'Very true, very true, but how did you get ashore?'

'I got ashore? Oh, well enough! Why not?'

'Gad, sir, you were near enough being drowned at last, only that girl's pluck saved you.'

'Well, but it did save me, and here I am, as I knew I should be when I last struck out from the stuff.'

'Knew' that is a bold word for mortal man at sea.'

'I suppose it is, but we doctors, you see, get into the way of looking at things as men of science, and the ground of science is experience, and, to judge from experience, it takes more to kill me than I have yet met with. If I had been going to be snuffed out, it would have happened long ago.'

'Hum! It's well to carry a cheerful heart, but the pitcher goes often to the well, and comes home broken at last.'

'I must be a gutta serena pitcher, I think, then, or else—'

'There's a sweet little cherub who sits up aloft, as Dublin has it. Now, look at the facts yourself, sir,' continued the stranger, with a recklessness half true, half assumed, to escape from the malady of thought. 'I don't want to boast, sir, I only want to show you that I have some practical reason for wearing as my motto, "Never say die." I have had the cholera twice, and yellow jack beside, five several times. I have had bullets through me, I have been bayoneted and left for dead, I have been shipwrecked three times—and once, as now, I was the only man who escaped. I have been fattened by savages for baking and eating, and got away with a couple of friends only a day or two before the feast. One really narrow chance I had, which I never expected to squeeze through, but, on the whole, I have taken full precautions to prevent its recurrence.'

'What was that, then?'

'I have been hanged, sir,' said the doctor quietly.

'Hanged!?' cried the lieutenant, facing round upon his strange companion with a visage which asked plainly enough, 'You hanged? I don't

believe you, and if you have been hanged, what have you been doing to get hanged?

'You need not take care of your pockets, sir—neither robbery nor murder was it which brought me to the gallows, but innocent bug-hunting. The fact is, I was caught by a party of Mexicans, during the last war, straggling after plants and insects, and hanged as a spy. I don't blame the fellows, I had no business where I was, and they could not conceive that a man would risk his life for a few butterflies.'

'But if you were hanged, sir—'

'Why did I not die? By my usual luck the fellows were clumsy, and the noose would not work, so that the Mexican doctor, who meant to dissect me, brought me round again, and being a freemason, as I am, stood by me, got me safe off, and I cheated the devil.'

The worthy lieutenant walked on in silence, stealing furtive glances at Tom, as if he had been a guest from the other world, but not disbelieving his story in the least. He had seen, as most old navy men, so many strange things happen, that he was prepared to give credit to any tale when told, as Tom's was, with a straightforward and unhesitant simplicity.

'There lives the girl who saved you,' said he, as they passed Grace Harvey's door.

'Ah! I ought to call and pay my respects.'

But Grace was not at home. The wreck had emptied the school, and Grace had gone after her scholars to the beach.

'We couldn't keep her away, weak as she was,' said a neighbour, 'as soon as she heard the poor corpses were coming ashore.'

'Hum!' said Tom. 'True woman. Quant—that appetite for horrors the sweet creatures have. Did you ever see a man hanged, lieutenant? No? If you had, you would have seen two women in the crowd to one man. Can you make out the philosophy of that?'

'I suppose they like it, as some people do hot peppers.'

'Or donkeys thistles—find a little pain pleasant.' I had a patient once in France, who read Dumas's *Crimes Celebres* all the week, and the *Vies des Saints* on Sundays, and both, as far as I could see, for just the same purpose—to see how miserable people could be, and how much pinching and pulling they could bear.'

So they walked on, along a sleep-path, and over the Spur, and down to the Cove.

It was such a morning as often follows a gale, when the great firmament stares down upon the ruin which it has made, bright, and clear and bold, and seems to say, with shameless smile, 'There, I have done it, and am as merry as ever after it all.' Beneath a cloudless sky the breakers, still gray and foul from the tempest, were tumbling in before a cold northern breeze. Half a mile out at sea, the rough backs of the Chough and Crow loomed black and sulky in the foam. At their feet, the rocks and shingle of the Cove were alive with human beings—groups of women and children clustering round a corpse or a chest, sailors, knee-deep in

the surf, hauling at floating spars and ropes, oilskinned coast-guardsmen pacing up and down in charge of goods, while groups of farmers' men, who had hurried down from the villages inland, lounged about on the top of the cliff, looking sulkily on, hoping for plunder, and yet half afraid to mingle with the sailors below, who looked on them as an inferior race, and refused, in general, to intermarry with them.

The lieutenant plainly held much the same opinion, for as a party of them tried to descend the narrow path to the beach, he shouted after them to come back.

'Eh! you won't!' and out rattled from its scabbard the old worthy's sword. 'Come back, I say, you loafing, inclining, wrooking clock-keepers, there are no pickings for you here. Brown, send those fellows back with the bayonet. None but blue-jackets allowed on the beach! And the labourers go up again, grumbling.'

'Can't trust those landabarks. They'll plunder even the rings off a corpse's fingers. They think every wreck a goldmine. I've known them, after they've been driven off, roll great stones over the cliff at night 'on the coast-guard, just out of spite, while these blue-jackets here, I can depend on them. Can you tell me the reason of that, as you seem a bit of a philosopher?'

'It is easy enough,' the sailors have a fellow-feeling with sailors, and the landmen have none. Besides, the sailors are finer fellows, body and soul, and the reason is that they have been brought up to face danger, and the landmen haven't.'

'Well,' said the lieutenant, 'unless a man has been taught to look death in the face, he never will grow up, I believe, to be much of a man at all.'

'Danger, my good sir, is a better schoolmaster than all your new model schools, diagrams, and scientific apparatus. It made our forefathers the masters of the sea, though they never heard of popular science, and I daresay couldn't, one out of ten of them, spell their own names.'

That sentiment elicited from the lieutenant a grunt of approbation, as Tom intended that it should do, shrewdly arguing that the old murtinet was no friend to the modern superstition, that all which is required to cast out the devil is a smattering of the 'ologies.'

'Will the gentlemen see the corpses?' asked Brown, 'we have fourteen already,'—and he led the way to where, along the shingle at high-water mark, lay a ghastly row, some fearfully bruised and mutilated, cramped together by the death agony, others with the peaceful smile which showed that they had sunk to sleep in that strange water-death, amid a wilderness of pleasant dreams. Strong men lay there, little children, women, whom the sailors' wives had covered decently with cloaks and shawls, and at their heads stood Grace Harvey, motionless, with folded hands, gazing into the dead faces with her great solemn eyes. Her mother and Captain Wallis stood by, watching her with a sort of superstitious awe. She took no notice

either of Thurnall or of the lieutenant, as the doctor identified the bodies one by one, without a remark which indicated any human emotion.

'A very sensible man, Willis,' said the lieutenant apart, as Tom knelt awhile to examine the crushed features of a sailor, and then, looking up, said simply—

'James Macgillivray, second mate. Cause of death, contusions; probably by the fall of the mainmast.'

'A very sensible man, and has seen a deal of life, and kept his eyes open, but a terrible hard-plucked one. Talked like a book to me all the way, but he hanged if I don't think he has a thirty-two pound shot under his ribs instead of a heart—Doctor Thurnall, that is Miss Harvey, the young person who saved your life last night.'

Tom rose, took off his hat (Frank Heudley's), and made her a bow, of which an ambassador need not have been ashamed.

'I am exceedingly shocked that Miss Harvey should have run so much danger for anything so worthless as my life.'

She looked up at him, and answered, not him, but her own thoughts.

'Strange, is it not, that it was a duty to pray for all these poor things last night, and a sin to pray for them this morning?'

'Grace, dear!' interposed her mother, 'don't you hear the gentleman thanking you?'

She started, as one awaking out of a dream, and looked into his face, blushing scarlet.

'Good heavens, what a beautiful creature!' said Tom to himself, as quite a new emotion passed through him. Quite now it was, whatsoever it was, and he was aware of it. He had had his passions, his intrigues, in past years, and prided himself—few men more on understanding women, but the expression of the face, and the strange words with which she had greeted him, added to the broad fact of her having offered her own life for his, raised in him a feeling of chivalrous awe and admiration, which no other woman had ever called up.

'Madam,' he said again, 'I can repay you with nothing but thanks, but, to judge from your conduct last night, you are one of those people who will find reward enough in knowing that you have done a noble and heroic action.'

She looked at him very steadfastly, blushing still. Thurnall, be it understood, was (at least, while his face was in the state in which Heaven intended it to be, half hidden in a silky-brown beard) a very good-looking fellow, and (to use Mark Arnsworth's description) 'as hard as a nail, as fresh as a rose, and stood on his legs like a game-cock.' Moreover, as Willis said, approvingly, he had spoken to her 'as if he was a duke, and she was a duchess.' Besides, by some blessed moral law, the surest way to make oneself love any human being is to go and do him a kindness, and therefore Grace had already a tender interest in Tom, not because he had saved her, but she him. And so it was, that a strange new emotion passed through her

heart also, though so little understood by her, that she put it forthwith into words.

'You might repay me,' she said, in a sad and tender tone.

'You have only to command me,' said Tom, wincing a little as the words passed his lips.

'Then turn to God, now in the day of His mercies. Unless you have turned to Him already!'

One glance at Tom's rising eyebrows told her what he thought upon those matters.

She looked at him sadly, hungrily, as if conscious that she ought not to look too long, and yet unable to withdraw her eyes. 'Ah! and such a precious soul as yours must be, a precious soul—all taken, and you alone left! God must have high things in store for you. He must have a great work for you to do. Else, why are you not as one of these? Oh, think! where would you have been at this moment if God had dealt with you as with them?'

'Where I am now, I suppose,' said Tom quietly.

'Where you are now?'

'Yes, where I ought to be. I am where I ought to be now. I suppose if I had found myself anywhere else this morning, I should have taken it as a sign that I was wanted there, and not here.'

Grace heaved a sigh at words which were certainly startling. The Stoic optimism of the world-hardened doctor was new and frightful to her.

'My good madam,' said he, 'the part of Scripture which I appreciate best, just now, is the case of poor Job, where Satan has leave to rob and torment him to the utmost of his wicked will, provided only he does not touch his life. I wish,' he went on, lowering his voice, to tell you something which I do not wish publicly talked of, but in which you may help me. I had nearly fifteen hundred pounds about me when I came ashore last night, sewed in a belt round my waist. It is gone. That is all.'

Tom looked steadily at her as he spoke. She turned pale, red, pale again, her lips quivered, but she spoke no word.

'She has it, as I live!' thought Tom to himself. "'Frailty, thy name is woman!'" The canting little methodistical humbug! She must have shipped it off my waist as I lay senseless. I suppose she means to keep it in pawn, till I redeem it by marrying her. Well, I might take an uglier mate, certainly, but when I do enter into the bitter bonds of matrimony, I should like to be sure, beforehand, that my wife was not a thief!'

Why, then, did not Tom, if he were so very sure of Grace's having the belt, charge her with the theft? Because he had found out already how popular she was, and was afraid of merely making himself unpopular. Because, too, he took for granted that whosoever had his belt, had hidden it already beyond the reach of a search warrant, and because, after all, an honourable shame restrained him. It would be a poor

return to the woman who had saved his life to charge her with theft the next morning, and more, there was something about that girl's face which had made him feel that, if he had seen her put the belt into her pocket before his eyes, he could not have found the heart to have sent her to gaol. 'No!' thought he, 'I'll get it out of her, or whoever has it, and stay here till I do get it. One place is as good as another to me.'

But what was Grace saying?

She had turned, after two or three minutes' astonished silence, to her mother and Captain Willis—

'Belt! Mother! Uncle! What is this? The gentleman has lost a belt!'

'Dear me!—a belt? Well, child, that's not much to grieve over, when the Lord has spared his life and soul from the pit!' said her mother, somewhat testily.

'You don't understand. A belt, I say, full of money—fifteen hundred pounds, he lost it last night. Uncle! Speak, quick! Did you see a belt?'

Willis shook his head mechanically. 'I don't, and yet I do, and yet I don't again. My brains were well-nigh washed out of me, I know. However, sir, I'll think, and talk it over with you too, for if it be in the village, found it ought to be, and will be, with God's help.'

'Found?' cried Grace, in so high a key, that Tom entreated her to calm herself, and not make the matter public. 'Found? yes, and shall be found, if there be justice in heaven. Shame, that West-country folk should turn robbers and wreckers! Mariners, too, and mariners' wives, who should be praying for those who are wandering far away, each man with his life in his hand! Ah, what a world! When will it end? soon, too soon, when West-country folk rob ships, wrecked men! But you will find your belt, yes, sir, you will find it. Wait till you have learnt to do without it. Man does not live by bread alone. Do you think he lives by gold? Only be patient, and when you are worthy of it, you shall find it again, in the Lord's good time.'

To the doctor this seemed a mere burst of jargon, invented for the purpose of hiding guilt, and his faith in womankind was not heightened when he heard Grace's mother say, *salvo voce*, to Willis, that 'In wrecks, and fires, and such like, a many people complained of having lost more than ever they had!'

'Oh ho! my o'ld lady, is that the way the fox is gone?' quoth Tom to that trusty counsellor, himself, and began carefully scrutinizing Mrs. Harvey's face. It had been very handsome; it was still very clever, but the eyebrows, crushed together downwards above her nose, and rising high at the outer corners, indicated, as surely as the restless down-dropt eye, a character self-conscious, furtive, capable of great inconsistencies, possibly of great deceptions.

'You don't look me in the face, old lady!' quoth Tom to himself. 'Very well! between you two it lies, unless that old gentleman im-

plicates himself also in his approaching confession.'

He took his part at once. 'Well, well, you will oblige me by saying nothing more about it. After all as this good lady says, the loss of a little money is not worth complaining over, when one has escaped with his. Good morning, and many thanks for all your kindness!'

And Tom made another grand bow, and went off to the lieutenant.

Grace looked after him awhile, as one stunned, and then turned to her mother.

'Let us go home.'

'Go home? Why there, dear?'

'Let me go home, you need not come. I am sick of this world. Is it not enough to have misery and death?' (and she pointed to the row of coffins), 'but we must have sin, too, when- ever we turn! Misery and theft—and in gratitude too!' she added, in a lower tone.

She went homeward, her mother, in spite of her entreaties, accompanied her, and, for some reason or other, did not lose sight of her all that day, or for several days after.

Meanwhile, Willis had beckoned the doctor aside. His face was serious and sad, and his lips were trembling.

'This is a very shocking business, sir. Of course, you saw the lieutenant.'

'Not yet, my good sir.'

'But—excuse my boldness, what plainer way of getting it back from the rascal, whoever he is?'

'Wait awhile,' said Tom, 'I have my reasons.'

'But, sir, in the honour of the place, the matter should be cleared up, and till the thief is found, suspicion will lie on a dozen innocent men, myself among the rest, for that matter.'

'You?' said Tom, smiling. 'I don't know who I have the honour to speak to, but you don't look much like a gentleman who wishes for a trip to Botany Bay.'

The old man chuckled, and then his face dropped again.

'I'm glad you take the thing as like a man, sir, but it is really no laughing matter. It's a scoundrelly job, only fit for a Maltese off the New Mangery. If it had been a lot of those cater fellows that had carried you up, I could have understood it, wrecking's born in the bone of them; but for those four sailors that carried you up, 'gad, sir, they'd have been shot sooner I've known 'em from boys!' and the old man spoke quite fiercely, and looked up, his lip trembling, and his eye moist.

'There's no doubt that you are honest—whatever is not,' thought Tom, so he ventured a further question.

'Then you were by all the while?'

'All the while? Who more? And that's just what puzzles me.'

'I'day don't speak loud,' said Tom. 'I have my reasons for keeping things quiet.'

'I tell you, sir, I held the man, and big John Beer (Gentleman Jan they call him) held me, and the maid had both her hands tight

in your belt. I saw it as plain as I see you, just before the wave covered us, though little I thought what was in it, and should never have remembered you had a belt at all, if I hadn't thought over things in the last five minutes.'

'Well, sir, I am lucky in having come straight to the fountain head, and must thank you for telling me so frankly what you know.'

'Tell you, sir? What else should one do but tell you? I only wish I knew more, and more I'll know, please the Lord. And you'll excuse an old sailor (though not of your rank, sir) saying that he wonders a little that you don't take the plain means of knowing more yourself.'

'May I take the liberty of asking your name?' said Tom, who saw by this time that the old man was worthy of his confidence.

'Willis, at your service, sir. Captain they call me, though I'm none. Sailing-master I was, on board of His Majesty's ship *Nale*, 81,' and Willis bowed his hat with such an air, that Tom raised his in return.

'Then, Captain Willis, let me have five words with you apart, first thanking you for having helped to save my life.'

'I'm very glad I did, sir, and thanked God for it on my knees this morning. But you'll excuse me, sir, I was thinking and no blame to me—more of saving my poor maid's life than yours, and no offence to you, for I hadn't the honour of knowing you, but for her, I'd have been drowned a dozen times over.'

'No offence, indeed,' said Tom, and hardly knew what to say next. 'May I ask, is she your niece? I heard her call you uncle.'

'Oh, no—no relation, only I look on her as my own, poor thing, having no father, and she always calls me uncle, as most do us old men in the West.'

'Well, then, sir,' said Tom, 'you will answer for none of the four sailors having robbed me?'

'I've said it, sir.'

'Was any one else close to her when we were brought ashore?'

'No one but I. I brought her round myself.'

'And who took her home?'

'Her mother and I.'

'Very good. And you never saw the belt after she had her hands in it?'

'No, I'm sure not.'

'Was her mother by her when she was lying on the rock?'

'No, came up afterwards, just as I got her on her feet.'

'Humph! What sort of a character is her mother?'

'Oh, a tidy, God-fearing person enough. One of these Methodist class-leaders, Quakers, they call themselves. I don't hold with them, though I do go to chapel at times, but there are good ones among them; and I do believe she's one, though she's a little fretful at times. Keeps a little shop that don't pay over well, and those preachers live on her a good deal, I think. Creeping into widows' houses, and making long prayers—you know the text.'

'Well, now, Captain Willis, I don't want to hurt your feelings, but do you not see that one of two things I must believe—either that the belt was torn off my waist, and washed back into the sea, as it may have been after all, or else, that—'

'Do you mean that she took it?' asked Willis, in a voice of such indignant astonishment that Tom could only answer by a shrug of the shoulders.

'Who else could have done so, on your own showing?'

'Sir!' said Willis slowly. 'I thought I had to do with a gentleman, but I have my doubts of it now. A poor girl risks her life to drag you out of that sea, which but for her would have hove your body up to be along with that line there,' and Willis pointed to the ghastly row—'and your soul gone to give in its last account—you only know what that would have been like—and the first thing you do in payment is to accuse her of robbing you—her, that the very angels in heaven, I believe, are glad to keep company with,' and the old man turned and paced the beach in fierce excitement.

'Captain Willis,' said Tom, 'I'll trouble you to listen patiently and civilly to me a minute.'

Willis stopped, drew himself up, and touched his hat mechanically.

'Just because I am a gentleman, I have not accused her, but held my tongue, and spoken to you in confidence. Now, perhaps, you will understand why I have said nothing to the lieutenant.'

Willis looked up at him.

'I beg your pardon, sir. I see now, and I'm sorry if I was rude, but it took me aback, and does still. I tell you, sir,' quoth he, warning again, 'whatever's true, that's false. You're wrong there, if you never are wrong again, and you'll say so yourself, before you've known her a week. No, sir! If you could make me believe that, I should never believe in goodness again on earth, but hold all men, and women too, and those above, for aught I know, that are greater than men and women, for liars together.'

What was to be answered? Perhaps only what Tom did answer.

'My good sir, I will say no more. I would not have said that much if I had thought I should have pained you so. I suppose that the belt was washed into the sea. Why not?'

'Why not, indeed, sir? That's a much wiser Christian-like way of looking at it than to blacken your own soul before God by suspecting that sweet innocent creature.'

'Be it so, then. Only say nothing about the matter, and beg them to say nothing. If it be jammed among the rocks (as it might be, heavy as it is), talking about it will only set people looking for it, and I suppose there is a man or two, even in Aberlona, who would find fifteen hundred pounds a tempting bait. If, again, some one finds it, and makes away with it, he will only be the more careful to hide it

if he knows that I am on the look-out. So just tell Miss Harvey and her mother that I think it must have been lost, and beg them to keep my secret. And now shake hands with me.'

'The best plan, I believe, though bad, is the best,' said Willis, holding out his hand, and he walked away sadly. His spirit had been altogether ruffled by the imputation on Grace's character, and, besides, the chances of Thimnall's recovering his money seemed to him very small.

In five minutes he returned.

'If you would allow me, sir, there's a man there of whom I should like to ask one question. He who held me, and after that, helped to carry you up,' and he pointed to Gentleman Jan, who stood, dripping from the waist downward, over a chest which he had just secured. 'Just let us ask him, off-hand like, whether you had a belt on when he carried you up. You may trust him, sir. He'd knock you down as soon as look at you, but tell a lie, never.'

They went to the giant, and after cordial salutations, Tom propounded his question carelessly, with something like a whim.

'It's no great matter, but it was an old friend, you see, with fittings for my knife and pistols, and I should be glad to find it again.'

Jan thrust his red hand through his black curls, and meditated while the water surged round his ankles.

'Never a belt seed I, sir; leastwise while you were in my hands. I had you round the waist all the way up, so no one could have took it off. Why should they! And I undressed you myself, and nothing, save your presence, was there to get off, but jersey and trousers, and a lump of laccy against your skin that looked the right sort.'

'Have some, then,' said Tom, pulling out his honey-dew. 'As for the belt, I suppose it's gone to choke the dog-fish.'

And there the matter ended, outwardly at least, but only outwardly. Tom had his own opinion, gathered from Grace's seemingly guilty face, and to it he held, and called old Willis, in his heart, a simple-minded old dotard, who had been taken in by her hypocrisy.

And Tom accompanied the lieutenant on his dreary errand that day, and several days after, through depositions before a justice, interviews with Lloyd's underwriters, and all the sad details which follow a wreck. Ere the week's end, forty bodies and more had been recovered, and brought up, ten or twelve at a time, to the churchyard, and upon the down, and laid side by side in one long shallow pit, where Frank Headley read over them the blessed words of hope, amid the sobs of women, and the grand silence of stalwart men, who knew not how soon their turn might come, and after each procession came Grace Harvey, with all her little scholars two and two, to listen to the funeral service; and when the last corpse was buried, they planted flowers upon the mound, and went their way again to learn their hymns and read their Bible—little ministering angels,

to whom, as to most sailors' children, death was too common a sight to have in it aught of hideous or strange.

And this was the end of the good ship *Hesperus*, and all her gallant crew.

Verily, however important the mere animal lives of men may be, and ought to be, at times, in our eyes, they never have been so, to judge from floods and earthquakes, pestilences and storm, in the eyes of Him who made and loves us all. It is a strange fact better for us, instead of shutting our eyes to it, because it interferes with our modern tenderness of pain, to ask honestly what it means.

CHAPTER V

THE WAY TO WIN THEM

So, for a week or more, Tom went on thrivingly enough, and became a general favourite in the town. Heale had no reason to complain of boarding him, for he had dinner and supper thrust on him every day by one and another, who were glad enough to have him for the sake of his stories, and songs, and endless fun and good humour. The lieutenant, above all, took the newcomer under his special patronage, and was paid for his services in some of Tom's incomparable honey-dew. The old fellow soon found that the doctor knew more than one old foreign station of his, and ended by pouring out to him his ancient wrongs, and the evil doings of the wicked admiral, all of which Tom heard with deepest sympathy, and surprise that so much naval talent had remained unappreciated by the unjust upper powers, and the lieutenant, of course, reported of him accordingly to Heale.

'A very civil spoken and intelligent youngster, Mr. Heale, d'ye see, to my mind, and you can't do better than accept his offer, for you'll find him a great help, especially among the ladies, d'ye see. They like a good-looking chap, eh, Mrs. Jones?'

On the fourth day, by good fortune, what should come ashore but Tom's own chest moneyless, alas! but with many useful matters still unspoiled by salt water. So all went well, and indeed somewhat too well (if Tom would have let it), in the case of Miss Anna Maria Heale, the doctor's daughter.

She was just such a girl as her father's daughter was likely to be, a short, stout, rosy, pretty body of twenty, with loose red lips, thwart black eyebrows, and right naughty eyes under them, of which Tom took good heed for Miss Heale was exceedingly inclined, he saw, to make use of them in his behoof. Let others who have experience in, and taste for such matters, declare how she set her cap at the dapper young surgeon, how she rushed into the shop with sweet abandon ten times a day, to find her father, and, not finding him, giggled, and blushed, and shook her shoulders, and retired to peep at Tom

through the glass door which led into the parlour, how she discovered that the muslin curtain of the said door would get out of order every ten minutes, and at last called Mr Thurnall to assist her in rearranging it, how, bolder grown, she came into the shop to help herself to various matters, inquiring tenderly for Tom's health, and giggling vulgar sentiments about 'absent friends, and hearts left behind', in the hope of fishing out whether Tom had a sweetheart or not. How, at last, she was minded to confide her own health to Tom, and to install him as her private physician, yea, and would have made him feel her pulse on the spot, had he not luckily found some *assafoetida*, and therewith so perfumed the shop, that her 'nerves' (of which she was always talking, though she had nerves only in the sense wherein a sirloin of beef has them) forced her to beat a retreat.

But she returned again to the charge next day, and rushed bravely through that fearful snail, cleaver in hand, as the carrier set down at the door a lunge box, carriage paul, all the way from London, and directed to Thomas Thurnall, Esquire. She would help to open it, and so she did, while old Heale and his wife stood by curious,—he with a mandarin wonder and awe (for he regarded Tom airily as an altogether awful and incomprehensible 'party'), and Mrs Heale with a look of incredulous scorn, as if she expected the box to be a mere sham, filled probably with shavings. For (from reasons best known to herself) she had never looked pleasantly on the arrangement which entrusted to Tom the care of the bottles. She had given way from motives of worldly prudence, even of necessity, for Heale had been for the greater part of the week quite incapable of attending to his business, but black envy and spite were seething in her foolish heart, and soothed more and more fiercely when she saw that the box did not contain shavings, but valuables of every sort and kind—drugs, instruments, a large microscope (which Tom delivered out of Miss Heale's fat clumsy fingers only by strong warnings that it would go off and shoot her), books full of prints of unspeakable monsters, and finally, a little packet, containing not one five-pound note, but four, and a letter which Tom, after perusing, put into Mr. Heale's hands with a look of honest pride.

The Mumpsimus man, it appeared, had 'sent round the hat' for him, and here were the results, and they would send the hat round again every month, if he wanted it, or, if he would come up, board, lodge, and wash him gratis. The great Doctor Bellairs, House Physician, and Carver, the famous operator (names at which Heale bowed his head and worshipped), sent compliments, condolences, offers of employment—never was so triumphant a testimonial, and Heale, in his simplicity, thought himself (as indeed he was) the luckiest of country doctors, while Mrs. Heale, after swelling and choking for five minutes, tottered

into the back room, and cast herself on the sofa in violent hysterics.

As she came round again, Tom could not but overhear a little that passed. And thus he overheard among other matters—

'Yes, Mr Heale, I see, I see too well, which your natural blindness, sir, and that fatal easiness of temper, will bring you to a premature grave within the paupers' precincts, and this young designing infidel, with his science and his magnifiers, and his callipers, and philosophy falsely so called, which in our true Protestant youth there was none, nor needed none, to supplant you in your old age, and take the bread out of your gray hairs, which he will bring with sorrow to the grave, and mine likewise, which am like my poor infant here, of only too sensitive sensibilities! Oh, Anna Maria, my child, my poor lost child! which I can feel for the tenderness of the inexperienced heart! My Virgin Eve, which the Serpent has entered into your youthful paradise, and you will find, alas! too late, that you have warmed an adder into your bosom!'

'Oh, ma, how judcheats!' giggled Anna Maria, evidently not displeased. 'If you don't mind he will hear you, and I should never be able to look him in the face again.' And therewith she looked round to the glass door.

What more passed, Tom did not choose to hear, for he began making all the bustle he could in the shop, merely saying to himself—

'That flood of eloquence is symptomatic enough I'll lay my life the old dame knows her way to the lundatum bottle.'

Tom's next business was to ingratiate himself with the young curate. He had found out already, cunning fellow, that any extreme intimacy with Headley would not increase his general popularity, and, as we have seen already, he bore no great affection to 'the cloth' in general, but the curate was an educated gentleman, and Tom wished for some more rational conversation than that of the lieutenant and Heale. Besides, he was one of those men with whom the possession of power, sought at first from self-interest, has become a passion, a species of sporting, which he follows for its own sake. To whomsoever he met he must needs apply the moral stethoscope, sound him, lungs, heart, and liver, put his tissues under the microscope, and try conclusions on him to the uttermost. They might be useful hereafter, for knowledge was power or they might not. What matter? Every fresh specimen of humanity which he examined was so much gained in general knowledge. Very true, Thomas Thurnall, provided the method of examination be the sound and the deep one, which will lead you down in each case to the real living heart of humanity; but what if your method be altogether a shallow and a cynical one, savouring much more of Gil Blas than of St. Paul, grounded not on faith and love for human beings, but on something very like suspicion and contempt? You will be but too likely, doctor, to make the coarsest

mistakes, when you fancy yourself most penetrating, to mistake the mere scurf and disease of the character for its healthy organic tissue, and to find out at last, somewhat to your confusion, that there are more things, not only in heaven, but in the earthiest of the earth, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. You have already set down Grace Harvey as a hypocrite, and Willis as a dotard. Will you make up your mind, in the same foolishness of over-wisdom, that Frank Headley is a merely narrow-headed and hard-hearted pedant, quite unaware that he is living an inner life of doubts, struggles, prayers, self-reproaches, noble hunger after an ideal of moral excellence, such as you, friend Tom, never yet dreamed of, which would be to you as an unintelligible gibber of shadows out of dreamland, but which is to him the only reality, the life of life, for which everything is to be risked and suffered? You treat his opinions (though he never thrusts them on you) about 'the Church,' and his duty, and the souls of his parishioners, with civil indifference, as much ado about nothing, and his ritual eccentricities as puerilities. You have already made up your mind to 'try and put a little common sense into him,' not because it is any concern of yours whether he has common sense or not, but because you think that it will be better for you to have the parish at peace, but has it ever occurred to you how noble the man is, even in his mistakes? How that one thought, that the finest thing in the world is to be utterly good, and to make others good also, puts him three heavens at least above you, your most unangelic terror-dog, bowered all day long by gubbling after vermin! What if his idea of 'the Church' be some what too narrow for the year of grace 1854, is it no honour to him that he has such an idea at all, that there has risen up before him the vision of a perfect polity, a 'Divine and wonderful Order,' linking earth to heaven, and to the very throne of Him who died for men, witnessing to each of its citizens what the world tries to make him forget, namely, that he is the child of God himself, and guiding and strengthening him, from the cradle to the grave, to do his Father's work? Is it a shame to him that he has seen that such a polity must exist, that he believes that it does exist, or that he thinks he finds it in its highest, if not its perfect form, in the most ancient and august traditions of his native land? True, he has much to learn, and you may teach him something of it, but you will find some day, Thomas Thurnall, that, granting you to be at one pole of the English character, and Frank Headley at the other, he is as good an Englishman as you, and can teach you more than you can him.

The two soon began to pass almost every evening together, pleasantly enough, for the reckless and rattling manner which Tom assumed with the mob, he laid aside with the curate, and showed himself as agreeable a companion as man could need; while Tom in his turn found that

Headley was a rational and sweet-tempered man, who, even where he had made up his mind to differ, could hear an adverse opinion, put sometimes in a startling shape, without falling into any of those male hysterics of sacred horror, which are the usual refuge of ignorance and stupidity, terrified by what it cannot refute. And soon Tom began to lay aside the reserve which he usually assumed to clergymen, and to tread on ground which Headley would gladly have avoided. For, to tell the truth, ever since Tom had heard of Grace's intended dismissal, the curate's opinions had assumed a practical importance in his eyes - and he had vowed in secret that, if his cunning failed him not, turned out of her school she should not be. Whether she had stolen his money or not, she had saved his life, and nobody should wrong her, if he could help it. Besides, perhaps she had not his money. The belt might have slipped off in the struggle, some one else might have taken it all in carrying him up, he might have mistaken the shame of innocence in her face for that of guilt. Be it as it might, he had not the heart to make the matter public, and contented himself with staying at Abernethy, and watching for every hint of his lost treasure.

By which it befell that he was thinking, the half of every day at least, about Grace Harvey and her face was seldom out of his mind's eye, and the more he looked at it, either in fancy or in fact, the more did it fascinate him. They met but rarely, and then interchanged the most simple and modest of salutations - but Tom liked to meet her, would have gladly stopped to chat with her, however, whether from modesty or from a guilty conscience, she always hurried on in silence.

And shot Tom's request to her, through Willis, to say nothing about the matter, she had obeyed, as her mother also had done. That Tom suspected her was a thought which never crossed her mind, to suspect any one herself was in her eyes a sin, and if the fancy that this manner that, among the sailors who had carried Tom up to Hale's, might have been capable of the baseness, she thrust the thought from her, and prayed to be forgiven for her much-abled judgment.

But night and day there weighed on that strange and delicate spirit the shame of the deed, as heavily, if possible, as if she herself had been the doer. There was another soul in danger of perdition, another black spot of sin, making earth hideous to her. The village was disgraced, not in the public eyes, true - but in the eye of heaven, and in the eyes of that stranger for whom she was beginning to feel an interest more intense than she ever had done in any human being before. Her saintliness (for Grace was a saint in the truest sense of that word) had long since made her free of that 'communion of saints' which consists not in Pharisaic isolation from 'the world,' not in the mutual flatteries and congratulations of a self-concocted clique, but which bears the sins and carries the sorrows

of all around—whose atmosphere is disappointed hopes and plans for good, and the indignation which hates the sin because it loves the sinner, and sacred fear and pity for the self-inflated miseries of those who might be (so runs the dream, and will run till it becomes a waking reality) strong, and free, and safe, by being good and wise. 'To such a spirit' this bold cunning man had come, stiff-necked and heaven-defiant, a 'brand plucked from the burning'—and yet equally unconscious of his danger, and thankless for his rescue. Given, too, as it were, into her hands, tossed at her feet out of the very mouth of the pit—why but that she might save him? A far duller heart, a far narrower indignation than Grace's would have done what Grace's did

concentrate themselves round the image of that man with all the love of woman. For, ere long, Grace found that she did love that man, as a woman loves but once in her life, perhaps in all time to come. She found that her heart throbbled, her cheek flushed, when his name was mentioned, that she watched, almost unawares to herself, for his passing, and she was not ashamed of the discovery. It was a sort of melancholy comfort to her that there was a great gulf fixed between them. His station, his acquirements, his great connections and friends in London (for all Tom's matters were the gossip of the town, as, indeed, he took care that they should be), made it impossible that he should ever think of her, and therefore she held herself excused for thinking of him, without any fear of that 'self-seeking,' and 'inordinate affection,' and 'unsanctified passions,' which her religious books had taught her to dread. Besides, he was not 'a Christian.' That five minutes on the shore had told her that, and even if her station had been the same as his, she must not be 'unequally yoked with an unbeliever.' And thus the very hopelessness of her love became its food and strength, the feeling which she would have checked with maidenly modesty, had it been connected even remotely with marriage, was allowed to take immediate and entire dominion, and she held herself permitted to keep him next her heart of hearts, because she could do nothing for him but pray for his conversion.

And pray for him she did, the noble, guileless girl, day and night, that he might be converted, that he might prosper, and become—perhaps rich, at least useful, a mighty instrument in some good work. And then she would build up a beautiful castle in the air after another, out of her fancies about what such a man, whom she had invested in her own mind with all the wisdom of Solomon, might do if his 'talents were sanctified.' Then she prayed that he might recover his lost gold—when it was good for him, that he might discover the thief—no—that would only involve fresh shame and sorrow, that the thief, thou, might be brought to repentance, and confession, and restitution. That was the solution of the dark problem, and for that she prayed,

T Y A.

while her face grew sadder and sadder day by day.

For a while, ever and above the pain which the theft caused her, there came—how could it be otherwise?—sudden pangs of regret that this same love was hopeless, at least upon this side of the grave. Inconsistent they were with the chivalrous selfishness of her usual temper, and as such she dashed them from her, and conquered them, albeit a while, by a method which many a woman knows too well. It was but 'one cross more', a natural part of her destiny—the child of sorrow and heaviness of heart. Pleasure in joy she was never to find on earth, she would find it, then, in grief. And musing her own melancholy, she went on her way, sad, sweet, and steadfast, and lavished more care and tenderness, and even gaiety, than ever upon her neighbours' children, because she knew that she should never have a child of her own.

But there is a third dunsel, to whom, whether more or less engaging than Grace Harvey or Miss Heale, my readers must needs be introduced. Let Miss Heale herself do it, with eyes full of jealous enmity.

'There is a foreign letter for Mr. Thurnall, marked Montreal, and sent on here from Whitbury,' said she, one morning at breakfast, and in a significant tone, for the address was evidently in a woman's hand.

'For me? ah, yes, I see,' said Tom, taking it carelessly, and thrusting it into his pocket.

'Won't you read it at once, Mr. Thurnall? I'm sure you must be anxious to hear from friends abroad,' with an emphasis on the word friends.

'I have a good many acquaintances all over the world, but no friends that I am aware of,' said Tom, and went on with his breakfast.

'Ah—but some people are more than friends. Are the Montreal ladies pretty, Mr. Thurnall?'

'Don't know, for I never was there.'

Miss Heale was silent, being mystified—and, moreover, not quite sure whether Montreal was in India or in Australia, and not willing to show her ignorance.

She watched Tom through the glass door all the morning to see if he read the letter, and betrayed any emotion at its contents. But Tom went about his business as usual, and, as far as she saw, never read it at all.

However, it was read in due time, for, hiding himself in a lonely place that afternoon, Tom pulled it out with an anxious face, and read a letter written in a hasty ill-formed hand, underscored at every fifth word, and plentifully beset with notes of exclamation.

'What? my dearest friend, and fortune still frowns upon you? You father blind and ruined! Ah, that I were there to comfort him for your sake! And ah, that I were anywhere, doing any drudgery, which might prevent my being still a burden to my benefactors. Not that they are unkind, not that they are not angels! I told them at once that you could send me no

more money till you reached England, perhaps not then, and they answered that God would send it that He who had sent me to them would send the means of supporting me, and ever since they have redoubled their kindness but it is intolerable, this dependence, and on you, too, who have a father to support in his darkness. Oh, how I feel for you! But to tell you the truth, I pay a price for this dependence. I must needs be staid and sober, I must needs dress like any Quakeress, I must not read this book or that, and my Shelley taken from me, I suppose, because it spoke too much "Liberty," though, of course, the reason given was its unkind opinions—is replaced by *Lea's Serious Call*. 'Tis all right and good, I don't not, but it is very dreary, as dreary as these black fir forests, and brown snake fences, and that dreadful, dreadful Canadian winter which is past, which went to my very heart, day after day, like a sword of ice. Another such winter, and I shall die, as one of my own humming-birds would die, did you cage him here, and prevent him from fleeing home to the sunny South when the first leaves begin to fall. Dear children of the sun! my heart goes forth to them, and the whir of their wings is music to me, for it tells me of the South, the glaring South, with its glorious flowers, and glorious woods, its luxuriance, life, heroic enjoyments. Let fierce sorrows come with them, if it must be so! Let me take the evil with the good, and live my rich wild life through bliss and agony, like a true daughter of the sun, instead of crystallizing slowly here into ice, and countenances rigid with respectability, sharpened by the lust of gain, without taste, without emotion, without even sorrow! Let who will be the stagnant mill head, crawling in its ugly spade-cut ditch to turn the mill. Let me be the wild mountain brook, which foams and flashes over the rocks—what if they tell it?—it leaps then nevertheless, and goes laughing on its way. Let me go thus, for weal or woe! And if I sleep a while, let it be like the brook, beneath the shade of fragrant magnolias and luxuriant vines, and images, meanwhile, in my bosom nothing but the beauty around.

Yes, my friend, I can live no longer this dull chrysalid life, in comparison with which, at times, even that past dark dream seems tolerable—for amid its lurid smoke were flashes of brightness. A slave? Well, I ask myself at times, and what were women meant for but to be slaves? Free them, and they enslave themselves again, or languish unsatisfied, for they must love. And what blame to them if they love a white man, tyrant though he be, rather than a fellow-slave? If the men of our own race will claim us, let them prove themselves worthy of us! Let them rise, exterminate their tyrants, or, failing that, show that they know how to die. Till then, those who are the masters of their bodies will be the masters of our hearts. If they crouch before the white like brutes, what wonder if we look up to him

as to a god? Woman must worship, or be wretched. Do I not know it? Have I not had my dream—too beautiful for earth? Was there not one whom you knew, to hear whom call no slave would have been rapture, to whom I would have answered on my knees, Master, I leave no will but yours? But that is past—past. One happiness alone was possible for a slave, and even that they tore from me, and now I have no thought, no purpose, save revenge.

"These good people bid me forgive my enemies. Easy enough for them, who have no enemies to forgive. Forgive? Forgive injustice, oppression, baseness, cruelty? Forgive the devil, and bid him go in peace, and work his wicked will? Why have they put into my hands, these last three years, books worthy of a free nation? books which call patriotism divine, which tell me how in every age and clime men have been called heroes who rose against their conquerors, women martyrs who stabbed their tyrants, and then died? Hypocrites! Did their grandfathers meekly turn the other cheek when your English taxed them somewhat too heavily? Do they not now teach every school-child to glory in their own revolution, their own declaration of independence, and to flatter themselves into the conceit that they are the lords of creation, and the examples of the world, because they asserted that sacred right of resistance which is discovered to be unchristian in the African? They will free us, forsooth, in good time (is it to be in God's good time, or in their own?), if we will but be patient, and endure the rice-swamp, the scourge, the slave-market, and shame unspcakable, a few years more, till all is ready and set—for them. Dreamers as well as hypocrites! What nation was ever freed by other's help? I have been reading history to see,—you do not know how much I have been reading,—and I find that freemen have always freed themselves as we must do, and as they will never let us do, because they know that with freedom must come retribution, that our Southern tyrants have an account to render, which the cold Northerner has no heart to see him pay. For, after all, he loves the Southerner better than the slave, and fears him more also. What if the Southern aristocrat, who looks it over him as the panther does over the ox, should transfer (as he has threatened many a time) the cowhide from the negro's loins to his? No, we must free our selves! And there lives one woman, at least, who, having gained her freedom, knows how to use it in eternal war against all tyrants. Oh, I could go down, I think at moments, down to New Orleans itself, with a brain and lips of fire, and speak words—you know how I could speak them—which would bring me in a week to the scourge, perhaps to the stake. The scourge I could endure. Have I not felt it already? Do I not bear its scars even now, and glory in them, for they were won by speaking as a woman should speak? And even the fire?—Have not women been martyrs already? and could not I be one? Might not my torments madden a people to

manhood, and my name become a war-cry in the sacred fight! And yet, oh my friend, life is sweet!—and my little day has been so dark and gloomy!—may I not have one hour's sunshine ere youth and vigour are gone, and my swift-vanishing Southern womanhood wrinkles itself up into despondent old age? Oh, counsel me, — help me, my friend, my preserver, my true master now, so brave, so wise, so all-knowing, under whose mask of cynicism lies hid (have I not cause to know it?) the heart of a hero.

'MARIE.'

If Miss Heale could have watched Tom's face as he read, much more could she have heard his words as he finished, all jealousy would have passed from her mind for as he read, the cynical smile grew sharper and sharper, turning a bit prelude for the 'Little fool' which was his only comment.

'I thought you would have fallen in love with some honest fellow years ago but a martyr you shan't be, even if I have to send for you hither, though how to get you hither to eat I don't know. However, you have been reading your book, it seems, — clever enough you always were, and too clever, so you could go out as governess, or something. Why, here's a postscript dated three months afterwards! Ah, I see, this letter was written last July, in answer to my Australian one. What's the meaning of this?' And he began reading again.

'I wrote so far, but I had not the heart to send it, it was so full of repetitions. And now then, — must I tell the truth? — I have made a step, do not call it a desperate one, do not blame me, for your blame I cannot bear, but I have gone on the stage. There was no other means of independence open to me, and I had a dream, I have it still, that there, if anywhere, I might do my work. You told me that I might become a great actress. I have set my heart on becoming one, on learning to move the hearts of men, till the time comes when I can tell them, show them, in living flesh and blood, upon the stage, the secrets of a slave's sorrows, and that slave a woman. The time has not come for that yet here. But I have had my success already, more than I could have expected, and not only in Canada, but in the States. I have been at New York, acting to crowded houses. Ah, when they applauded me, how I longed to speak! to point out my whole soul to them, and call upon them, as men, to — But that will come in time. I have found a friend, who has promised to write dramas especially for me. Merely republican ones at first, in which I can give full vent to my passion, and hurl forth the eternal laws of liberty, which their conscience may — must — at last, apply for themselves. But soon, he says, we shall be able to dare to approach the real subject, if not in America, still in Europe, and then, I trust, the coloured actress will stand forth as the championess of her race, of all who are oppressed, in every capital in

Europe, save, alas! Italy and the Austria who crushes her. I have taken, I should tell you, an Italian name. It was better I thought, to hide my African taint, forsooth, for awhile. So the wise New Yorkers have been sitting, as Maria Cordiamina, the white woman (for am I not fairer than many an Italian signora?), whom they would have looked on as an inferior being under the name of Marie Livingston though there is finer old English blood running in my veins, from your native Berkshire, they say, than in many a Down-Easter's who hangs upon my lips. Address me henceforth, then, as La Signora Maria Cordiamina. I am learning fast, by the bye, to speak Italian. I shall be at Quebec till the end of the month. Then, I believe, I come to London, and we shall meet once more, and I shall thank you, thank you thank you, once more, for all your unworldly kindnesses.'

'Triumph!' said Tom, after a while. 'Well, she is old enough to choose for herself. Fifty-and-twenty she must be by now. As for the stage, I suppose it is the best place for her, better, at least, than turning governess, and going mad, as she would do, over her drudgery and her dreams. But who is this friend? Singing-master, scribbler, or political refugee? or perhaps all three together? A dark lot, those fellows. I must keep my eye on him though it's no concern of mine. I've done my duty by the poor thing, the devil himself can't deny that. But somehow, if this play writing worthy plays her false, I feel very much as if I should be loud enough to try whether I had for gotten my pistol-shooting.'

CHAPTER VI

AN OLD FOE WITH A NEW FACE

'This child's head is dreadfully hot, and how yellow he does look!' says Mrs Vavasour, fussing about in her little nursery. 'Oh, Clara, what shall I do? I really dare not give them any more medicine myself, and that horrid old Dr. Heale is worse than no one.'

'Ah, ma'am,' says Clara, who is privileged to become herself, and to have sad confidence made to her, 'at we were but in town now, to see Mr. Chivers, or any one that could be trusted, but in this dreadful out-of-the-way place—'

'Don't talk of that, Clara! Oh, what will become of the poor children!' And Mrs Vavasour sits down and cries, as she does three times at least every week.

'But indeed, ma'am, if you thought you could trust him, there is that new assistant—'

'The man who was saved from the wreck? Why, nobody knows who he is.'

'Oh, but indeed, ma'am, he is a very nice gentleman, I can say that, and so wonderfully clever, and has cured so many people already, they say, and got down a lot of new medicines

(for he has great friends among the doctors in town), and such a wonderful magnifying glass, with which he showed me himself, as I dropped into the shop promiscuous, such horrible things, ma'am, in a drop of water, that I haven't dared hardly to wash my face since.'

And what good will the magnifying glass do to us?' says the poor little Irish soul, laughing up through its tears. 'He won't want it to see how ill poor Frederick is, I'm sure, but you may send for him, Clara.'

'I'll go myself, ma'am, and make sure,' says Clara, glad enough of a run, and chance of a chat with the young doctor.

And in half an hour Mr Thurnall is announced.

Though Mrs. Vavasour has a flannel apron on (for she will wash the children herself, in spite of Elsley's grumbings), Tom sees that she is a lady, and puts on, accordingly, his very best manner, which, as his experience has long since taught him, is no manner at all.

He does his work quietly and kindly, and bows himself out.

'You will be sure to send the medicine immediately, Mr Thurnall.'

'I will bring it myself, madam, and, if you like, administer it. I think the young gentleman has made friends with me sufficiently already.'

Tom keeps his word, and is back, and away again to his shop, in a marvellously short space, leaving 'struck a fresh root,' as he calls it, fir—

'What a very well-beloved sensible man that Mr Thurnall is,' says Laura to Elsley, an hour after, as she meets him coming in from the garden, where he has been polishing his 'Wreck.' 'I am sure he understands his business,' he was so kind and quiet, and yet so ready, and seemed to know all the child's symptoms before hand, in such a strange way. I do hope he'll stay here. I feel happier about the poor children than I have for a long time.'

'Thurnall?' asks Elsley, who is too absorbed in the 'Wreck' to ask after the children, but the name catches his ear.

'Mr Heale's new assistant—the man who was wrecked,' answers she, too absorbed, in her turn, in the children to notice her husband's startled face.

'Thurnall? Which Thurnall?'

'Do you know the name? It's not a common one,' says she, moving to the door.

'No—not a common one at all. You said the children were not well?'

'I am glad that you thought of asking after the poor things.'

'Why, really, my dear—' But before he can finish his excuse (probably not worth hearing), she has trotted upstairs again to the nest, and is as busy as ever. Possibly Clara might do the greater part of what she does, and do it better, but still are they not her children? Let those who will call a mother's care mere animal instinct, and liken it

to that of the sparrow or the spider; shall we not rather call it a Divine inspiration, and doubt whether the sparrow and the spider must not have souls to be saved, if they, too, show forth that faculty of maternal love which is, of all human feelings, most inexplicable and most self-sacrificing, and therefore, surely, most heavenly? If that does not come down straight from heaven, a 'good and perfect gift,' then what is heaven, and what the gifts which it sends down?

But poor Elsley may have had solid reasons for thinking more of the name of Thurnall than of his children's health, we will hope so for his sake, for, after sundry melodramatic parings and stunts (Elsley was of a melodramatic turn, and fond of a scene, even when he had no spectator, not even a looking-glass), besides ejaculations of 'It cannot be!' 'If it were!' 'I trust not!' 'A fresh ghost to torment me!' 'When will come the end of this accursed evil which I have wound round my life!' and so forth, he decided aloud that the suspense was intolerable, and enclosing himself in his poetical cloak and Mazzini wide-awake, strode down to the town, and into the shop. And as he entered it, 'his heart sank to his girdle, and his knees below were loosed.' For there, making up pills, in a pair of brown-holland sleeves of his own manufacture (for Tom was a good scamster, as all travellers should be) whistled Lilliputero, as of old, the Tom of other days, which Elsley's nurse would fain have buried in a thousand Letheas.

Elsley came forward to the counter carelessly, nevertheless, after a moment. 'What with my beard, and the lapse of time,' thought he, 'I cannot know me.' So he spoke—

'I understand you have been visiting my children, sir. I hope you did not find them seriously indisposed?'

'Mr Vavasour?' says Tom, with a low bow.

'I am Mr Vavasour.' But Elsley was a loud actor, and hesitated and coloured so much as he spoke, that if Tom had known nothing, he might have guessed something.

'Nothing serious, I assure you, sir, unless you are come to announce any fresh symptom.'

'Oh, no—not at all—that is—I was passing my way to the quay, and thought it as well to have your own assurance.' Mrs. Vavasour is so over-anxious.

'You seem to partake of her infirmity, sir,' says Tom, with a smile and a bow. 'However, it is one which does you both honour.'

An awkward pause.

'I hope I am not taking a liberty, sir, but I think I am bound to—'

'What in heaven is he going to say?' thought Elsley to himself, feeling very much inclined to run away.

'Thank you for all the pleasure and instruction which your writings have given me in lonely hours, and lonely places too. Your first volume of poems has been read by one man, at

least, beside wild watch-fires in the Rocky Mountains.'

Tom did not say that he pitched the said volume into the river in disgust, and that it was, probably, long since used up as house material by the caddis-baits of those parts, - for doubtless there are caddises there as elsewhere.

Poor Elsley rose at the last, and smiled and bowed in silence.

'I have been so long absent from England, and in utterly wild countries, too, that I need hardly be ashamed to ask if you have written anything since *The Soul's Agony*? No doubt, if you have, I might have found it at Melbou no on my way home, but my visit there was a very hurried one. However, the loss is mine, and the fault too, as I ought to call it.'

'Pray make no excuses,' says Elsley, delighted. 'I have written, of course. Who can help writing, sir, while Nature is so glorious, and man so wretched? One cannot but take refuge from the pettiness of the real in the contemplation of the ideal. Yes, I have written. I will send you my last book down. I don't know whether you will find me improved.'

'How can I doubt that I shall?'

'Saddened, perhaps, perhaps more severe in my taste, but we will not talk of that. I owe you a debt, sir, for having furnished me with one of the most striking "motifs" I ever had. I mean that miraculous escape of yours. It is seldom enough, in this dull every-day world, one stumbles on such an incident ready made to one's hands, and needing only to be described as one sees it.'

And the weak vain man chattered on, and ended by telling Tom all about his poem of 'The Wreck,' in a tone which seemed to imply that he had done Tom a serious favour, perhaps raised him to immortality, by putting him in a book.

Tom thanked him gravely for the said honour, bowed him at last out of the shop, and then vaulted back clean over the counter, as soon as Elsley was out of sight, and commenced an Indian war-dance of frantic character, accompanying himself by an extemporaneous chant, with which the name of John Briggs was frequently intermingled -

"If I don't know you, Johnny, my boy,
In spite of all your blarney,
Why then I am a slow-witted fellow,
Than ever has yet appeared."

'Oh! if it was but he! what a card for me! What a world it is for poor honest muscals like me to try a fall with!'

"Why didn't I take bad verse to make,
And call it poetry,
And so make up to an earl's daughter,
Which was of high degree?"

But perhaps I am wrong after all, no—I saw he knew me, the humbug, though he never was a humbug, never rose above the rank of fool. However, I'll make assurance doubly sure, and then—if it pays me not to tell him I know him, I won't tell him, and if it pays me to tell him,

I will tell him. Just as you choose, my good Mr. Post.' And Tom returned to his work singing an extemporaneous parody of 'We met, 'twas in a crowd,' ending with—

'And thou art the cause of this anguish, my pill box,'

in a howl so doleful, that Mrs. Heale marched into the shop, evidently making up her mind for an explosion.

'I am very sorry, sir, to have to speak to you upon such a subject, but I must say, that the profane songs, sir, which our house is not at all accustomed to them, not to mention that at your time of life, and in your position, sir, as my husband's assistant, though there's no saying' (with a meaning toss of the head) 'how long it may last,'—and there, her gramma having got into a hopeless knot, she stopped.

Tom looked at her cheerfully and fixedly. 'I had been expecting this,' said he to himself. 'Better show the old cat at once that I carry claws as well as she.'

'There is saying, madam, humbly begging your pardon, how long my present engagement will last. It will last just as long as I like.'

Mrs. Heale boiled over with rage, but ere the geyser could explode, Tom had continued in that dogged, nasal Yankee twang which he assumed when he was venomous.

'As for the songs, ma'am, there are two ways of making oneself happy in this life, you can judge for yourself which is best. One is to do one's work like a man, and hum a tune, to keep one's spirits up, the other is to let the work go to rack and ruin, and keep one's spirits up, if one is a gentleman, by a little too much brandy, if one is a lady, by a little too much laudanum.'

'Laudanum, you?' almost screamed Mrs. Heale, turning pale as death.

'The pint bottle of best laudanum, which I had from town a fortnight ago, ma'am, is now nearly empty, ma'am. I will make affidavit that I have not used a hundred drops, or drunk one. I suppose it was the cat. Cats have queer tastes in the West, I believe. I have heard the cat coming downstairs into the surgery, once or twice, after I was in bed, so I set my door ajar a little, and saw her come up again, but whether she had a vial in her paws—'

'Oh, sir!' says Mrs. Heale, bursting into tears. 'And after the dreadful toothache which I have had this fortnight, which nothing but a little laudanum would ease it, and at my time of life, to mock a poor elderly lady's infirmities, which I did not look for this cruelty and outrage!'

'Dry your tears, my dear madam,' says Tom, in his most winning tone. 'You will always find me the thorough gentleman, I am sure. If I had not been one, it would have been easy enough for me, with my powerful London connections, - though I won't boast, - to get up in opposition to your good husband, instead of saving him labour in his good old age. Only, my dear madam, how shall I get the laudanum-

bottle refilled without the doctor's—you understand?

The wretched old woman hurried upstairs, and brought him down a half-sovereign out of her private hoard, trembling like an aspen leaf, and departed.

'So—scotched, but not killed. You'll gossip and he too. Never trust a landlamm drinker. You'll see me, by the eye of imagination, committing all the seven deadly sins, and by the tongue of inspiration go forth and proclaim the same at the town-head. I can't kill you, and I can't cure you, so I must endure you. What said old Goethe, in all the German I ever cared to recollect—

"Der Wallfisch hat doch seine Lais,
Muss auch die meine haben."

'Now, then, for Mrs Ponberthy's draughts. I wonder how that pretty schoolmistress goes on. If she were but honest, now, and had fifty thousand pounds why then, she wouldn't marry me, and so why now, I wouldn't marry she,—as my native Berkshire grammar would render it.'

CHAPTER VII

LA CORDIFIANNA

THIS chapter shall begin good reader, with one of those startling bursts of 'illustration,' with which our most popular preachers are wont now to astonish and edify their hearers, and after starting with them at the opening of the sermon from the north pole, the Crystal Palace, or the nearest cabbage-garden, float them safe, upon the gushing stream of oratory, to the safe and well-known shores of doctrinal commonplaces, lost in admiration at the skill of the good man who can thus make all roads lead, if not to heaven, at least to strong language about its opposite. True, the logical sequence of their periods may be, like that of the coming one, somewhat questionable, reminding one at moments of Eucliden's comparison between Macedon and Monmouth, Henry the Fifth and Alexander. But, in the logic of the pulpit, all's well that end's well, and the end must needs sanctify the means. There is, of course, some connection or other between all things in heaven and earth, or how would the universe hold together? And if one has not time to find out the true connection, what is left but to invent the best one can for one's self? Thus argues, probably, the popular preacher, and fills his pews, proving thereby clearly the excellence of his method. So argue also, probably, the popular poets, to whose 'luxuriant fauney' everything suggests anything, and thought plays leap-frog with thought down one page and up the next, till one fancies at moments that they had got permission from the higher powers, before looking at the universe, to stir it all up a few times with a spoon. It is notorious, of course,

that poets and preachers alike pride themselves upon this method of astonishing, that the former call it, 'seeing the infinite in the finite', the latter, 'pressing secular matters into the service of the sanctuary,' and other pretty phrases which, for reverence' sake, shall be omitted. No doubt they have their reasons and their reward. The style takes, the style pays, and what more would you have? Let them go on rejoicing, in spite of the cynical podants in the *Saturday Review*, who dare to accuse (will it be believed?) those luminaries of the age of talking merely irreverent nonsense. Meanwhile, so evident is the success (sole test of merit) which has attended the new method, that it is worth while trying whether it will not be as taking in the novel as it is in the chapel, and therefore the reader is requested to pay special attention to the following paragraph, modelled carefully after the exordiums of a famous Irish preacher, now drawing crowded houses at the West End of Town. As thus—'It is the pleasant month of May, when, as in old Chaucer's time, the—

"Smale foules maken melodie,
That sleepen alle night with open eye
So priketh hem nature in their songes.
Then longen folk to go on pilgrimages,
And specially from every shire a end
Of Englond, to Exeter hall they wend,"

till the low places of the Strand blossom with white cravats, those hills of the valley, types of meekness and humility, at least in the pious palmer—and why not of similar virtues in the undertaker, the concert-singer, the grocer, the tavern-writer, the roustabout at the gaming-table, and Frederick Augustus Lord Scouthlash, who, white cravated like the rest, is just getting into his cab at the door of the Never-mind-what Theatre, to spend an hour at Kensington before sauntering in to Lady M—'s ball?

Why not, I ask, at least in the case of little Scouthlash? For Guardsman though he is coming from a theatre and going to a ball, there is meekness and humility in him at this moment, as well as in the average of the white-cravated gentlemen who trotted along that same pavement about eleven o'clock this forenoon. Why should not his white cravat, like theirs, be held symbolic of that fact? However, Scouthlash belongs rather to the former than the latter of Chaucer's categories, for a 'smale foule' he is, a little bad-like fellow, who maketh melodie also, and warbles like a cock-rolan, we cannot liken him to any more dignified songster. Moreover, he will sleep all night with open eye, for he will not be in bed till five to-morrow morning, and pricked he is, and that sorely, in his courage, for he is as much in love as his little nature can be with the new actress, La Signora Cordifiamina, of the Never-mind-what Theatre.

How exquisitely, now (for this is one of the rare occasions in which a man is permitted to praise himself), is established hereby an unexpected bond of linked sweetness long drawn out between things which had, ere they came beneath

the magic touch of genius, no more to do with each other than this book has with the Stock Exchange. Who would have dreamed of travelling from the Tabard in Southwark to the last new singer, *vid Eveter-hall* and the lilies of the valley, and touching *en passant* on two cardinal virtues and an Irish Viscount? But see, given only a little impudence, and less logic, and hey presto! the thing is done, and all that remains to be done is to dilute (as the Rev Dionysius O'Blaraway would do at this stage of the process) upon the moral question which has been so cunningly raised, and to inquire, firstly, how the virtues of meekness and humility could be predicated of Frederick Augustus St Just, Viscount Scoutbush and Baron Torytown, in the peerage of Ireland, and secondly, how those virtues were called into special action by his questionably wise attachment to a new actress, to whom he had never spoken a word in his life.

First, then, 'Little Freddy Scoutbush,' as his compoers irreverently termed him, was, by common consent of her Majesty's Guards, a 'good fellow.' Whether the St James' Street definition of that adjective be the perfect one or not, we will not stay to inquire, but in the Guards' club-house it meant this: that Scoutbush had not an enemy in the world, because he deserved none, that he lent, and borrowed not, gave, and asked not again, carried not, hustled not, slandered not, never bore malice, never said a cruel word, never played a dirty trick, would bear a fellow's troubles out to the end, and if he could not counsel, at least would not laugh at them, and at all times and in all places lived and let live, and was accordingly a general favourite. His morality was neither better nor worse than the average of his companions, but if he was sensual, he was at least not base, and there were frail women who blessed 'little Freddy,' and his shy and secret generosity, for having saved them from the lowest pit.

As regards, he was idle, frivolous, useless, but with those two palliating facts, that he knew it and regretted it, and that he never had a chance of being nught else. His father and mother had died when he was a child. He had been sent to Eton at seven, where he learnt nothing, and into the Guards at seventeen, where he learnt less than nothing. His aunt, old Lady Knockdown, who was a kind old Irish woman, an ex-blue and ex-beauty, now a high evangelical professor, but as worldly as her neighbours in practice, had tried to make him a good boy in old times, but she had given him up, long before he left Eton, as a 'vessel of wrath' (which he certainly was, with his hot Irish temper), and since then she had only spoken of him with moans, and to him just as if he and she had made a compact to be as worldly as they could, and as if the fact that he was going, as she used to tell her private friends, straight to the wrong place, was to be utterly ignored before the pressing reality of getting him and his sisters well married. And so it befell that Lady Knockdown, like many more, having begun with too high

(or at least precise) a spiritual standard, was forced to end practically in having no standard at all, and that, for ten years of Scoutbush's life, neither she nor any other human being had spoken to him as if he had a soul to be saved, or any duty on earth save to eat, drink, and be merry.

And all the while there was a quaint and pathetic consciousness in the little man's heart that he was meant for something better, that he was no fool, and was not intended to be one. He would thrust his head into lectures at the Polytechnic and the British Institution, with a dim endeavour to guess what they were all about, and a good-natured envy of the clever fellows who knew about 'science, and all that.' He would sit and listen, puzzled and admiring, to the talk of statesmen, and could do his own alterations to some chum. 'Ah, if I had had the chance now that my cousin Chalkleton has! If I had had two or three tutors, and a good mother, too, keeping me in a coop, and cramming me with learning, as they cram chickens for the market, & fancy I could have shown my comb and wattles in the House as well as some of them. I fancy I could make a speech in parliament now, with the help of a little Irish impudence, if I only knew anything to speak about.'

So Scoutbush clung, in a childish way, to any superior man who would take notice of him, and not treat him as the fribble which he seemed. He had taken to that well-known artist, Claude Mellot, of late, simply from admiration of his brilliant talk about art and poetry, and boldly confessed that he preferred one of Mellot's orations on the sublime and beautiful, though he didn't understand a word of them, to the songs and jokes (very excellent ones in their way) of Mr Hector Larkaway, the distinguished Irish novelist, and boon companion of her Majesty's Life Guards Green. His special intimate and Mentor, however, was a certain Major Campbell, of whom more hereafter, who, however, being a lofty-minded and perhaps somewhat Pharisaic person, made heavier demands on Scoutbush's conscience than he had yet been able to meet, for fully as he agreed that Hercules's choice between pleasure and virtue was the right one, still he could not yet follow that ancient hero along the thorny path, and confined his conception of 'duty' to the minimum guard and drill. He had estates in Ireland, which had almost cleared themselves during his long minority, but which, since the famine, had cost him about as much as they brought him in, and estates in the West, which, with a Welsh slate-quarry, brought him in some seven or eight thousand a year, and so kept his poor little head above water, to look pitifully round the universe, longing for the life of him to make out what it all meant, and hoping that somebody would come and tell him.

So much for his meekness and humility in general, as for the particular display of those virtues which he has shown to-day, it must be

understood that he has given a promise to Mrs. Mellot not to make love to La Cordithamma, and, on that only condition, has been allowed to meet her to-night at one of Claude Mellot's *petits soupers*.

La Cordithamma has been staying, ever since she came to England, with the Mellots in the wilds of Brompton, unapproachable there, as in all other places. In public, she is a very Zenobia, who keeps all animals of the other sex at an awful distance, and of the fifty young puppies who are raving about her beauty, her air, and her voice, not one has obtained an introduction, while Claude, whose studio used to be a favorite lounge of young Guardsmen, has, as civilly as he can, closed his doors to those magnificent personages ever since the new singer became his guest.

Claude Mellot seems to have come into a fortune of late years, large enough, at least, for his few wants. He paints no longer, save when he chooses, and has taken a little old house in one of those back lanes of Brompton, where islands of painted nursery garden still remain undevoured by the advancing wings of the brick and mortar deluge. There he lives, happy in a green lawn, and windows opening thereon, in three rhos, a cork, an alex, and a mulberry, with a great standard pear, for flower and foliage the queen of all suburban trees. There he lies on the lawn, upon strange skins, the summer's day, playing with cats and dogs, and making love to his Sabina, who has not lost her beauty in the least, though she is on the wrong side of five-and-thirty. He deludes himself, too, into the belief that he is doing something, because he is writing a treatise on the 'Principles of Beauty', which will be published, probably, about the time the *Thaïs* is pulled, in the season of latter Lammis and the Greek Kalends, and the more certainly so, because he has wandered into the abyss of comic sections and caricatures of double curvature, of which, if the truth must be spoken, he knows no more than his friends of the *late Guards Green*.

To this charming little nest his Lord Scoutbush procured an evening's admission after ardent supplication to Sabina, who pets him because he is musical, and solemn promises neither to talk nor look any manner of foolishness.

'My dearest Mrs. Mellot,' says the poor wretch, 'I will be good, indeed I will, I will not even speak to her. Only let me sit and look,—and—and,—why, I thought you understood all about such things, and could pity a poor fellow who was spoony.'

And Sabina, who prides herself much on understanding such things, and on having, indeed, reduced them to a science in which she gives gratuitous lessons to all young gentlemen and ladies of her acquaintance, receives him pityingly, in that delicious little back drawing-room, whither whosoever enters is in no hurry to go out again.

Claude's house is arranged with his usual defiance of all conventionalities. Dining or

drawing-room proper there is none; the large front room is the studio, where he and Sabina eat and drink, as well as work and paint, but out of it opens a little room, the walls of which are so covered with gems of art (where the rogue finds money to buy them as a puzzle) that the eye can find nowhere without taking in some new beauty, and wandering on from picture to statue, from portrait to landscape, dreaming and learning afresh after every glance. At the back, a glass bay has been thrown out, and forms a little conservatory, for ever fresh and gay with tropic ferns and flowers, gaudy orchids dangle from the roof, creepers hide the framework, and you hardly see where the room ends and the winter-garden begins, and in the centre an ottoman invites you to lounge. It costs Claude money, doubtless, but he has his excuse.

'Having once seen the tropics, I cannot live without some love-tokens from their lost paradises, and such is the wiser plan, to spend money on a horse and hrougham, which we don't care to use, and on scrambling into society at the price of one great stupid party a year, or to make our little world as pretty as we can, and let those who wish to see us take us as they find us.'

In this 'nest,' as Claude and Sabina call it, sacred to the everlasting billing and cooing of that sweet little pair of human love-birds who have built it, was supper set. La Cordithamma, all the more beautiful from the languor produced by the excitement of acting, lay on a sofa, Claude attended, talking earnestly, Sabina, according to her custom, was fluttering in and out, and arranging supper with her own hands, both husband and wife were as busy as bees, and yet any one accustomed to watch the little ins and outs of married life, could have seen that neither sought for a moment that the other was in the room, but basked and purred, like two blessed cats, each in the sunshine of the other's presence, and he could have seen, too, that La Cordithamma was divining their thoughts, and studying all their little expressions, perhaps that she might use them on the stage, perhaps, too, happy in sympathy with their happiness, and yet there was a shade of sadness on her forehead.

Scoutbush enters, is introduced, and receives a salutation from the actress, haughty and cold enough to check the forwardest, puts on the air of languid nonchalance which is considered (or was before the little experiences of the *Cinna*) fit and proper for young gentlemen of rank and fashion. So he sits down, and casts his foolish eyes upon his idol, hoping for a few words before the evening is over. Did I not say well, then, that there was as much meekness and humility under Scoutbush's white cravat as under others? But his little joy is soon dashed, for the black boy announces (seemingly much to his own pleasure) a tall personage, whom, from his dress and his moustachio, Scoutbush takes for a Frenchman, till he hears him called Stangrave. The intruder is introduced to Lord

Scoutbush, which ceremony is consummated by a microscopic nod on either side, he then walks straight up to La Cordifiamma, and Scoutbush sees her cheeks flush as he does so. He takes her hand, speaks to her in a low voice, and sits down by her, Claude making room for him, and the two engaged earnestly in conversation.

Scoutbush is much mollified to walk out of the room, was he brought there to see that? Of course, however, he sits still, keeps his own counsel, and makes himself agreeable enough all the evening, like a good-natured kind-hearted little man, as he is. Whereby he is repaid, for the conversation soon becomes deep, and even too deep for him, and he is fain to drop out of the race, and leave it to his idol and to the woman, who seems to have seen, and done, and read everything in heaven and earth, and probably bought everything also, not to mention it if he would be happy to sell the said universe again, at a very cheap price, if any one would kindly take it off his hands. Not that he boasts, or takes any undue share of the conversation, he is evidently too well-bred for that, but every sentence shows an acquaintance with facts of which Eton has told Scoutbush nothing, the barrack-room less, and after which he still craves, the good little fellow, in a very honest way, and would soon have learnt, had he had a chance, for of native Irish shrewdness he had no lack.

'Poor Flake was half mad about you, signora, in the stage-box to-night,' said Sabina. 'He says that he shall not sleep till he has painted you.'

'Do let him!' cried Scoutbush. 'What a picture he will make!'

'He may paint a picture, but not me, it is quite enough, Lord Scoutbush, to be some one else for two hours every night, without going down to posterity as some one else for ever. If I am painted, I will be painted by no one who cannot represent my very self.'

'You are right,' said Staungrave, 'and you will do the man himself good by refusing, he has some notion still of what a portrait ought to be. If he once begins by attempting passing expressions of passion, which is all stage portraits can give, he will find them so much easier than honest representations of character, that he will end, where all our moderns seem to do, in merest melodrama.'

'Explain!' said she.

'Portrait painters now depend for their effect on the mere accidents of *enlourage*, on dress, on landscape, even on broad hints of a man's occupation, putting a plan on the engineer's table, and a roll in the statesman's hands, like the old Greek who wrote "this is an ox" under his picture. If they wish to give the face expression, though they seldom aim so high, all they can compass is a passing emotion, and the sitter goes down to posterity with an eternal frown, another with an eternal smile.'

'Or, if he be a poet,' said Sabina, 'rolls his eye for ever in a fine frenzy.'

'But would you forbid them to paint passion?'

'Not in its place, when the picture gives the causes of the passion, and the scene tells its own story. But then let us not have merely Kean as Hamlet, but Hamlet's self, let the painter sit down and conceive for himself a Hamlet, such as Shakespeare conceived, not merely give us as much of him as could be pressed at a given moment into the face of Mr Kean. He will be only unjust to both actor and character. If Flake paints Marie as Lady Macbeth, he will give us neither her nor Lady Macbeth, but only the single point at which then two characters can coincide.'

'How rude!' said Sabina, laughing, 'what is he doing but hinting that La Signora's conception of Lady Macbeth is a very partial and imperfect one?'

'And why should it not be?' asked the actress, humbly enough.

'I meant,' he answered warmly, 'that there was more, far more, in her than in any character which she assumes, and I do not want a painter to copy only one aspect, and let a part go down to posterity as a representation of the whole.'

'If you mean that, you shall be forgiven. No, when she is painted, she shall be painted as herself, as she is now. Claude shall paint her.'

'I have not known La Signora long enough,' said Claude, 'to aspire to such an honour. I paint no face which I have not studied for a year.'

'Faith!' said Scoutbush, 'you would find no more in most faces at the year's end, than you did the first day.'

'Then I would not paint them. If I paint a portrait, which I seldom do, I wish to make it such a one as the old masters aimed at, to give the sum total of the whole character, traces of every emotion, if it were possible, and glances of every expression which have passed over it since it was born into the world. They are all here, the whole past and future of the man, and every man, as the Mohammedans say, carries his destiny on his forehead.'

'But who has eyes to see it?'

'The old masters had, some of them at least. Raphael had, Sebastian del Piombo had, and Titian, and Giorgione. There are portraits painted by them which carry a whole life-history concentrated into one moment.'

'But they,' said Staungrave, 'are the portraits of men such as they saw around them, natures who were strong for good and evil, who were not ashamed to show their strength. Where will a painter find such among the poor, thin, unable mortals who come to him to buy immortality at a hundred and fifty guineas apiece, after having spent their lives in religiously rubbing off their angles against each other, and forming their characters, as you form shot, by shaking them together in a bag till they have polished each other into dullest uniformity?'

'It's very true,' said Scoutbush, who suffered much at times from a certain wild Irish vein, which started him up to kick over the traces. 'People are horribly like each other, and if a

poor fellow is bored, and tries to do anything spivoy or original, he has half a dozen people pook-pooking him down on the score of bad taste.

'Men can be just as original now as ever,' said La Signora, 'if they had but the courage, oven the insight. Heroic souls in old times had no more opportunities than we have, but they used them. There were daring deeds to be done then—are there none now? Sacrifices to be made—are there none now? Wrongs to be redressed—are there none now? Let any one set his heart, in these days, to do what is right, and nothing else, and it will not be long ere his brow is stamped with all that goes to make up the herculean expression—with noble indignation, noble self-restraint, great hopes, great sorrows, perhaps, even, with the print of the martyr's crown of thorns.'

She looked at Stangrave as she spoke, with an expression which Scoutbush tried in vain to read. The American made no answer, and seemed to hang his head awhile. After a minute he said tenderly

'You will tire yourself if you talk thus, after the evening's fatigue. Mrs. Mellot will sing to us, and give us leisure to think over our lesson.'

And Sabina sang, and then Lord Scoutbush was made to sing, and sang his best, no doubt.

So the evening slipped on, till it was past eleven o'clock, and Stangrave rose. 'And now,' said he, 'I must go to Lady M——'s ball, and Maria must rest.'

As he went, he just leaned over La Cordhamma.

'Shall I come in to-morrow evening? We ought to read over that scene together before the rehearsal.'

'Early then or Sabina will be gone out, and she must play saute-rete to our hero and heroine.'

'You will rest? Mrs. Mellot, you will see that she does not sit up?'

'It is not very polite to rob us of her, as soon as you cannot enjoy her yourself.'

'I must take care of people who do not take care of themselves,' and Stangrave departed.

Great was Scoutbush's wrath when he saw Maria rise and obey orders. 'Who was this man? what right had he to command her?'

He asked as much of Sabina the moment La Cordhamma had retired.

'Are you not going to Lady M——'s too?'

'No, that is, I won't go yet, not till you have explained all this to me.'

'Explained what?' asked Sabina, looking as demure as a little brown mouse.

'Why, what did you ask me here for?'

'Lord Scoutbush should recollect that he asked himself.'

'You cruel venomous creature! do you think I would have come, if I had known that I was to see another man making love to her before my very eyes? I could kill the fellow, who is he?'

'A New York merchant, unworthy of your aristocratic powder and ball.'

'The confounded Yankee!' muttered Scoutbush.

'If people swear in my house, I fine them a dozen of kid gloves. Did you not promise me that you would not make love to her yourself?'

'Well—but it is too cruel of you, before my very eyes.'

'I saw no love-making to-night.'

'None? Were you blind?'

'Not in the least, but you cannot well see a thing making which has been made long ago.'

'What? Is he her husband?'

'No.'

'Engaged to her?'

'No.'

'What then?'

'Don't you know already that this is a house of mystery, full of mysterious people? I tell you this only, that if she ever marries any one, she will marry him, and that if I can, I will make her.'

'Then you are my enemy after all.'

'I? Do you think that Sabina Mellot can see a young viscount loose upon the universe, without trying to make up a match for him? No, I have such a prize for you—young, handsome, better educated than any woman whom you will meet to-night. Tina, who is a Manchester girl, but then she has eighty thousand pounds.'

'Eighty thousand noughts? I'd sooner have that divine creature without a penny, than'

'And would my lord viscount so far debase himself as to marry an actress?'

'Humph! Faith, my grandmother was an actress, and we St. Justs are none the worse for that fact, as far as I can see, and certainly none the uglier the women at least. Oh Sabina, Mrs. Mellot, I mean—only help me this once.'

'This once? Do you intend to marry by my assistance this time, and by your own the next? How many viscountesses are there to be?'

'Don't laugh at me, you cruel woman, you don't know, you fancy that I am not in love,' and the poor fellow began pouring out these confessions, which one has heard too often to take the trouble of repeating, and yet which are real enough, and pathetic too, for in every man, however frivolous, or even worthless, love calls up to the surface the real heroism, the real depth of character—all the more deep because common to poet and philosopher, guardian and country clod.

'I'll leave town to-morrow! I'll go to the Land's-end—to Norway, to Africa—'

'And forget her in the bliss of hum-bunting.'

'Don't, I tell you, here I will not stay to be driven mad. To think that she is here, and that hateful Yankee at her elbow! I'll go—'

'To Lady M——'s ball?'

'No, confound it, to meet that fellow there! I should quarrel with him, as sure as there is hot Irish blood in my veins. The self-satisfied puppy! to be flirting and strutting there, while such a creature as that is lying thinking of him.'

'Would you have him shut himself up in his

hotel, and write poetry, or walk the streets all night, sighing at the moon ?'

'No, but the cool way in which he went off himself, and sent her to bed. Confound him ! commanding her. It made my blood boil.'

'Claude, get Lord Scoutbush some real soda-water.'

'If you laugh at me, I'll never speak to you again.'

'Oh buy any of Claude's pictures !'

'Why do you torment me so ? I'll go, I say leave town to-morrow—only I can't with this horrid depot work ! What shall I do ? It's too cruel of you, while Campbell is away in Iceland, too, and I have not a soul but you to ask advice of, for Valentinia is as great a goose as I am,' and the poor little fellow buried his hands in his curls, and stared fiercely into the fire, as if to draw from thence omens of his love, by the apocalyptic augury of the ancient Greeks, while Sabina tripped up and down the room, putting things to rights for the night, and enjoying his torments as a cat does those of the mouse between her paws, and yet not out of spite, but from pure and simple fun.

Sabina is one of those charming bodies who knows everybody's business, and manages it. She lives in a world of intrigue, but without a thought of intriguing for her own benefit. She has always a match to make, a dissatisfactory lover to comfort, a young artist to bring forward, a refugee to conceal, a misadventurer to get out of a scrape, and, like David in the mountains, 'every one that is discontented, and every one that is in debt, gather themselves to her.' The strongest people, on the strongest grounds, run over each other in that cosy little nest of hers. Fine ladies with over-full hearts, and merely gentleman with over-empty pockets, push each other at her door, and she has a smile, and a repartee, and good, cunning, practical wisdom for each and every one of them, and then dismisses them to hush and coo with Claude, and laugh over everybody and everything. The only price which she demands for her services is, to be allowed to laugh, and if that be permitted, she will be as busy, and earnest, and tender, as Saint Elizabeth herself. 'I have no children of my own,' she says, 'so I just make everybody my children, Claude included, and play with them, and laugh at them, and pet them, and help them out of their scrapes, just as I should if they were in my own nursery.' And so it is all that she is every one's confidante, and though every one seems on the point of taking liberties with her, yet no one does, partly because they are in her power, and partly because, like an Eastern sultana, she carries a pom-pom, and can use it, though only in self-defence. So if great people, or small people (either who can give themselves airs as well as their betters), take her plain speaking unkindly, she just speaks a little more plainly, once for all, and goes off smiling to some one else, as a humming bird, if a flower has no honey in it,

whirls away, with a saucy flirt of its pretty little tail, to the next branch on the bush.

'I must know more of this American,' said Scoutbush, at last.

'Well, he would be very improving company for you, and I know you like improving company.'

'I mean—what has he to do with her ?'

'That is just what I will not tell you. One thing I will tell you, though, for it may help to quench any vain hopes on your part, and that is, the reason which she gives for not marrying him.'

'Well ?'

'Because he is an idler.'

'What would she say of me, then ?' groaned Scoutbush.

'Very true, for, you must understand, this Mr Stangrave is not what you or I should call an idle man. He has travelled over half the world, and made the best use of his eyes. He has filled his house in New York, they say, with gems of art gathered from every country in Europe. He is a finished scholar, talks half a dozen different languages, sings, draws, writes poetry, reads hard every day at every subject, from gardening to German metaphysics, altogether, one of the most highly cultivated men I know, and quite an Admirable Crichton in his way.'

'Then why does she call him an idler ?'

'Because, she says, he has no great purpose in life. She will marry no one who will not devote himself, and all he has, to some great, chivalrous, heroic enterprise, whose one object is to be of use, even if he has to sacrifice his life to it. She says that there must be such men still left in the world, and that when she finds one, she will marry, and no one else.'

'Why, there are none such to be found nowadays, I thought ?'

'You heard what she herself said on that very point.'

There was a silence for a minute or two. Scoutbush had heard, and was pondering it in his heart. At last—

'I am not out out for a hero, so I suppose I must give her up. But I wish sometimes I could be of use, Mrs Mellot, but what can a fellow do ?'

'I thought there was an Irish mannantry to be looked after, my lord, and a Cornish tenantry too.'

'That's what Campbell is always saying, but what more can I do than I do ? As for those poor Paddies, I never ask them for rent, if I did, I should not get it, so there is no generosity in that. And as for the Aherlva people, they have got on very well without me for twenty years, and I don't know them, nor what they want, nor even if they do want anything, except fish enough, and I can't put more fish into the sea, Mrs. Mellot !'

'Try and be a good soldier, then,' said she, laughing. 'Why should not Lord Scoutbush emulate his illustrious countryman, conquer at a second Waterloo, and die a duke ?'

'I'm not cut out for a general, I am afraid, but if—I don't say if I could marry that woman—I suppose it would be a foolish thing—though I shall break my heart, I believe, if I do not. Oh, Mrs. Mellot, you cannot tell what a fool I have made myself about her, and I cannot help it! It's not her beauty merely, but there is something so noble in her face, like one of those Greek goddesses (Canda talks of, and when she is sitting, if she has to say anything grand or generous—or you know the sort of thing,—she brings it out with such a voice, and such a look, from the very bottom of her heart,—it makes me shudder, just as she did when she told that Yankee that every one could be a hero, or a martyr, if he chose. Mrs. Mellot, I am sure she is one, or she could not look and speak as she does.'

'She is one,' said Sabina, 'a heroine and a martyr too.'

'If I could, that was what I was going to say, if I could but win that woman's respect—as I live, I ask no more, only to be sure she didn't despise me. I'd do—I don't know what I wouldn't do—I'd—I'd study the art of war. I know there are books about it. I'd get out to the East, away from this depot work, and if there is no fighting there, as every one says there will not be, I'd go into a marching regiment, and see service. I'd—hang it if they'd have me—I'd even go to the senior department at Sandhurst, and read mathematics!'

Sabina kept her countenance (though with difficulty) at this magnificent bathos, for she saw that the little man was really in earnest, and that the looks and words of the strange actress had awakened in him something far deeper and nobler than the mere sensual passion of a boy.

'Ah, if I had but gone out to Varina with the rest! I thought myself a lucky fellow to be left here.'

'Do you know that it is getting very late?'

So Frederick Lord Scotchbush went home to his rooms, and there sat for three hours and more with his feet on the fender rejecting the entreaties of Mr. Bowie, his servant, either to have something, or to go to bed, yea, he forgot even to smoke, by which Mr. Bowie 'jealous' that he was hit very hard indeed—but made no remark, being a Scotchman, and of a cautious temperament.

However, from that night Scotchbush was a changed man, and tried to be so. He read of nothing but sieges and stockades, brigade evolutions, and conical bullets, he drilled his men till he was an abomination in their eyes, and a weariness to their flesh, only every evening he went to the theatre, watched La Cordiliumina with a heavy heart, and then went home to bed; for the little man had good sense enough to ask Sabina for no more interviews with her. So in all things he acquitted himself as a model officer, and excited the admiration and respect of Sergeant Major MacArthur, who began fishing

at Bowie to discover the cause of this strange metamorphosis in the rakety little Irishman.

'Your master seems to be qualifying himself for the adjutant's post, Mr. Bowie. I'm jealousing he's fired with martial ardour since the war broke out.'

To which Bowie, being a brother Scot, answered—Scottish, by a crafty paralogism.

'I've always held it as my opinion, that his lordship is a youth of very good parts, if he was only compelled to employ them.'

CHAPTER VIII

TAKING HOOT

WHOEVER enjoys the sight of an honest man doing his work well, would have enjoyed the sight of Tom Thumall for the next month. Indoors all the morning, and out of doors all the afternoon, was that shrewd and good-natured visage, calling up an answering smile on every face, and leaving every heart a little lighter than he found it. Amazing enough it was, alike to Heale and to Headley, how Tom captivated, as if by magic, to gain every one's good word, their own included. For Frank, in spite of Tom's questionable opinions, had already made all but a convert of the doctor, and Heale, in spite of envy and suspicion, could not deny that the young man was a very valuable young man, if he wasn't given so much to those new-fangled notions of the profession.

By which time Heale indicated the, to him astounding fact, that Tom charged the patients as little, instead of as much as possible, and applying to medicine the principles of an enlightened political economy, tried to increase the demand by cheapening the supply.

'Which is revolutionary doctrine, sir,' said Heale to Lieutenant Jones, over the brandy-and-water, 'and just like what the Cobden and Bright lot used to talk, and have been the ruin of British agriculture, though don't say I said so, because of my Lord Munchampstead. But conceive my feelings, sir, as the father of a family who have my bread to earn, this very morning—in comes old Dame Penaluna (which is good pay I know, and has two hundred and more out on a merchant brig) for something, and what was my feelings, sir, to hear this young party deliver himself—"Well, ma'am," says he, as I am a living man, "I can cure you, if you like, with a dozen bottles of lotion, at eighteenpence a-piece, but if you'll take my advice, you'll buy twopennyworth of alum down street, do what I tell you with it, and cure yourself." It's robbery, sir, I say, all these out-of-the-way cheap dodges, which ain't in the pharmacopoeia, half of them, it's unprofessional, sir—quackery.'

'Tell you what, doctor, robbery or none, I'll go to him to-morrow, d'ye see, if I live as long, for this old ailment of mine. I never told you

of it, old pill and potion, for fear of a swinging bill, but just grinned and hore it, d'yo see.

'There it is again,' cries Heale in despair 'He'll run me.'

'No, he won't, and you know it.'

'What d'yo think he served me last week? A young chap comes in, consumptive, he said, and I dare say he's right—he is uncommonly 'onto about what he calls diagnosis.' Says he, "You ought to try Carragreen moss. It's an old drug, but it's a good one." There was a drawer full of it to his hand, had been lying there any time this ten years. I go to open it but what was my feelings when he took on, as cool as a cucumber, "And there's bushels of it here," says he, "on every rock, so if you'll come down with me at low tide this afternoon, I'll show you the trade, and tell you how to boil it." I thought I should have knocked him down.'

'But you didn't,' said Jones, laughing in every muscle of his body. 'Tell you what, doctor, you've got a treasure, he's just getting back your custom, d'ya see, and when he's done that, he'll lay on the bills sharp enough. Why, I hear he's up at Mrs. Vavason's every day.'

'And not ten shillings' worth of medicine sent up to the house any week.'

'Ho charges for his visits, I suppose.'

'Not he! If you'll believe me, when I asked him if he wasn't going to, he says, says he, that Mrs. Vavason's company was quite payment enough for him.'

'Shows his good taste. Why, what now, Mary?' as the maid opens the door.

'Mr. Thurnall wants Mr. Heale.'

'Always wanting me,' groans Heale, hugging his glass, 'driving me about like any negro slave. Tell him to come in.'

'Here, doctor,' says the lieutenant, 'I want you to prescribe for me, if you'll do it gratis, d'yo see. Take some brandy-and-water.'

'Good advice costs nothing,' says Tom, hilling.

'Mr. Heale, read that letter.'

And the lieutenant details his ailments, and their supposed cause, till Heale has the pleasure of hearing Tom answer—

'Fiddlesticks! That's not what's the matter with you. I'll cure you for half a crown, and toss you up double or quits.'

'Oh!' groans Heale, as he spells away over the letter,—

'Lord Minchampstead having been informed by Mr. Armsworth that Mr. Thurnall is now in the neighbourhood of his estates of Pentremoechyn, would feel obliged to him at his earliest convenience to examine into the sanitary state of the cottages thereon, which are said to be much haunted by typhus and other epidemics, and to send him a detailed report, indicating what he thinks necessary for making them thoroughly healthy. Mr. Thurnall will be so good as to make his own charge.'

'Well, Mr. Thurnall, you ought to turn a good penny by this,' said Heale, half envious of Tom's coimection, half contemptuous at his supposed indifference to gain.

'I'll charge what it's worth,' said Tom. 'Meanwhile, I hope you're going to see Miss Beer to-night.'

'Couldn't you just go yourself, my dear sir? It is so late.'

'No, I never go near young women. I told you so at first, and I stick to my rule. You'd better go, sir, on my word, or if she's dead before morning, don't say it's my fault.'

'Did you ever hear a poor old man so tyrannised over?' said Heale, as Tom coolly went into the passage, brought in the old man's greatcoat and hat, arrayed him, and manched him out, civilly but firmly.

'Now, lieutenant, I've half an hour to spare, let's have a jolly chat about the West Indies.'

And Tom began with anecdote and joke, and the old seaman laughed till he cried, and went to bed vowing that there never was such a pleasant fellow on earth, and he ought to be physician to Queen Victoria.

Up at five the next morning, the indefatigable Tom had all his work done by ten, and was preparing to start for Pentremoechyn ere Heale was out of bed, when a customer came in who kept him half an hour.

He was a tall broad-shouldered young man, with a red face, protruding bull's eyes, and a moustachio. He was dressed in a complete suit of pink and white plaid, cut jauntily enough. A bright blue cap, a thick gold watch-chain, three or four large rings, a dog-whistle from his buttonhole, a fancy cane in his hand, and a little Oxford meershaum in his mouth, completed his equipment. He lounged in, with an air of careless superiority, while Tom, who was behind the counter, cutting up his day's provision of honey-dew, eyed him curiously.

'Who are you, now? A gentleman? Not quite, I guess. Some squire of the parts adjacent, and look in somewhat of a crapulo-connatose state moreover. I wonder if you are the great Trebooze, of Trebooze.'

'I say,' yawned the young gentleman, 'where's old Heale?' and an oath followed the speech, as it did every other one herein recorded.

'The plying half of old Heale is in bed, and I'm his working half. Can I do anything for you?'

'Cool hah,' thought the customer. 'I say what have you got there?'

'Australian honey dew. Did you ever smoke it?'

'I've heard of it, let's see,' and Mr. Trebooze—for it was he—put his hand across the counter inadvertently, and clawed up some.

'Didn't know you sold tobacco here. Prime stuff. Too strong for me, though, this morning, somehow.'

'Ah! A lil 'e too much claret last night? I thought so. We'll set that right in five minutes.'

'Eh? How did you guess that?' asked Trebooze, with a larger oath than usual.

'Oh, we doctors are men of the world,' said

Tom, in a cheerful and insinuating tone, as he mixed his man a draught.

'You doctors? You're a cock of a different hackle from old Heale, then.'

'I trust so,' said Tom.

'By George, I feel better already. I say, you're a trump, I suppose you're Heale's new partner, the man who was washed ashore?'

Tom nodded assent.

'I say—how do you sell that honey-dew?'

'I don't sell it, I'll give you as much as you like, only you shan't smoke it till after dinner.'

'Shan't I?' said Trebooze, testy and proud.

'Not with my leave, or you'll be complaining two hours hence that I'm a humbug, and have done you no good. Get on your horse, and have four hours' gallop on the downs, and you'll feel like a buffalo bull by two o'clock.'

Trebooze looked at him with a stupid curiosity and a little awe. He saw that Tom's cold self-possession was not meant for impudence, and something in his tone and manner told him that the boast of being 'a man of the world' was not idle. And of all kinds of men, a man of the world was the man of whom Trebooze stood most in awe. A small squreem, cursed with six or seven hundreds a year of his own, never sent to school, college, or into the army, he had grown up in a narrow circle of squreems like himself, without an object save that of gratifying his animal passions, and had about six years before, being then just of age, settled in life by marrying his housemaid—the only wise thing, perhaps, he ever did. For she, a clever and determined woman, kept him, though not from drunkenness and debt, at least from delirious trappings and ruin, and was, in her rough, vulgar way, his guardian angel—such a one, at least, as he was worthy of. More than once has one seen the same seeming folly turn out in practice as wise a step as could well have been taken, and the coarse nature of the man, which would have criminal and ill-used a delicate and high-minded wife, subsided to some thing like decency by a help literally meet for it.

There was a pause. Trebooze fancied, and wisely, that the doctor was a cleverer man than he, and of course would want to show it. So, after the fashion of a country squreem, he felt a longing to 'set him down.' 'He's been a traveller, they say,' thought he in that pugnacious, sceptical spirit which is bred, not, as twaddlers fancy, by too extended knowledge, but by the sense of ignorance and a narrow sphere of thought, which makes a man angry and ominous of any one who has seen more than he.

'Buffalo bulls?' said he, half contemptuously, 'what do you know about buffalo bulls?'

'I was one once myself,' said Tom, 'where I lived before.'

Treboozeswore. 'Don't you put your traveller's lies on me, sir.'

'Well, perhaps I dreamt it,' said Tom placidly, 'I remember I dreamt at the same time that

you were a grizzly bear, fourteen feet long, and wanted to eat me up, but you found me too tough about the hump ribs.'

Trebooze stared at his audacity.

'You're a rum hand.'

To which Tom made answer in the same elegant strain, and then began a regular word battle of slang, in which Tom showed himself so really witty and apropos, that Mr Trebooze laughed himself into good humour, and ended by

'I say, you're a good fellow, and I think you and I shall suit.'

Tom had his doubts, but did not express them. 'Come up this afternoon and see my child,' Mrs. Trebooze thinks it's got swelled glands, or some such woman's nonsense. Better them, why can't they let the child alone, fussing and doctoring, and she will have you. Heard of you from Mrs. Vavasour, I believe. Our doctor and I have quarrelled, and she said, if I could get you, she'd sooner have you than that old rum-punchoon Heale. And then you'd better stop and take pot-luck, and we'll make a night of it.'

'I have to go round Lord Muchmunchstead's estates, and will take you on my way, but I'm afraid I shall be too dirty to have the pleasure of dining with Mrs. Trebooze coming back.'

'Mrs. Trebooze! She won't take what I like, and what's good enough for me is good enough for her, I hope. Come as you are—Jubilee hall at Trebooze,' and out he swaggered.

'Does he loilly her?' thought Tom, 'or is he hen-picked, and wants to hulo it? I'll see to-night, and play my cards accordingly.'

All which Miss Heale had heard. She had been peeping and listening at the glass-door, and her mother also, for no sooner had Trebooze entered the shop, than she had run off to tell her mother the surprising fact, Trebooze's custom having been, for some years past, confined in vain by Heale. So Miss Heale peeped and peeped at a man whom she regarded with delighted curiosity, because he bore the reputation of being 'such a naughty, wicked man!' and 'so very handsome too, and so distinguished as he looks!' said the poor little fool, to whose novel-led imagination Mr Trebooze was an ideal Lothario.

But the surprise of the two dames grew rapidly as they heard Tom's audacity towards the country aristocrat.

'Impudent wretch!' moaned Mrs. Heale to herself. 'He'll drive away an angel if he comes into the shop.'

'Oh, ma! hear how they are going on now. I can't bear it, my dear. This man will be the ruin of us. His manners are those of the pot-house, when the cloven foot is shown, which it's his nature as a child of wrath, and we can't expect otherwise.'

'Oh, ma! do you hear that Mr. Trebooze has asked him to dinner?'

'Nonsense!'

But it was true.

'Well! if there ain't the signs of the end of the world, which is? All the years your poor father has been here, and never so much as send him a hare, and now this young penniless interloper, and he to dine at Treboove off purple and luscious'.

'There is not much of that there, ma, I'm sure they are poor enough for all his pride, and as for her—'

'Yes, my dear, and as for her, though we haven't married squires, my dear, yet we haven't been squires' housemaids, and have adorned our own station, which was good enough for us, and has no need to rise out 'of it, nor ride on Phraoli's chariot-wheels after hithy lincos'.

Miss Heale hated poor Miss Treboove with a bitter hatred, because she dreamed meanly that, but for her, she might have secured Mr Treboove for herself. And though her ambition was now transferred to the unconscious Tom, that need not make any difference in the small amiable feeling.

But that Tom was a most wonderful person, she had no doubt. He had conquered her heart—so she informed herself passionately again and again, as was very necessary, seeing that the passion, having no real life of its own, required a good deal of blowing to keep it alight. Yes, he had conquered her heart, and he was conquering all hearts! It was true. There must be some mystery about him—there should be. And she settled in her novel-bewildered brain that Tom must be a nobleman in disguise—probably a foreign prince, exiled for political offences. Bah! perhaps too many lines have been spent on the poor little fool, but as such fools exist, and people must be as they are, there is no harm in drawing her, and in asking, too. Who will help those young girls of the middle class who, like Miss Heale, are often really less educated than the children of their parents' workmen, sedentary, luxurious, full of petty vanity, gossip, and intrigue, without work, without purpose, except that of getting married to any one who will ask them—bewildering brain and heart with novels, which, after all, one hardly grudges them, in what other means have they of learning that there is any fairer, nobler life possible, at least on earth, than that of the sordid money-getting, often the sordid pelfery and adulteration, which is the atmosphere of their home? Exceptions there are, in thousands, doubtless, and the families of the great city tradesmen stand, of course, on far higher ground, and are often far better educated, and more high-minded, than the fine ladies, their parents' customers. But, till some better plan of education than the boarding-school is devised for them, till our towns shall see something like in kind to, though sounder and soberer in quality than, the high schools of America, till in country villages the ladies who interest themselves about the poor will recollect that the farmers' and tradesmen's daughters are just as much in want of their influence as the charity children, and will yield a far richer

return for their labour, though the one need not interfere with the other, so long will England be full of Miss Heales, fated, when they marry, to bring up sons and daughters as sordid and unwholesome as their mothers.

Tom worked all that day in and out of the Pentrevochlyn cottages, noting down nuisances and dilapidations but his head was full of other thoughts, for he had received, the evening before, news which was to him very important, for more reasons than one. The longer he stayed at Aberlva, the longer he felt inclined to stay. The strange attraction of Graca had, as we have seen, something to do with his purpose, but he saw, too, a good opening for one of those country practices in which he seemed more and more likely to end. At his native Whitbury, he knew, there was no room for a fresh medical man; and gradually he was making up his mind to settle at Aberlva, to buy out Heale, either with his own money (if he recovered it), or with money borrowed from Mark, to bring his father down to live with him, and in that pleasant wild western place, fold his wings after all his wanderings. And therefore certain news which he had obtained the night before was very valuable to him, in that it put a fresh person into his power, and might, if cunningly used, give him a hold upon the ruling family of the place, and on Lord Scouthush himself. He had found out that Lucia and Elsley were unhappy together, and found out, too, a little more than was there to find. He could not, of course, be a month among the gossips of Aberlva, without hearing hints that the great folks at the Court did not always keep their tempers, in of family jars, as of everything else beneath, the great and just law stands true. 'What you do in the closet shall be proclaimed on the lunnetop'.

But the gossips of Aberlva, as women are too often wont to do, had altogether taken the man's side in the quarrel. The reason was, I suppose, that Lucia, conscious of having fallen somewhat in rank, 'held up her head' to Mrs. Treboove and Mrs. Heale (as they themselves expressed it), and to various other little notabilities of the neighbourhood, rather more than she would have done had she married a man of her own class. She was afraid that they might boast of being intimate with her, that they might take to advising and patronising her as an inexperienced young creature, afraid, even, that she might be tempted in some unguarded moment to gossip with them, confide her unhappiness to them, in the blind longing to open her heart to some human being, for there were no resolute gentry of her own rank in the neighbourhood. She was too high-minded to complain much to Clara, and her sister Valentinia was the very last person to whom she would confess that her runaway match had not been altogether successful. So she lived alone and friendless, shrinking into herself more and more, while the vulgar women round mistook her honour for pride, and revenged themselves

accordingly she was an uninteresting fine lady, proud and cross, and Elsley was a martyr 'So handsome and agreeable as he was' (and, to do him justice, he was the former, and he could be the latter when he chose), 'to be tied to that unsuitable, stuck-up woman,' and so forth.

All which Tom had heard, and formed his own opinion thereof which was—

'All very fine, but I flatter myself I know a little what women are made of, and thus I know, that where man and wife quarrel, even if she ends the battle, it is he who has begun it. I never saw a case yet where the man was not the most in fault, and I'll lay my life John Briggs has led her a pretty life what else could one expect of him?'

However, he held his tongue, and kept his eyes open withal whenever he went up to Penrhyn Court, which he had to do very often, for though he had cured the children of their ailments, yet Mrs. Vasavour was perpetually, more or less, unwell, and he could not cure her. Her low spirits, headaches, general want of tone and vitality, puzzled him at first, and would have puzzled him longer, had he not settled with himself that their cause was to be sought in the mind, and not in the body, and at last, gaining courage from certainty, he had hinted as much to Miss Clara the night before, when she came down (as she was very fond of doing) to have a gossip with him in his shop, under the pretence of fetching medicine.

'I don't think I shall send Mrs. Vasavour any more, Miss Clara. There is no use running up a long bill while I do no good, and, what is more, suspect that I can do none, poor lady.' And he gave the girl a look which seemed to say, 'You had better tell me the truth, for I know everything already.'

To which Clara answered by trying to find out how much he did know—but Tom was a cunninger diplomatist than she, and in ten minutes, after having given solemn promises of secrecy, and having, by strong expressions of contempt for Mrs. Heale and the village gossip, made Clara understand that he did not at all take their view of the case, he had pointed out to him across the counter all Clara's long-pent indignation and contempt.

'I never said a word of this to a living soul, sir, I was too proud, for my mistress's sake, to let vulgar people know what we suffered. We don't want any of their pity indeed, but you, sir, who have the feelings of a gentleman, and know what the world is, like ourselves—'

'Take care,' whispered Tom, 'that daughter of Heale's may be listening.'

'I'd pull her hair about her ears if I caught her!' quoth Clara, and then ran on to tell how Elsley 'never kept no hours, nor no accounts either; so that she has to do everything, poor thing, and no thanks either. And never knows when he'll dine, or when he'll breakfast, or when he'll be in, wandering in and out like a madman, and sits up all night, writing his nonsense. And she'll go down twice and three

times a night in the cold, poor dear, to see if he's fallen asleep, and gets abused like a jack-pocket for her pains (which was an exaggeration), and lies in bed all the morning, looking at the flies, and calls after her if his shoes want tying, or his finger aches, as helpless as the babe unborn, and will never do nothing useful himself, not even to hang a picture or move a chair, and grumbles at her if he sees her doing anything, because she ain't listening to his prosodies, and snaps, and worrits, and won't speak to her sometimes for a whole morning, the brute.'

'But is he not fond of his children?'

'Fond? Yes, his way, and small thanks to him, the little angels! To play with 'em when they're good, and tell them cock-and-a-bull fairy-tales—wonder why he likes to put such stuff into their heads—and then send 'em out of the room if they make a noise, because it splits his poor head, and his nerves are so delicate. Wish he had hers, or mine either, Doctor Thurnall, then he'd know what nerves was, in a frail woman, which he uses in both as his negro slaves, or would if I didn't stand up to him pretty sharp now and then, and give him a piece of my mind, which I will do, like the faithful servant in the parable, if he kills me for it, Doctor Thurnall!'

'Does he drink?' asked Tom bluntly.

'He!' she answered, in a tone which seemed to imply that even one masculine vice would have raised him in her eyes. 'He's not man enough, I think, and lives on his slops, and his coffee, and his tapoca, and how's he ever to have any appetite, always a sitting about, heaped up together over his books, with his ribs growing into his backbone? If he'd only go and take his walk, or get a spade and dig in the garden, or anything but then everlasting papers, which I hates the sight of,' and so forth.

From all which Tom gathered a tolerably clear notion of the poor poet's state of body and mind, as a self-indulgent, unmethodical person, whose ill-temper was owing partly to perpetual brooding over his own thoughts, and partly to dyspepsia, brought on by his own effeminacy—in both cases, not a thing to be pitied or excused by the hoary and valiant doctor. And Tom's original contempt for Vasavour took a darker form, perhaps one too dark to be altogether just.

'I'll tackle him, Miss Clara.'

'I wish you would. I'm sure he wants some one to look after him just now. He's half wild about some review that somebody's been and done of him in the *Times*, and has been flinging the paper about the room, and calling all mankind vipers, and adders, and hooting herds—it's as bad as swearing, I say—and running to my mistress, to make her read it, and see how the whole world's against him, and then forbidding her to defile her eyes with a word of it, and so on, till she's been crying all the morning, poor dear!'

'Why not laughing at him?'

'Poor thing, that's where it all is, she's just

as anxious about his poetry as he is, and would write it just as well as he, I'll warrant, if she hadn't better things to do, and all her fuss is, that people should "appreciate" him. He's always talking about appreciating, till I hate the sound of the word. How any woman can go on so after a man that behaves as he does! but were all soft fools, I'm afraid, Doctor Thurnall!" And Clara began a laughing look or two across the counter, which made Tom answer to an imaginary Doctor Heale, whom he heard calling from within.

"Yes, doctor! coming this mornin', doctor! Good-bye, Miss Clara. I must hear more next time, you may trust me, you know secret as the grave, and always your friend, and your lady's too, if you will allow me to do myself such a honour. Coming, doctor!"

And Tom bolted through the glass door, till Miss Clara was safe on her way up the street.

"Very well," said Tom to himself. "Know ledge is power—but how to use it? To get into Mrs. Vavasour's confidence, and show an inclination to take her part against her husband! If she be a true woman, she would order me out of the house on the spot, as surely as a fish-wife would fall tooth and nail on me as a base intruder, if I dared to interfere with her sacred right of being beaten by her husband when she chooses. No! I must go straight to John Briggs himself, and land him over to keep the peace, and I think I know the way to do it."

So Tom pondered over many plans in his head that day, and then went to Treboose, and saw the sick child, and sat down to dinner, where his host talked loud about the Trebooses of Treboose, who fought in the Spanish Armada on against it, and showed an unbounded belief in the greatness and antiquity of his family, confirmed with a historic accuracy almost equal to that of a good old dame of those parts, who used to say that "her family come over the water, that she knew, but whether it were with the Conqueror, or whether it were with Oliver, she couldn't exactly say!"

Then he became great on the subject of old county families in general, and poured out all the vials of his wrath on "that confounded upstart of a Newbrun, Lord Minchampstead, squandering all the true old blood in the country."

"Why, sir, that Pentremochyn, and Carrarow moors too (---- good shooting there, there used to be), they ought to be mine, sir, if every man had his rights!" And then followed a long story, and a confused one withal, for by this time Mr. Treboose had drunk a great deal too much wine, and as he became aware of the fact, became proportionately anxious that Tom should drink too much also, out of which story Tom picked the plain facts, that Treboose's father had mortgaged Pentremochyn estate for more than its value, and that Lord Minchampstead had foreclosed, while some equally respectable uncle, or cousin, just deceased, had sold the reversion of Carrarow to the same mighty cotton lord twenty years before. "And this is the way,

sir, the land gets eaten up by a set of tinkers, and robbers, and money-lending jobbers, who suck the blood of the aristocracy!" The oaths we omit, leaving the reader to peep at Mr. Treboose's conversation therewith, up to any degree of heat which may suit his palate.

Tom sympathised with him deeply, of course, and did not tell him, as he might have done, that he thought the sooner such rascals of the ground were cleared off, whether by an encumbered estates' act, such as we may see yet in England, or by their own suicidal folly, the better it would be for the universe in general, and perhaps for themselves in particular. But he only answered with pleasant effrontery—

"Ah, my dear sir, I am sure there are hundreds of good sportsmen who sympathise with you deeply. The wonder is, that you do not write and defend yourselves. For not only in the west of England, but in Ireland, and in Wales, and in the north, too, it one is to believe these novels of Chriss Bell's and her sister, there is a large and important class of landed proprietors of the same stamp as yourself, and exposed to the very same dangers. I wonder at times that you do not call your, and use your combined influence on the Government."

"The Government! All a set of Whig traitors! Call themselves Conservative, or what they like. Traitors, sir! from that fellow Noel upwards—all condemned to ruin the landed gentry—ruin the Church—betray the family party. Disraeli! Derby!—Fren-trade—ruined, sir! My north Protection—treason—help yourself, and pass the—you know, nil follow."

And Mr. Treboose's voice died away, and he slumbered, but not softly.

The door opened, and in marched Mrs. Treboose, tall, tawily, and terrible.

"Mr. Treboose, it's just eleven o'clock!"

"Hush, my dear madam!" He is sleeping so sweetly," said Tom, rising, and gulping down a glass, not of wine, but of strong ammonia and water. The rogue had put a phial thereof in his pocket that morning, expecting that, as Treboose had said, he would be required to make a night of it.

She was silent, so far to rouse her tyrant was more than she dared. If awakened, he would crave for brandy-and-water, and if he got that sweet poison, he would probably become furious. She stood for half a minute, and Tom, who knew her story well, watched her anxiously.

"She is a true woman, and with a fairer heart in her than that brute. Her eyelow and eye, now, have the fair Sidlons stamp, the great white forehead, and sharp cut little nose, breathing scorn—and what a Suddons-like attitude—I should like, madam, to see the child again before I go."

"If you are fit, sir," answered she.
"Brave woman, comes to the point at once. I am a poor doctor, madam, and not a country gentleman, and have neither money nor health to spend in drinking too much wine."

"Then why do you encourage him in it, sir?"

I had expected a very different sort of conduct from you, sir.

Tom did not tell her what she would not (no woman will) understand that it is morally and socially impossible to escape from the table of a fool, till either he or you are conquered, and she was too strewed to be taken in by commonplace excuses, so he looked her very full in the face, and replied a little haughtily, with a slow and delicate articulation, using his lips more than usual, and yet compressing them--

'I beg your pardon, madam, if I have unintentionally displeased you but if you ever do me the honour of knowing more of me, you will be the first to confess that your words are unjust. Do you wish me to see your son, or do you not?'

Poor Mrs. Trebooze looked at him with an eye which showed that she had been accustomed to study character keenly, perhaps in self-defence. She saw that Tom was sober, he had taken care to prove that, by the way in which he spoke, and she saw, too, that he was a better bred man than her husband, as well as a cleverer. She dropped her eye before his, heaved something very like a sigh, and then said, in her curt, fierce tone, which yet implied a sort of sullen resignation--

'Yes, come upstairs.'

Tom went up, and looked at the boy again, as he lay sleeping. A beautiful child of four years old, as large and fair a child as man need see, and yet there was on him the curse of his father's sins, and Tom knew it, and knew that his mother knew it also.

'What a noble boy!' said he, after looking, not without honest admiration, upon the sleeping child, who had kicked off his bed-clothes, and lay in a wild graceful attitude, as children are wont to lie, just like an old Greek statue of Cupid. 'It all depends upon you, madam, now.'

'On me?' she asked, in a startled, suspicious tone.

'Yes. He is a magnificent boy but I can only give palliatives. It depends upon you care now.'

'He will have that, at least, I should hope,' said she, nettled.

'And on your influence ten years hence,' went on Tom.

'My influence?'

'Yes, only keep him steady, and he may grow up a magnificent man. If not--you will excuse me--but you must not let him live as freely as his father, the constitutions of the two are very different.'

'Don't talk so, sir. Steadily? His father makes him drunk now, if he can, teaches him to swear, because it is manly--God help him and me!'

Tom's cunning and yet kind shaft had sped. He guessed that with a coarse woman like Mrs. Trebooze his best plan was to come as straight to the point as he could, and he was right. Ere half an hour was over, that woman had

few secrets on earth which Tom did not know.

'Let me give you one hint before I go,' said he at last. 'Persuade your husband to go into a militia regiment.'

'Why? He would see so much company, and it would be so expensive.'

'The expense would repay itself ten times over. The company which he would see would be sober company, in which he would be forced to keep in order. He would have something to do in the world; and he'd do it well. He is just cut out for a soldier, and might have made a gallant one by now, if he had had other men's chances. He will find he does his militia work well, and it will be a new interest, and a new pride, and a new life to him. And meanwhile, madam, what you have said to me is sacred. I do not pretend to advise or interfere. Only tell me if I can be of use--how, when, and where--and command me as your servant.'

And Tom departed, having struck another root, and was up at four the next morning (he never worked at night, for, he said, he never could trust after-dinner brains), drawing out a detailed report of the Pentremochlyn cottages, which he sent to Lord Minchamstead, with--

'And your Lordship will excuse my saying, that to put the cottages into the state in which your Lordship, with your known wish for progress of all kinds, would wish to see them, is a responsibility which I dare not take on myself, as it would involve a present outlay of not less than £150. This sum would be certainly repaid to your Lordship and your tenants, in the course of the next three years, by the saving in repairs, an opinion for which I subjoin my grounds, drawn from the books of the medical officer, Mr. Heale. But the responsibility and possible unpopularity which employing so great a sum would involve is more than I can, in the present dependent condition of poor-law medical officers, dare to undertake, in justice to Mr. Heale, my employer, save at your special command. I am bound, however, to inform your Lordship that this outlay would, I think, perfectly defend the hamlets, not only from that visit of the cholera which we have every reason to expect next summer, but also from those zymotic diseases which (as your Lordship will see by my return) make up more than sixty-five per cent of the aggregate sickness of the estate.'

Which letter the old cotton lord put in his pocket, rode into Whitbury therewith, and showed it to Mark Arnsworth.

'Well, Mr. Arnsworth, what am I to do?'

'Well, my Lord, I told you what sort of a man you'd have to do with, one that does his work thoroughly, and, I think, pays you a compliment, by thinking that you want it done thoroughly.'

Lord Minchamstead was of the same opinion, but he did not say so. Few, indeed, have ever heard Lord Minchamstead give his opinion.

though many a man has seen him act on it.

'I'll send down orders to my agent.'

'Don't.'

'Why, then, my good friend?'

'Agents are always in league with farmers, or guardians, or builders, or drain-tile makers, or attorneys, or bankers, or somebody, and either you'll be told that the work don't need doing, or have a job brewed out of it, to get off a lot of unsaleable drain-tiles, or cracked soil-pans, or to get farm ditches dug, and perhaps the highway rates saved hunking culverts, and fifty dodges besides. I know their game, and you ought, too, by now, my Lord, begging your pardon.'

'Perhaps I do, Mark,' said his Lordship with a chuckle.

'So, I say, let the man that found the fox run the fox, and kill the fox, and take the brush home.'

'And so it shall be,' quoth my Lord Muchamptstead.

CHAPTER IX

'AM I NOT A WOMAN AND A SISTER?'

BUT what was the mysterious bond between La Cordiflamia and the American, which had prevented Scotchish from following the example of his illustrious progenitor, and taking a virtuousness from off the stage?

Certainly, any one who had seen him with him on the morning after Scotchish's visit to the Mellots, would have said that, if the cause was love, the love was all on one side.

She was standing by the fireplace in a splendid pose, her arm resting on the chimney-piece, the book from which she had been reciting in one hand, the other playing in her black curls, as her eyes glanced back ever and anon at her own profile in the mirror. Staungrave was half sitting in a low chair by her side, half kneeling on the footstool before her, looking up beseechingly, as she looked down tyrannically.

'Stupid, this reciting? Of course it is! I want realities, not shams, life, not the stage, nature, not art.'

'Throw away the book, then, and words, and art, and live!'

She knew well what he meant, but she answered as if she had misunderstood him.

'Thanks, I live already, and in good company enough. My ghost-husbands are as noble as they are obedient, do all which I demand of them, and vanish on my errands when I tell them. Can you guess who my last is? Since I tired of Egmont, I have taken Sir Galahad, the spotless knight. Did you ever read the *Mort d'Arthur*?'

'A hundred times.'

'Of course!' and she spoke in a tone of contempt so strong that it must have been affected. 'What have you not read? And what have

you copied? No wonder that these English have been what they have been for centuries, while their heroes have been the Galahads, and their Homer the *Mort d'Arthur*.'

'Enjoy your Utopia!' said he bitterly. 'Do you fancy they acted up to their ideals? They dreamed of the Quest of the Sangreal, but which of them ever went upon it?'

'And does it count for nothing that they felt it the finest thing in the world to have gone on it, had it been possible? Be sure if their ideal was so self-sacrificing, so lofty, their practice was ruled by something higher than the almighty dollar.'

'And so are some other men's, Marie,' answered he reproachfully.

'Yes, forsooth,—when the almighty dollar is there already, and a man has ten times as much to spend every day as he can possibly invest in French cookery, and wines, and fine clothes, then he begins to lay out his surplus nobly on self-education, and the patronage of art, and the theatre—for merely æsthetic purposes, of course; and when the lust of the flesh has been satiated, thinks himself an archangel, because he goes on to satisfy the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Christ was of old the model, and Sir Galahad was the hero. Now the one is exchanged for Goethe, and the other for Wilhelm Meister.'

'Cruel! You know that my Goethe fever is long past. How would you have known of its existence if I had not confessed it to you as a sin of old years? Have I not said to you, again and again, show me the thing which you would have me do for your sake, and see if I will not do it?'

'For my sake? A noble reason! Show yourself the thing which you will do for its own sake, because it ought to be done. Show it yourself, I say, I cannot show you. If your own eyes cannot see the Sangreal, and the angels who are bearing it before you, it is because they are dull and gross; and am I Milton's archangel, to purge them with enthusiasm and me? If you have a noble heart, you will find for yourself the noblest Quest. If not, who can prove to you that it is noble? And tapping impatiently with her foot, she went on to herself—

'A gentle wind, an awful light'

Three angels bear the holy Grail
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
The spirit beats her mortal wings,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

'Why, there was not a knight of the round table, was there, who did not give up all to go upon that Quest, though only one was found worthy to fulfil it? But nowadays, the knights sit drinking hock and champagne, or drive sulky-wagons, and never fancy that there is a Quest at all.'

'Why talk in these parables?'

'So the Jews asked of their prophets. They are no parables to my ghost-husband Sir Galahad.'

Now go, if you please, I must be busy, and write letters.

He rose with a look, half of disappointment, half amused, and yet his face bore a firmness which seemed to say, 'You will be mine yet.' As he rose, he cast his eye upon the writing-table, and upon a letter which lay there—and as he did so, his cheek grew pale, and his brows knitted.

'The letter was addressed to 'Thomas Thurnall, Esq., Aberlona'.

'Is this, then, your Sir Galahad?' asked he, after a pause, during which he had choked down his rising jealousy, while she looked first at herself in the glass, and then at him, and then at herself again, with a determined and triumphant air.

'And what if it be?'

'So he, then, has achieved the Quest of the Sangreal?'

Stangrave spoke bitterly, and with an emphasis upon the 'he', and

'What if he have? Do you know him?' answered she, while her face lighted up with eager interest, which she did not care to conceal, perhaps chafe, in her woman's love of tormenting, to punish.

'I knew a man of that name once,' he replied, in a carefully careless tone, which did not relieve her, 'an adventurer—a doctor, if I recollect—who had been in Texas and Mexico, and I know not where besides. Agreeable enough he was, but as for your Quest of the Sangreal, whatever it may be, he seemed to have as little notion of anything beyond his own interest as any Greek I ever met.'

'Unjust! Your words only show how little you can see! That man, of all men I ever met, saw the Quest at once, and followed it, at the risk of his own life, as far at least as he was concerned with it—ay, even when he pretended to see nothing. Oh, there is more generosity in that man's affected selfishness than in all the noisy good-nature which I have met with in the world. Thurnall! oh, you know his nobleness as little as he knows it himself.'

'Then he, I am to suppose, is your phantom husband, for as long, at least, as your present dream lasts?' asked he, with white, compressed lips.

'He might have been, I believe,' she answered carelessly, 'if he had even taken the trouble to ask me.'

'Marie, this is so much! Do you not know to whom you speak? To one who deserves, if not common courtesy, at least common mercy.'

'Because he adores me, and so forth? So has many a man done—or told me that he has done so. Do you know that I might be a viscountess to-morrow, so Sabrina informs me, if I but chose?'

'A viscountess? I may except you offsets English aristocrat, and, as far as I am concerned, accept my best wishes for your happiness.'

'My offete English aristocrat, did I show him that pedigree of mine which I have ere now

threatened to show you, would perhaps be less horrified at it than you are?'

'Marie, I cannot bear this! Tell me only what you mean. What care I for pedigree? I want you—worship you—and that is enough, Marie!'

'You admire me because I am beautiful. What thanks do I owe you for finding out so patent a fact? What do you do more to me than I do to myself?' and she glanced back once more at the mirror.

'Marie, you know that your words are false. I do more—'

'You admire me,' interrupted she, 'because I am clever. What thanks to you for that, again? What do you do more to me than you do to yourself?'

'And thus, after all—'

'After what? After you found me, or rather I found you—you the critic, the arbiter of the green-room—the highly organized do-nothing teaching others how to do nothing most gracefully, the world-in-God who must, for the sake of his own self-development, try experiments on every weak woman whom he met. And I, the new phenomenon, whom you must appoint to show your own taste, patronise to show your own liberality, develop to show your own insight into character. You found yourself mistaken! You had attempted to play with the tigress—and behold she had talons, to scratch for the silly fish—and behold the fish was the better angler, and caught you!'

'Marie, have mercy! Is your heart iron?'

'No, but firm, as my name shows,' and she stood looking down on him with a glare of dreadful beauty.

'Firm, indeed!'

'Yes, but that I may scorch you, kindle you, madden you, to do my work, and wear the heart of iron which I wear day and night!'

Stangrave looked at her startled. Was she mad? Her face did not say so—her brow was white, her features calm, her eye fierce and contemplative, but clear, steady, full of meaning.

'So you know Mr. Thurnall?' said she, after a while.

'Yes, why do you ask?'

'Because he is the only friend I have on earth.'

'The only friend, Marie?'

'The only one,' answered she sadly, who, seeing the right, has gone and flown it forth with. When did you see him last?'

'I have not been acquainted with Mr. Thurnall for some years,' said Stangrave haughtily.

'In plain words, you have quarrelled with him?'

Stangrave bit his lip.

'He and I had a difference. He insulted my nation, and we parted.'

She laughed a long, loud, bitter laugh, which rang through Stangrave's ears.

'Insulted your nation? And on what grounds, pray?'

'About that accursed slavery question!'

La Cordisfamma looked at him with firm-closed lips a while.

'So, then! I was not aware of this! Even so long ago you saw the Sangreal, and did not know it when you saw it. No wonder that since then you have been staring at it for months, in your very hands, played with it, admired it, made verses about it, to show off your own taste, and yet were blind to it the whole time! Farewell, then!'

'Marie, what do you mean?' and Stangrave caught both her hands.

'Hush, if you please. I know you are eloquent enough, when you choose, though you have been somewhat dumb and monosyllabic to-night in the presence of the actress whom you undertook to educate. But I know that you can be eloquent, so spare me any brilliant appeals, which can only go to prove that already settled fact. Between you and me lie two great gulfs. The one I have told you of, and from it I shrink. The other I have not told you of, from it you would shrink.'

'The first is your Quest of the Sangreal.'

'She smiled assent, bitterly enough.'

'And the second?'

She did not answer. She was looking at herself in the mirror, and Stangrave, in spite of his almost dotting affection, flushed with anger, almost contempt, at her vanity.

And yet, was it vanity which was expressed in that face? No, but dread, horror, almost disgust, as she gazed with sidelong, startled eyes, struggling, and yet struggling in vain, to turn her face from some horrible sight, as if her own image had been the Gorgon's head.

'What is it? Marie, speak!'

But she answered nothing. For that last question she had no heart to answer, no heart to tell him that in her veins were some drops, at least, of the blood of slaves. Instinctively she had looked round at the mirror—for might he not, if he had eyes, discover that secret for himself? Were there not in her features traces of that taint? And as she looked,—was at the mere play of her excited fancy,—or did her eyelid slupe more and more, her nostril shorten and curl, her lips enlarge, her mouth itself protrude?

It was more than the play of fancy, for Stangrave saw it as well as she. Her actress's imagination, fixed on the African type with an intensity proportioned to her dread of seeing it in herself, had moulded her features, for the moment, into the very shape which it dreaded. And Stangrave saw it, and shuddered as he saw.

Another half minute, and that face also had melted out of the mirror, at least for Marie's eyes, and in its place an ancient negress, white-haired, withered as the wrinkled ape, but with eyes closed—in death. Marie knew that face well, a face which haunted many a dream of hers, once seen, but never forgotten since, for to that old dame's coffin had her mother, the gay quadroon woman, flaunting in finery which was the price of shame, led Marie when she was

but a three years' child, and Marie had seen her bend over the corpse, and call it her dear old granny, and weep bitter tears.

Suddenly she shook off the spell, and looked round and down, terrified, self-conscious. Her eye caught Stangrave's, she saw, or thought she saw, by the expression of his face, that he knew all, and burst away with a shriek.

He sprang up and caught her in his arms. 'Marie! Beloved Marie!' She looked up at him struggling, the dark expression had vanished, and Stangrave's love blinded eyes could see nothing in that face but the refined and yet rich beauty of the Italian.

'Marie, this is mere madness, you excite yourself till you know not what you say, or what you are—'

'I know what I am,' murmured she, but he hurried on unheeding.

'You love me, you know you love me, and you madden yourself by refusing to confess it.' He felt her heart throb as he spoke, and knew that he spoke truth. 'What gulfs are these you dream of? No, I will not ask. There is no gulf between me and one whom I adore, who has thrown a spell over you which I cannot resist, which I glory in not resisting, for you have been my guide, my morning star, which has awakened me to new life. If I have a noble purpose upon earth, if I have roused myself from that conceited dream of self-culture which now looks to me so cold, and barren, and tawdry, into the hope of becoming useful, beneficent—to whom do I owe it but to you, Marie? No, there is no gulf, Marie! You are my wife, and you alone! And he held her so firmly, and gazed down upon her with such strong manhood, that her woman's heart quailed; and he might, perhaps, have conquered then and there, had not Sabina, summoned by his shriek, entered hastily.

'Good heavens! what is the matter?'

'Wait but one minute, Mrs. Mellor,' said he, 'the next, I shall introduce you to my bride.'

'Never! never! never!' cried she, and breaking from him, flew into Sabina's arms. 'Leave me, leave me to hear my curse alone!'

And she broke out into such wild weeping, and refused so wildly to hear another word from Stangrave, that he went away in despair, the prize snatched from his grasp in the very moment of seeming victory.

He went in search of Claude, who had agreed to meet him at the Exhibition in Trafalgar Square. Thither Stangrave rolled away in his cab, his heart full of many thoughts. Marie's words about him, though harsh and exaggerated, were on the whole true. She had fascinated him utterly. To marry her was now the one object of his life, she had awakened in him, as he had confessed, noble desires to be useful, but the discovery that he was to be useful to the negro, that abolition was the Sangreal in the quest of which he was to go forth, was as disagreeable a discovery as he could well have made.

From public life in any shape, with all its vulgar noise, its petty chicanery, its pandering to the mob whom he despised, he had always shrunk, as so many Americans of his stamp have done. He had no wish to struggle, unrewarded and disappointed, in the ranks of the minority, while to gain place and power on the side of the majority was to lend himself to that fatal policy which, ever since the Missouri Compromise of 1820, has been gradually making the northern states more and more the tools of the southern ones. He had no wish to be threatened in Congress with having his Northerner's 'ears nailed to the counter, like his own base coin,' or to be informed that he, with the 17,000,000 of the north, were the 'White Slaves' of a southern aristocracy of 350,000 slaveholders. He had enough comprehension of, enough admiration for, the noble principles of the American Constitution to see that the democratic mobs of Irish and Germans, who were stupidly playing into the hands of the Southerners, were not exactly carrying them out, but he had no mind to face either Irish or Southerners. The former were too vulgar for his delicacy, the latter too aristocratic for his pride. Strong, as he held (and rightly), from as fine old English blood as any Virginian (though it did happen to be Puritan, and not Cavalier), he had no list to come into contact with men who considered him much further below them in rank than an English footman is below an English nobleman, who, indeed, would some of them look down on the English nobleman himself as a mushroom of yesterday. So he compounded with his conscience by ignoring the whole matter, and by looking on the state of public affairs on his side of the Atlantic with a cynicism which very soon (as is usual with rich men) passed into apathy. Epicureanism. Poetry and music, pictures and statues, amusement and travel, became his idols, and cultivation his substitute for the plain duty of patriotism, and wandering luxuriously over the world, he learnt to sentimentalise over cathedrals and monasteries, pictures and statues, saints and kings, with a lazy regret that such 'forms of beauty and nobleness' were no longer possible in a world of scrip and railroads, but without any notion that it was his duty to reproduce in his own life, or that of his country, as much as he could of the said beauty and nobleness. And now he was sorely tried. It was interesting enough to 'develop' the peculiar turn of Marie's genius, by writing for her plays about liberty, just as he would have written plays about jealousy, or anything else for representing which she had 'capabilities.' But to be called on to act in that slavery question, the one on which he knew (as all sensible Americans do) that the life and death of his country depended, and which for that very reason he had carefully ignored till a more convenient season, finding in its very difficulty and danger an excuse for leaving it to solve itself to have this thrust on him, and by her, as the price of the thing which he must have,

or die! If she had asked for his right hand, he would have given it sooner, and he entered the Royal Academy that day in much the same humour as that of a fine lady who should find herself suddenly dragged from the ballroom into the dust-hole, in her tenderest array of gauze and jewels, and there peremptorily compelled to sift the candors, under the superintendence of the sweep and the pot boy.

Glad to escape from questions which he had rather not answer too soon, he went in search of Claude, and found him before one of those pre-Raphaelite pictures, which Claude does not appreciate as he ought.

'Desmit is Calice's mother formosa superna,' said Stangrave, as he looked over Claude's shoulder, 'but I suppose he followed nature, and copied his model.'

'That he didn't,' said Claude, 'for I know who his model was, but if he did, he had no business to do so. I object on principle to those men's notion of what copying nature means. I don't deny him talent. I am ready to confess that there is more imagination and more honest work in that picture than in any one in the room. The hysterical, all but grinning joy upon the mother's face is a miracle of truth. I have seen the expression more than once, doctors see it often, in the sudden revulsion from terror and agony to certainty and peace, I only marvel where he ever met it, but the general effect is unpleasant, marred by patches of sheer ugliness, like that child's foot. There is the same mistake in all his pictures. What ever they are, they are not beautiful, and no magnificence of colouring will make up, in my eyes, for wilful ugliness of form. I say that nature is beautiful, and therefore nature cannot have been truly copied, or the general effect would have been beautiful also. I never found out the fallacy till the other day, when looking at a portrait by one of them. The woman for whom it was meant was standing by my side, young and lovely, the portrait hung there, neither young nor lovely, but a wrinkled caricature twenty years older than the model.'

'I surely know the portrait you mean, Lady D—.'

'Yes. He had simply, under pretence of following nature, caricatured her into a woman twenty years older than she is.'

'But did you ever see a modern portrait which more perfectly expressed character, which more completely fulfilled the requirements which you laid down a few evenings since?'

'Never, and that makes me all the more cross with the wilful mistake of it. He had painted every wrinkle.'

'Why not, if they were there?'

'Because he had painted a face not one-twentieth of the size of life. What right had he to cram into that small space all the marks which nature had spread over a far larger one?'

'Why not, again, if he diminished the marks in proportion?'

'Just what neither he nor any man could do, without making them so small as to be invisible, save under a microscope and the result was, that he had caricatured every wrinkle, as his friend has in those horrible knuckles of Shem's wife. Besides, I deny utterly your assertion that one is bound to paint what is there. On that very fallacy are they all making shipwreck.'

'Not paint what is there? And you are the man who talks of art being highest when it copies nature.'

'Exactly. And therefore you must paint, not what is there, but what you see there. They forget that human beings are men with two eyes, and not daguerreotype lenses with one eye, and so are contriving and striving to introduce into their pictures the very defect of the daguerreotype which the stereoscope is required to correct.'

'I comprehend. They forget that the double vision of our two eyes gives a softness, and indistinctness, and roundness to every outline.'

'Exactly so, and therefore, while for distant landscapes, motionless, and already softened by atmosphere, the daguerreotype is invaluable (I shall do nothing else this summer, but work at it), yet for taking portraits, in any true sense, it will be always useless, not only for the reason I just gave, but for another one which the pre-Raphaelites have forgotten.'

'Because all the features cannot be in focus at once?'

'Oh no, I am not speaking of that. Art, for aught I know, may overcome that, for it is a mere defect in the instrument. What I mean is this: it tries to represent as still what never yet was still for the thousandth part of a second; that is, the human face, and as seen by a spectator who is perfectly still, which no man ever yet was. My dear fellow, don't you see that what some painters call idealising a portrait is, if it be wisely done, really painting for you the face which you see, and know, and love, her ever-shifting features, with expression varying more rapidly than the gleam of the diamond on her finger, features which you, in your turn, are looking at with ever-shifting eyes, while, perhaps, if it is a face which you love and have lingered over, a dozen other expressions equally belonging to it are hanging in your memory, and blending themselves with the actual picture on your retina: till every little angle is somewhat rounded, every little wrinkle somewhat softened, every little shade somewhat blended with the surrounding light, so that the sum total of what you see, and are intended by Heaven to see, is something far softer, lovelier, younger, perhaps, thank Heaven, than it would look if your head was screwed down in a vice, to look with one eye at her head screwed down in a vice also — though even that, thanks to the muscles of the eye, would not produce the required ugliness, and the only possible method of fulfilling the pre-Raphaelite ideal would be, to set a petrified Cyclops to paint his petrified brother.'

'You are spiteful.'

'Not at all. I am standing up for art, and for nature too. For instance, Salma has wrinkles. She says, too, that she has gray hairs coming. The former I won't see, and therefore don't. The latter I can't see, because I am not looking for them.'

'Nor I either,' said Stangrave, smiling. 'I assure you the announcement is new to me.'

'Of course. Who can see wrinkles in the light of those eyes, that smile, that complexion?'

'Certainly,' said Stangrave, 'if I asked for her portrait, as I shall do some day, and the artist sat down and painted the said "wastes of time," on pretence of their being there, I should consider it an impertinence on his part. What business has he to spy out what nature is taking such charming trouble to conceal?'

'Again,' said Claude, 'such a face as Cordiamma's. When it is at rest, in deep thought, there are hues in it which utterly puzzle one — touches which are Eastern, Kalyle, almost Quadroon.'

Stangrave started. 'Claude went on unconscious --'

'But who sees them in the light of that beauty? They are defects, no doubt, but defects which no one would observe without deep study of the face. They express her character no more than a scar would, and therefore when I paint her, as I must and will, I shall utterly ignore them. If, on the other hand, I met the same hues in a face which I knew to have Quadroon blood in it, I should religiously copy them, because then they would be integral elements of the face. You understand?'

'Understand? — yes,' answered Stangrave, in a tone which made Claude look up.

That strange scene of half an hour before flashed across him. What if it were no fancy? What if Marie had African blood in her veins? And Stangrave shuddered, and felt for the moment that thousands of pounds would be a cheap price to pay for the discovery that his fancy was a false one.

'Yes — oh — I beg your pardon,' said he, recovering himself. 'I was thinking of something else. But as you say, what if she had Quadroon blood?'

'I? I never said so, or dreamt of it.'

'Oh! I mistook. Do you know, though, where she came from?'

'I? You forget, my dear fellow, that you yourself introduced her to us.'

'Of course, but I thought Mrs. Mellot might — women always make confidences.'

'All we know is, that I suppose you knew long ago, that her most intimate friend, next to you, seems to be an old friend of ours, named Thurnall.'

'An old friend of yours?'

'Oh yes, we have known him these fifteen years. Met him first at Paris; and after that went round the world with him, and saw infinite

adventures. Sabina and I spent three months with him once, among the savages in a South-sea Island, and a very pretty romance our stay and our escape would make. We were all three, I believe, to have been cooked and eaten, if Tom had not got us off by that wonderful address which, if you know him, you must know well enough.

'Yes,' answered Stangrave coldly, as in a dream, 'I have known Mr. Thurnall in past years, but not in connection with La Signora Corithamma. I was not aware till this moment

this morning, I mean—that they knew each other.'

'You astonish me, why she talks of him to us all day long, as of one to whom she has the deepest obligations, she was ready to rush into our arms when she first found that we knew him. He is a greater hero in her eyes, I sometimes fancy, than even you are. She does nothing (or fancies that she does nothing, for you know her pretty wilfulness) without writing for his advice.'

'I a hero in her eyes? I was really not aware of that fact,' said Stangrave, more coldly than ever, for bitter jealousy had taken possession of his heart. 'Do you know, then, what this same obligation may be?'

'I never asked. I hate gossiping, and I make a rule to inquire into no secrets but such as are voluntarily confided to me, and I know that she has never told Sabina.'

'I suppose she is married to him. That is the simplest explanation of the mystery.'

'Impossible! What can you mean? If she ever marries living man, she will marry you.'

'Then she will never marry living man,' said Stangrave to himself. 'Good-bye, my dear fellow, I have an engagement at the Traveller's.' And away went Stangrave, leaving Claude sorely puzzled, but little dreaming of the powder-magazine into which he had put a match.

But he was puzzled still more that night, when by the latest post a note came.

'From Stangrave!' said Claude. 'Why, in the name of all wonders!'—and he read.

'Good-bye. I am just starting for the Continent, on sudden and urgent business. What my destination is I hardly can tell you yet. You will hear from me in the course of the summer.'

Claude's countenance fell, and the note fell likewise. Sabina snatched it up, read it, and gave La Corithamma a look which made her spring from the sofa, and snatch it in turn.

She read it through, with trembling hands and blanching cheeks, and then dropped fainting upon the floor.

They laid her on the sofa, and while they were recovering her, Claude told Sabina the only clue which he had to the American's conduct, namely, that afternoon's conversation.

Sabina shook her head over it, for to her, also, the American's explanation had suggested itself. Was Marie Thurnall's wife? Or did she—it was possible, however painful—stand to

him in some less honourable relation, which she would fain forget now, in a new passion for Stangrave? For that Marie loved Stangrave, Sabina knew well enough.

The doubt was so ugly that it must be solved, and when she had got the poor thing safe into her bedroom she alluded to it as gently as she could.

Mario sprang up in indignant innocence.

'He? Whatever he may be to others, I know not but to me he has been purity and nobleness itself—a brother, a father. Yes, if I had no other reason for trusting him, I should love him for that alone, that however tempted he may have been, and Heaven knows he was tempted, he could respect the honour of his friend, though that friend lay sleeping in a soldier's grave ten thousand miles away.'

And Marie threw herself upon Sabina's neck, and under the pressure of her misery sobbed out to her the story of her life. What it was need not be told. A little common sense, and a little knowledge of human nature, will enable the reader to fill up for himself the story of a beautiful slave.

Sabina soothed her, and cheered her, and soothed and cheered her most of all by telling her in return the story of her own life, not so dark and sour, but almost as sad and strange. And poor Marie took heart, when she found in her great need a sister in the communion of sorrows.

'And you have been through all this, so beautiful and bright as you are! You whom I should have fancied always living the life of the humming-bird and yet not a scar or a wrinkle has it left behind!'

'They were there once, Marie, but God and Claude smoothed them away.'

'I have no Claude, and no God, I think, at times.'

'No God, Marie! Then how did you come hither?'

Marie was silent, reproved, and then passionately.

'Why does He not right my people?'

That question was one to which Sabina's little scheme of the universe had no answer. Why should it, while in my scheme which pretends to be far vaster and more infallible has none as yet?

So she was silent, and sat with Marie's head upon her bosom, caressing the black curls, till she had soothed her into soldiering exhaustion.

'There, be there and rest: you shall be my child, my poor Marie. I have a fresh child every week, but I shall find plenty of room in my heart for you, my poor hunted deer.'

'You will keep my secret?'

'Why keep it? No one need be ashamed of it here in free England.'

'But he—he—you do not know, Sabina! Those Northerners, with all their boasts of freedom, shrink from us just as much as our own masters.'

'Oh, Marie, do not be so unjust to him! He is too noble, and you must know it yourself.'

'Ay, if he stood alone, if he were even going to live in England, if he would let himself be himself, but public opinion,' sobbed the poor self-tormentor. 'It has been his God, Salina, to be a leader of taste and fashion—admired and complete—the Crichton of Newport and Brooklyn. And he could not bear scorn, the loss of society. Why should he bear it for me? If he had been one of the Abolitionist party, it would have been different. But he has no sympathy with them, good, narrow, pious people, or they with him—he could not be satisfied in their society—or I either, for I crave after it all as much as he—wealth, luxury, art, brilliant company, admiration—oh, inconsistent wretch that I am! And that makes me love him all the more, and yet makes me so harsh to him, wickedly cruel, as I was to day, because when I am reproving his weakness, I am reproving my own, and because I am angry with myself, I grow angry with him too—envious of him, I do believe at moments, and all his success and luxury.'

And so poor Mario sobbed out her confused confession of that strange double nature which so many Quadroons seem to owe to their mixed blood, a strong side of deep feeling, ambition, energy, and intellect rather Greek in its rapidity than English in sturdiness, and withal a weak side, of instability, inconsistency, hasty passion, love of present enjoyment, sometimes, too, a tendency to untruth, which is the mark, not perhaps of the African specially, but of every enslaved race.

Consolation was all that Salina could give. It was too late to act. Stungrove was gone, and week after week rolled by without a hint from the wanderer.

CHAPTER V

THE RECOGNITION

ELSLEY VAYASOUR is sitting one morning in his study, every comfort of which is of Lucia's arrangement and invention, hearing the home-jaconet of his brains for pretty thoughts. On he struggles through that wild and too luxuriant cover, now brought up by a 'lawyer,' now stumbling over a root, now bogged in a green spring, now glimpsing a stray convey of birds of Paradise, now a splinter, chimera, strix, lamia, fire-drake, flying-donkey, two-headed eagle (Austrian, as will appear shortly), or other portent only to be seen nowadays in the recesses of that enchanted forest, the convolutions of a poet's brain. Up they whirl and rattle, making, like most game, more noise than they are worth. Some get back, some dodge among the trees, the fair shots are few and far between. But Elsley blazes away right and left with trusty quill, and, to do him justice, seldom misses his aim, for practice has made him a sure and quick marksman in his own line. Moreover, all is

game which gets up to-day, for he is shooting for the kitchen, or rather for the London market, as many a noble sportsman does nowadays, and thinks no shame. His new volume of poems ('The Wreck' included) is in the press, but behold, it is not as long as the publisher thinks it, and Messrs Brown and Younger have written down to entreat in haste for some four hundred lines more, on any subject which Mr Vayasour may choose. And therefore is Elsley beating his home covers, heavily shot over though they have been already this season, in hopes that a few heads of his own game may still be left—or in default (for human nature is the same, in poets and in sportsmen), that a few fawns may have strayed in out of his neighbours' manners.

At last the sport slackens, for the sportsman is getting tired, and huffy also, to carry on the metaphor, for he has seen the postman come up the front walk a quarter of an hour since, and the letters have not been brought in yet.

At last there is a knock at the door, which he answers by a somewhat testy 'come in.' But he checks the coming grumble, when not the maid, but Lucia enters.

'Why not grumble at Lucia? He has done so many a time.'

Because she looks this morning so charming, really quite pretty again, so radiant is her face with smiles. And because, also, she holds triumphant above her head a newspaper.

She dances up to him—

'I have something for you.'

'For me? Why, the post has been in this half-hour.'

'Yes, for you, and that's just the reason why I kept it myself. D'ye understand my Irish reasoning?'

'No, you pretty creature,' said Elsley, who saw that whatever the news was, it was good news.

'Pretty creature, am I? I was once, I know, but I thought you had forgotten all about that. But I was not going to let you have the paper till I had devoured every word of it myself first.'

'Every word of what?'

'Of what you shan't leave unless you promise to be good for a week. Such a review, and from America! What a dear man he must be who wrote it! I really think I should kiss him if I met him.'

'And I really think he would not say no. But as he's not here, I shall act as his proxy.'

'Be quiet, and read that, if you can, for blushes', and she spread out the paper before him, and then covered his eyes with her hands. 'No, you shan't see it, it will make you vain.'

Elsley had looked eagerly at the honeyed columns (as who would not have done?), but the last word smote him. What was he thinking of! his own praise, or his wife's love?

'Too true,' he cried, looking up at her. 'You dear creature! Vain I am, God forgive

mo, but before I look at a word of this I must have a talk with you'

'I can't stop, I must run back to the children. No, now don't look cross,' as his brow clouded, 'I only said that to tease you. I'll stop with you ten whole minutes, if you won't look so very solemn and important. I hate tragedy faces. Now, what is it?'

As all this was spoken while both her hands were clasped round Elsley's neck, and with looks and tones of the very sweetest as well as the very sincerest, no offence was given, and none taken, but Elsley's voice was sad as he asked—

'So you really do care for my poems?'

'You great silly creature! Why else did I marry you at all? As if I cared for anything in the world but your poems, as if I did not love everybody who praises them, and if any stupid reviewer dares to say a word against them I could kill him on the spot. I care for nothing in the world but what people say of you. And yet I don't care one pin I know what your poems are, if nobody else does, and they belong to me, because you belong to me, and I must be the best judge, and care for nobody, no, not I!' And she began singing, and then hung over him, tormenting him lovingly while he read.

It was a true American review, utterly extravagant in its laudations, whether from over-kindness, or from a certain love of exaggeration and magniloquence, which makes one suspect that a large proportion of the Transatlantic gentlemen of the press must be natives of the sister isle, but it was all the more pleasant to the soul of Elsley.

'There,' said Lucia, as she clung croodling to him, 'there is a pretty character of you, isn't it? Make the most of it, for it is all those Yankees will ever send you.'

'Yes,' said Elsley, 'if they would send me a little money, instead of making endless dollars by printing one's books, and then a few more by praising one at a penny a line.'

'That's talking like a man of business, if, instead of the review, now, a cheque for fifty pounds had come, how I would have rushed out and paid the bills!'

'And liked it a great deal better than the review!'

'You jealous creature! No. If I could always have you praised, I'd live in a cabin, and go about the world barefoot, like a wild Irish girl.'

'You would make a very charming one.'

'I need to, once, I can tell you. Valentinia and I need to run about without shoes and stockings at Kilnabeggan, and you can't think how pretty and white this little foot need to look on a nice soft carpet of green moss.'

'I shall write a sonnet to it.'

'You may if you choose, provided you don't publish it.'

'You may trust me for that. I am not one of those who anatomise their own married

happiness for the edification of the whole public, and make fun, if not money, out of their own wives' hearts.'

How I should hate you, if you did! Not that I believe their fine stories about themselves. At least, I am certain it's only half the story. They have their quarrels, my dear, just as you and I have, but they take care not to put them into poetry.'

'Well, but who could? Whether they have right or not to publish the poetical side of their married life, it is too much to ask them to give you the unpoetical also.'

'Then they are all humbugs, and I believe, if they really love their wives so very much, they would not be at all that pains to persuade the world of it.'

'You are very satirical and spiteful, ma'am.'

'I always am when I am pleased. If I am particularly happy, I always long to punish somebody. I suppose it's Irish—'

"Comes out, murther a friend, and for love knocks him down."

'But you know, you rogue, that you care to read no poetry but love poetry.'

'Of course not, every woman does, but let me find you publishing any such about me, and see what I will do to you! There, now I must go to my work, and you go and write something extra-supremely grand, because I have been so good to you. No. Let me go, what a bother you are. Good-bye.'

And away she tripped, and he returned to his work, happier than he had been for a week past.

His happiness, truly, was only on the surface. The old wound had been salved—as what wound cannot be?—by woman's love and woman's wit, but it was not healed. The cause of his wrong doing, the vain, self-indulgent spirit, was there still unchastised, and he was destined, that very day, to find that he had still to bear the punishment of it.

Now the reader must understand, that though one may laugh at Elsley Vavasour, because it is more pleasant than scolding at him, yet have Philistia and Fogeydom neither right nor reason to consider him a despicable or merely ludicrous person, or to cry, 'Ah, if he had been as we are!'

Had he been merely ludicrous, Lucia would never have married him, and he could only have been spoken of with indignation, or left utterly out of the story, as a simply unpleasant figure, beyond the purposes of a novel, though admissible now and then into tragedy. One cannot heartily laugh at a man if one has not a lurking love for him, as one really ought to have for Elsley. How much value is to be attached to his mere power of imagination and fancy, and so forth, is a question; but there was in him more than mere talent: there was, in thought at least, virtue and magnanimity.

True, the best part of him, perhaps almost all the good part of him, spent itself in words, and must be looked for, not in his life, but in his books. But in those books it can be found,

and if you look through them, you will see that he has not touched upon a subject without taking, on the whole, the right, and pure, and lofty view of it. However extravagant he may be in his notions of poetic licence, that licence is never with him a synonym for licentiousness. Whatever is tender and true, whatever is chivalrous and high-minded, he loves at first sight, and reproduces it lovingly. And it may be possible that his own estimate of his poems was not altogether wrong, that his words may have awakened here and there in others a love for that which is morally as well as physically beautiful, and may have kept alive in their hearts the recollection that, both for the bodies and the souls of men forms of life far nobler and purer than those which we see now are possible, that they have appeared, in fragments at least, already on the earth, that they are destined, perhaps, to reappear and combine themselves in some ideal state, and in

'One far-off divine event,
Toward which the whole creation moves.'

This is the special and proper function of the poet, that he may do this, does God touch his lips with that which, however it may be misused, is still fire from off the altar beneath which the spirits of his saints cry, 'Lord, how long?' If he 'reproduces the beautiful' with this intent, however so little, then is he of the sacred guild. And because Vavasour had this gift, therefore he was a poet.

But in this he was weak, that he did not feel, or at least was forgetting fast, that this gift had been bestowed on him for any practical purpose. No one could demand that he should have gone forth with some grand social scheme, to reform a world which looked to him so mean and evil. He was not a man of business, and was not meant to be one. But it was ill for him that in his fastidiousness and touchiness he had shut himself out from that world, till he had quite forgotten how much good there was in it as well as evil, how many people—commonplace and unpoetical it may be, but still heroic in God's sight, were working harder than he ever worked, at the divine drudgery of doing good, and that in dens of darkness and sloughs of filth from which he would have turned with disgust, so that the sympathy with the sinful and fallen which marks his earlier poems, and which perhaps verges on sentimentalism, gradually gives place to a Pharisaic and contemptuous tone, a tone more lofty and manful in seeming, but far less divine in fact. Perhaps comparative success had injured him. Whilst struggling himself against circumstances, poor, untaught, unhappy, he had more fellow-feeling with those whom circumstances oppressed. At least, the pity which he could once bestow upon the misery which he met in his daily walks, he now kept for the more picturesque woes of Italy and Greece.

In this, too, he was weak, that he had altogether forgotten that the fire from off the altar could only be kept alight by continual self-

restraint and self-sacrifice, by continual gentleness and humility, shown in the petty matters of everyday home-life, and that he who cannot rule his own household can never rule the Church of God. And so it befell that amid the little cross-blasts of home squabbles the sacred spark was fast going out. The poems written after he settled at Ponalva are marked by a less definite purpose, by a lower tone of feeling, not, perhaps, by a lower moral tone, but simply by loss of any moral tone at all. They are more and more full of merely sensuous beauty, mere word-painting, mere word-hunting. The desire of finding something worth saying gives place more and more to that of saying something in a new fashion. As the originality of thought (which accompanies only vigorous moral purpose) decreases, the attempt at originality of language increases. Manner, in short, has taken the place of matter. The art, it may be, of his latest poems is greatest, but it has been expended on the most unworthy themes. The later are mannered caricatures of the earlier, without their soul, and the same change seems to have passed over him which (with Mr. Ruskin's pardon) transformed the *Thyrer* of 1820 into the *Turner* of 1850.

Thus had Elsley transferred what sympathy he had left from needle-women and ragged schools, dwellers in Jacob's Island and sleepers in the dry arches of Waterloo Bridge, to sufferers of a more poetic class. Whether his sympathies showed thereby that he had risen or fallen, let my readers decide each for himself. It is a credit to any man to feel for any human being, and Italy, as she is at this moment, is certainly one of the most tragic spectacles which the world has ever seen. Elsley need not be blamed for pitying her, only for holding, with most of our poets, a vague notion that her woes were to be cured by a ban of the dog that bit her, viz. by homoeopathic doses of that same 'art' which has been all along her mould and self-deceiving substitute for virtue and industry. So, as she had sung herself down to the nether pit, Elsley would help to sing her up again, and had already been throwing off, ever since 1848, a series of sonnets which he entitled *Eurydice*, intimating, of course, that he acted as the *Orpheus*. Whether he had hopes of drawing iron tears down Radetky's cheek does not appear, but certainly the longer poem which had sprung from his fancy, at the urgent call of Messrs. Brown and Younger, would have been likely to draw nothing but iron balls from Radetky's cannon, or failing so vast an effect, an immediate external application to the poet himself of that famous herb *Pantagruelion*, cure for all public ills and private woes, which men call hemp. Nevertheless, it was a noble subject, one which ought surely to have been taken up by some of our poets, for if they do not make a noble poem of it, it will be their own fault. I mean that sad and fantastic tragedy of *Fra Dolcino and Margaret*, which Signor Mariotti has lately given to the English public in a book

which, both for its matter and its manner, should be better known than it is. Elsley's soul had been filled (it would have been a dull one else) with the conception of the handsome and gifted patriot-monk, his soul delirious with the dream of realising a perfect Church on earth, battling with tongue and pen, and at last with sword, against the villainies of pope and kaiser, and all the old devourers of the earth, cheered only by the wild love of her who had given up wealth, fame, friends, all which render life worth having, to die with him a death too horrible for words. And he had conceived (and not altogether ill) a vision in which, wandering along some bright Italian bay, he met Dolcino sitting, a spirit at rest but not yet glorified, waiting for the revival of that dead land for which he had died, and Margaret by him, dipping her scorched feet for ever in the cooling wave, and looking up to the hero for whom she had given up all, with eyes of everlasting love. There they were to prophesy to him such things as seemed fit to him, of the future of Italy and of Europe, of the doom of priests and tyrants, of the sorrows and rewards of genius unappreciated and before its age, for Elsley's secret vanity could see in himself a far greater likeness to Dolcino than Dolcino the preacher, confessor, leader of all hearts, man of the world and man of action, at last crafty and all but an invincible guerrilla warrior would ever have acknowledged in the self-indulgent dreamer. However, it was a fair conception enough, though perhaps it never would have entered Elsley's head, had Shelley never written the opening canto of the Revolt of Islam.

So Elsley, on a burning July forenoon, strolled up the lane and over the down to King Arthur's Nose, that he might find materials for his seashore scene. For he was not one of those men who live in such quiet, everyday communion with nature, that they drink in her various aspects as unconsciously as the air they breathe, and so can reproduce them, out of an inexhaustible stock of details, simply and accurately, and yet freshly too, tinged by the peculiar hue of the mind in which they have been long sleeping. He walked the world, either blind to the beauty round him, and trying to compose instead some little scrap of beauty in his own self-imprisoned thoughts, or else he was looking out consciously and spasmodically for views, effects, emotions, images, something striking and uncommon which would suggest a poetic figure, or help out a description, or in some way re-form his mind with thought. From which method it befell, that his lamp of truth was too often burnt out just when it was needed and that, like the foolish virgins, he had to go and buy oil when it was too late, or failing that, to supply its place with some baser artificial material.

That day, however, he was fortunate enough, for wandering and scrambling among the rocks, at a dead low spring tide, he came upon a spot which would have made a poem of itself better than all Elsley ever wrote, had he, forgetting all

about Fra Dolcino, Italy, priests, and tyrants, set down in black and white just what he saw, provided, of course, that he had patience first to see the same.

It was none other than that ghastly chasm across which Thurnall had been so miraculously swept on the night of his shipwreck. The same ghastly chasm, but ghastly now no longer, and as Elsley looked down the beauty below invited him, and the coolness also, for the sun beat on the flat rock above till it scorched the feet, and dazzled the eye, and crisped up the blackening sea-woods, while every sea-snail crept to hide itself under the bladder-tangle, and nothing dared to peep or stir save certain grains of gunpowder, which seemed to have gone mad, so merrily did they hop about upon the surface of the fast evaporating salt-pools. That wonder, indeed, Elsley stooped to examine, and drew back his hands with an 'Ugh!' and a gesture of disgust, when he found that they were 'nasty little insects.' For Elsley held fully the poet's right to believe that all things are not very good, none, indeed, save such as suited his eclectic and fastidious taste, and to hold (on high æsthetic grounds, of course) tanks and spiders in as much abhorrence as does any boarding-school girl. However, hurrying some rock ledges which formed a natural ladder, down he scrambled, gingerly enough, for he was neither an active nor a courageous man. But once down, I will do him the justice to say that for five whole minutes he forgot all about Fra Dolcino, and, what was better, about himself also.

The chasm may have been fifteen feet deep, and above, about half that breadth, but below, the waves had hollowed it into dark overhanging caverns. Just in front of him a huge boulder spanned the crack, and formed a natural doorway, through which he saw, like a picture set in a frame, the far-off blue softening into the blue sky among brown Eastern haze. Amid the haze a single ship hung motionless, like a white cloud. Nearer a black cormorant floated sleepily along, and dived, and rose again. Nearer again, long lines of flat tide-rock, glittering and quivering in the heat, sloped gradually under the waves, till they ended in half-smoken beds of olive seaweed, which bent their tangled stems into a hundred graceful curves, and swayed to and fro slowly and sleepily. The low swell slid whispering among their floating palms, and slipped on toward the cavern's mouth, as if asking vainly (so Elsley fancied) when it would be time for it to return to that cool shade, and hide from all the blinding blaze outside. But when his eye was enough accustomed to the shade within, it withdrew gladly from the glaring sea and glaring tide-rocks to the walls of the chasm itself, to curved and polished sheets of stone, rich brown, with snow-white veins, on which danced for ever a dappled network of pale yellow light, to crusted beds of pink coralline, to caverns in the dark crannies of which hung all

branching sponges and tufts of purple sea-moss; to strips of clear white sand, bestrewn with shells, to pools, each a gay flower-garden of all hues, where branching sea-weed reflected blue light from every point, like a thousand damasked sword-blades, while among their dahlias and chrysanthemums, and many another mine of our earth-born flowers, spread blooms of crimson, and purple, and blue, and creamy gray, half-buried among feathered weeds as lightly coloured as they, and strange and gaudy fishes shot across from side to side, and chased each other in and out of hidden cells.

Within and without all was at rest, the silence was broken only by the timid whisper of the swell, and by the clime of dropping water within some unseen cave, but what a delicious rest! Without, all lying breathless, stupefied, sun-stricken, in blinding glare, within, all coolness and refreshing sleep. Without, all simple, broad, and vast, within, all various, with infinite richness of form and colour. An Haroun Alraschid's harem looking out upon the—

Bother the fellow! Why will he go on analysing and figuring in this way? Why not let the blessed place tell him what it means, instead of telling it what he thinks? And—why, he is actually writing verses, though not about Fra Dolcino!

How rests yon rock, whose half day a bath is done,
With broad bright side, beneath the broad bright sun,
Like sea-nymph tired, on cushioned dunes sleeping;
Yet, nearer drawn, beneath her purple tresses,
Front down bent brows we find her slowly weeping,
So many a heart for cruel man's care is seen
Must only pine and pine, and yet must bear
A gallant front beneath his gaudy glare.

Silly fellow! Do you think that Nature had time to think of such a far-fetched conceit as that while it was making that rock and peopling it with a million tiny living things, of which not one falleth to the ground without your Father's knowledge, and each more beautiful than any sea-nymph whom you ever fancied? For, after all, you cannot fancy a whole sea-nymph (perhaps in that case you could make one), but only a very little scrap of her outside. Or if, as you boast, you are inspired by the Creative Spirit, tell us what the Creative Spirit says about that rock, and not such verse as this, the lesson of which you don't yourself really feel. Pretty enough it is, perhaps, but in your haste to say a pretty thing, just because it is pretty, you have not cared to condemn yourself out of your own mouth. Why were you sulky, sir, with Mrs. Vavasour this very morning, after all that passed, because she would look over the washing-books, while you wanted her to hear about Fra Dolcino? And why, though she was up to her knees among your dirty shirts when you went out, did you not give her one parting kiss, which would have transfigured her virtuous drudgery for her into a sacred pleasure? One is heartily glad to see you disturbed, cross though you may look at it, by that sturdy step and jolly whistle which

burst in on you from the other end of the chasm, as Tom Thurnall, with an old smock frock over his coat and a large basket on his arm, comes stumbling and hopping towards you, dropping every now and then on hands and knees, and turning over on his back, to squeeze his head into some muddy crack, and then withdraw it with the salt water dripping down his nose.

Elsley closed his eyes, and rested his head on his hand in a somewhat studied 'pose'. But as he wished not to be interrupted, it may not have been altogether unpardonable to pretend sleep. However, the sleeping posture had exactly the opposite effect to that which he designed.

'Ah, Mr. Vavasour!'

'Humph!' quoth he slowly, it not sulkily.

'I admire your taste, sir, a charming museum-house old Triton has vacated for your use, but let me advise you not to go to sleep in it.'

'Why then, sir?'

'Because it's no business of mine, of course', but the tide has turned already, and if a breeze springs up, old Triton will be back again in a hurry and in a rage also, and I may possibly lose a good patient.'

Elsley, who knew nothing about the tides, save that 'the moon wooed the ocean,' or some such important fact, thanked him coolly enough, and returned to a meditative attitude. Tom saw that he was in the seventh heaven, and went on, but he had not gone three steps before he pulled up short, slipping his hands together once, as a man does who has found what he wants, and then plunged up to his knees in a rock pool, and then began working very gently at something under water.

Elsley watched him for full five minutes with so much curiosity that, despite of himself, he asked him what he was doing.

Tom had his whole face under water, and did not hear till Elsley had repeated the question.

'Only a rare zoophyte,' said he at last, hitting his dripping visage and gasping for breath, and then he dived again.

'Inexplicable pedantry of science!' thought Elsley to himself, while Tom worked on steadily, and at last rose, and taking out a phial from his basket, was about to deposit in it something invisible.

'Stay a moment, you really have roused my curiosity by your earnestness. May I see what it is for which you have taken so much trouble?'

Tom held out on his finger a piece of shiny crust the size of a halfpenny. Elsley could only shrug his shoulders.

'Nothing to you, sir, I doubt not, but worth a guinea to me, even if it be only to mount bits of it as microscope objects.'

'So you mingle business with science?' said Elsley, rather in a contentious tone.

'Why not? I must live, and my father too, and it is as honest a way of making money as any other, I preach in no man's manner for my game.'

'But what is your game? What possible

attraction in that bit of dirt can make men spend their money on it?"

"You shall see," said Tom, dropping it into the phial of salt water, and offering it to Elsley, with his pocket magnifier.

"Judge for yourself."

Elsley did so, and beheld a new wonder, a living plant of crystal, studded with crystal bells, from each of which waved a crown of delicate arms. It was the first time that Elsley had ever seen one of those exquisite zoophytes which stud every rock and every tuft of weed.

"This is most beautiful," said he at length.

"Humph! why should not Mr Vavasour write a poem about it?"

"Why not, indeed?" thought Elsley.

"It's no business of mine, no man's less, but I often wonder why you poets don't take to the microscope, and tell us a little more about the wonderful things which are here already, and not about those which are not, and which, perhaps, never will be."

"Well," said Elsley, after another look. "but, after all, these things have no human interest in them."

"I don't know what, they have to me, for instance. These are the things which I would write about if I had any turn for verse, not about human nature, of which I know, I'm afraid, a little too much already. I always like to read old Darwin's *Loves of the Plants*, hosh as it is in a scientific point of view, it amuses one's fancy without making one lose one's temper, as one must when one begins to analyse that microscopic ape called self and friends."

"You would like, then, the old cosmogonies, the *Kabbas* and the *Vedas*," said Elsley, getting interested, as most people did after five minutes' talk with the cynical doctor. "I suppose you would not say much for their science, but, as poetry, they are just what you ask for: the expression of thoughtful spirits, who look round upon nature with awe-struck, child-like eyes, and asked of all heaven and earth the question, 'What are you? How came you to be?' Yet—it may be my fault—while I admire them, I cannot sympathise with them. To me, this zoophyte is as a being of another sphere, and till I can create some link in my own mind between it and humanity it is as nothing in my eyes."

"There is link enough, sir, don't doubt, and chains of iron and brass too."

"You believe, then, in the development theory of the 'Vestiges'?"

"Doctors who have their bread to earn never commit themselves to theories. No, all I meant was, that this little zoophyte lives by the same laws as you and I, and that he and the sea-weeds, and so forth, teach us doctors certain little rules concerning life and death, which you will have a chance soon of seeing at work on the most grand and poetical, and indeed altogether tragic scale."

"What do you mean?"

"When the cholera comes here, as it will, at

its present pace, before the end of the summer, then I shall have the zoophytes rising up in judgment against me, if I have not profited by a leaf out of their book."

"The cholera?" said Elsley in a startled voice, forgetting Tom's parables in the new thought. For Elsley had a dread more nervous than really coward of infectious diseases; and he had also (and prided himself, too, on having) all Goethe's dislike of anything terrible or horrible, of sickness, disease, wounds, death, anything which jarred with that "beautiful" which was his ideal.

"The cholera?" repeated he. "I hope not, I wish you had not mentioned it, Mr Thurnall."

"I am very sorry that I did so, it it offend you. I had thought that forewarned was forearmed. After all, it is no business of mine, if I have extra labour, as I shall have, I shall have extra experience, and that will be a fair set-off, even if the board of guardians don't vote me an extra remuneration, as they ought to do."

Elsley was struck dumb, first by the certainty which Tom's words expressed, and next by the coolness of their temper. At last he stammered out, "Good heavens, Mr Thurnall! you do not talk of that frightful asconge—so disgusting, too, in its character—as a matter of profit and loss! It is sordid, cold-hearted!"

"My dear sir, if I let myself think, much more talk, about the matter in any other tone, I should face the thing poorly enough when it came. I shall have work enough to keep my head about the end of August or beginning of September, and I must not lose it beforehand, by indulging in any horror, disgust, or other emotion perfectly justifiable in a layman."

"But are not doctors men?"

"That depends very much on what 'a man' means."

"Men with human sympathy and compassion."

"Oh, I mean by a man, a man with human strength. My dear sir, one may be too busy, and at doing good too (though that is not my line, save professionally, because it is my only way of earning money), but one may be too busy at doing good to have time for compassion. If while I was cutting a man's leg off I thought of the pain which he was suffering—"

"Thank Heaven!" said Elsley, "that it was not my lot to become a medical man."

Tom looked at him with the quaintest smile, a flush of mingled anger and contempt had been rising in him as he heard the *ex-bottle* boy talking sentiment—but he only went on quietly—

"No, sir, with your more delicate sensibilities, you may thank Heaven that you did not become a medical man, your life would have been one of torture, disgust, and agonising sense of responsibility. But do you not see that you must thank Heaven for the sufferer's sake also? I will not shock you again by talking of amputation, but even in the smallest matter—even if you were merely sending medicine to an old maid—suppose that your imagination were preoccupied by the thought of her old age, her sufferings, her disappointed hopes, her regretful

dream of bygone youth, and beauty, and love, and all the tender fancies which might well spring out of such a mournful spectacle, would you not be but too likely (pardon the pathos) to end by sending her an elderly gentleman's medicine after all, and so either frightfully increasing her sufferings, or ending them once for all?

Tom said this in the most quiet and natural tone, without even a twinkle of his wicked eye; but Elsie heard him begin with reddening face, and as he went on, the red had turned to purple, and then to deadly yellow, till making a half-step forward he cried fiercely—

'Sir!' and then stopped suddenly, for his foot slipped upon the polished stone, and on his face he fell into the pool at Thruall's feet.

'Well for both of us, goose!' said Tom inwardly, as he went to pick him up. 'I verily believe he was going to strike me, and that would have done for neither of us. I was a fool to say it, but the temptation was so exquisite, and it must have come some day.'

But Vavasour staggered up of his own accord, and dashing away Tom's proffered hand, was rushing off without a word.

'Not so, Mr John Briggs!' said Tom, making up his mind in a moment that he must have it out now, or never; and that he might have everything to fear from Vavasour if he let him go home furious. 'We do not part thus, sir!'

'We will meet again, if you will,' flamed Vavasour, 'but it shall end in the death of one of us!'

'By each other's potions? I can doctor myself, sir, thank you. Listen to me, John Briggs! You shall listen!' and Tom sprang past him, and planted himself at the foot of the rock steps, to prevent his escaping upward.

'What, do you wish to quarrel with me, sir? It is I who ought to quarrel with you. I am the aggrieved party, and not you, sir! I have not seen the son of the man who, when I was an apothecary's boy, jettied him, lent me books, introduced me as a genius, turned my head for me—which was just what I was vain enough to enjoy—I have not seen that man's son cast ashore penniless and friendless, and yet never held out to him a helping hand, but tried to conceal my identity from him, from a dirty shame of my honest father's honest name.'

Vavasour dropped his eyes, for was it not true? but he raised them again more fiercely than ever.

'Curse you! I owe you nothing. It was you who made me ashamed of it. You rhymed on it, and laughed about poetry coming out of such a name.'

'And what if I did? Are poets to be made of nothing but tinder and gall? Why could you not take an honest joke as it was meant and go your way like other people, till you had shown yourself worth something, and won honour even for the name of Briggs?'

'And I have! I have my own station now, my own fame, sir, and it is nothing to you what

I choose to call myself. I have won my place, I say, and your mean envy cannot rob me of it.'

'You have your station. Very good,' said Tom, not caring to notice the imputation, 'you owe the greater part of it to your having made a most fortunate marriage, for which I respect you, as a practical man. Let your poetry be what it may (and people tell me that it is really very beautiful), your match shows me that you are a clever, and therefore a successful person.'

'Do you take me for a sordid schemer, like yourself? I loved what was worthy of me, and won it because I deserved it.'

'Then, having won it, treat it as it deserves,' said Tom, with a cool, searching look, before which Vavasour's eyes fell again. 'Understand me, Mr John Briggs, it is of no consequence to me what you call yourself. But it is of consequence to me that I should not have a patient in my parish whom I cannot cure, for I cannot cure broken hearts, though they will be simple enough to come to me for medicine.'

'You shall have no chance! You shall never enter my house! You shall not ruin me, sir, by your bills!'

Tom made no answer to this fresh insult. He had another game to play.

'Take care what you say, Briggs, remember that, after all, you are in my power, and I had better remind you plainly of the fact.'

'And you mean to make me your tool? I will die first!'

'I believe that,' said Tom, who was very near adding, 'that he should be sorry to work with such tools.'

'My tools are my lancet and my drugs,' said he quietly, 'and all I have to say refers to them. It suits my purpose to become the principal medical man in this neighbourhood—'

'And I am to tout for introductions for you?'

'You are to be so very kind as to allow me to finish my sentence, just as you would allow any other gentleman, and because I wish for practice, and patients, and power, you will be so kind as to treat me henceforth as one high-minded man would treat another to whom he is obliged. For you know, John Briggs, as well as I,' said Tom, drawing himself up to his full height, 'look me in the face, if you can, ere you deny it, that I was, while you knew me, as honourable a man and as kind-hearted a man as you ever were, and that now—considering the circumstances under which we meet—you have more reason to trust me than I have, *prima facie*, to trust you.'

Vavasour answered not a word. 'Good-bye, then,' said Tom, drawing aside from the step, 'Mrs Vavasour will be anxious about you! And mind! With regard to her first of all, sir, and then with regard to other matters—as long, and only as long, as you remember that you are John Briggs of Whitbury, I shall be the first to forget it. There is my hand, for old acquaintance' sake.'

Vavasour took the proffered hand coldly,

paused a moment, and then wrung it in silence, and hurried away home.

'Have I played my ace ill after all?' said Tom, sitting down to consider. 'As for whether I should have played it at all, that's no business of mine now. Madam Might-have-been may see to that. But did I play ill? For if I did, I may try a new lead yet. Ought I to have twitted him about his wife? If he's venomous, it may only make matters worse, and still worse if he be suspicious. I don't think he was either in old times, but vanity will make a man so, and it may have made him. Well, I must only ingratiate myself all the more with him, and hum out, too, whether she has his secret as well as I. What I am most afraid of is my having told him plainly that he was in my power, it's up to make sprats of his now flounce desperately, in the mere hope of proving themselves whales after all, if it's only to then unnerve selves. Never mind, he can't break my tackle, and besides, that grip of the hand seemed to indicate that the poor wretch was beat, and thought himself let off easily, as unless he is. We'll hope so. Now, zoophytes, for another turn with you!'

To tell the truth, however, Tom is looking for more than zoophytes, and has been doing so at every dead low tide since he was wrecked. He has heard nothing yet of his belt. The notes have not been presented at the London bank, nobody in the village has been spending more money than usual, for cunning Tom has contrived already to know how many pints of ale every man of whom he has the least doubt has drunk. Perhaps, after all, the belt may have been torn off in the life struggle, it may have been for a moment in Grace's hands, and then have been swept back into the sea. What was likely? And what more likely, in that case, that, sinking by its weight, it is wedged away in some cranny of the rocks? So spring-tide after spring-tide Tom searches, and all the more carefully because others are searching too, for waifs and strays from the wreck. Sad relief of mortality he finds at times, as others do, once, even, a dressing-case, full of rings and pins and chains, which belonged, he fancied, to a gay young lady with whom he had waited in many a time on deck, as they shipped along before the soft trade-wind but no belt. He sent the dressing-case to the Lloyd's underwriters, and searched on, but in vain. Neither could he find that any one else had forestalled him, and that very afternoon, sulky and disheartened, he determined to waste no more time about the matter, and strode home, vowing signal vengeance against the thief, if he caught him.

'And I will catch him!' These West-country yokels, to fancy that they can do Tom Thurnall! It's adding insult to injury, as Sam Weller's parrot has it.

Now his shortest way home lay across the shore, and then along the beach, and up the steps by the little waterfall, just Mrs. Harvey's door, and at that door sat Grace, sewing in the

sun. She looked up and bowed as he passed, smiling modestly, and little dreaming of what was passing in his mind, and when a very lovely girl smiled and bowed to Tom, he must needs do the same to her. Whereon she added:

'I beg your pardon, sir, have you heard anything of the money you lost? I--we--have been so ashamed to think of such a thing happening here.'

Tom's evil spirit was roused.

'Have you heard anything of it, Miss Harvey? For you seem to be the only person in the place who knows anything about the matter.'

'I, sir?' cried Grace, fixing her great startled eyes full on him.

'Why, m'am,' said Tom with a courtly smile, 'you may possibly recollect, if you will so far tax your memory, that you had it in your hands at least a moment, when you did me the kindness to save my life, and as you were kind enough to inform me that I should recover it when I was worthy of it, I suppose I have not yet risen in your eyes to the required state of conversion and regeneration.' And swinging impatiently away, he walked on, really afraid lest he should say something rude.

Grace half called after him, and then suddenly checking herself, rushed in to her mother with a wild and pale face.

'What is this Mr. Thurnall has been saying to me about his belt and money which he lost?'

'About what? Has he been rude to you, the bad man?' cried Mrs. Harvey, dropping the patch in some confusion, and taking a long while to pick up the pieces.

'About the belt. The money which he lost. Why don't you speak, mother?'

'Belt--money? Ah, I recollect now. He has lost some money, he says.'

'Of course he has.'

'How should you know anything? I recollect there was some talk of it, though. But what matter what he says? He was quite passed away, I'll swear, when they carried him up.'

'But, mother! mother! he says that I know about it, that I had it in my hands!'

'You? Oh, the wicked wretch, the false, ungrateful, slanderous child of wrath, with sinner's poison under his lips! No, my child! Though we're poor, we're honest! Let him slander us, rob us of our good name, send us to prison if he will—he cannot rob us of our souls. We'll be silent, we'll turn the other cheek, and commit our cause to One above who pleads for the orphan and the widow. We will not strive nor cry, my child. Oh, no!'

And Mrs. Harvey began fussing over the smashed patch. 'I shall not strive nor cry, mother,' said Grace, who had recovered her usual calm, 'but he must have some cause for these strange words. Do you recollect seeing me with the belt?'

'Belt, what's a belt? I know nothing about belts. I tell you he's a villain and a slanderer. Oh, that it should have come to this, to have my child's fair fame blasted by a wretch that

comes nobody knows where from, and has been doing nobody knows what, for aught I know!'

'Mother, mother! we know no harm of him. If he is mistaken, God forgive him!'

'If he is mistaken?' went on Mrs. Harvey, still over the pie-dish but Grace gave her no answer. She was deep in thought. She recollected now, that as she had gone up the path from the cove on that eventful morning, she had seen Willis and Thurnall whispering earnestly together, and she recollected now, for the first time, that there had been a certain sadness and perplexity, almost reserve, about Willis ever since. Good heavens! Could he suspect her too? She would find out that at least, and no sooner had her mother fused away, talking angrily to herself, into the back kitchen, than Grace put on her bonnet and shawl, and went forth to find the captain.

In an hour she returned. Her lips were firm as if, her cheeks pale, her eyes red with weeping. She said nothing to her mother, who for her part did not seem inclined to allude again to the matter.

'Where have you been, child? You look quite poorly, and your eyes red.'

'The wind is very cold, mother,' and she, and went into her room. Her mother looked sharply after her, and muttered to herself.

Grace went in, and sat down on the bed. 'What a coldness this is at my heart!' she said aloud to herself, trying to smile, but she could not, and she sat on the bed-side, without taking off her bonnet and shawl, her hands hanging listlessly by her side, her head drooping on her bosom, till her mother called her to tea. Then she was forced to rouse herself, and went out, composed, but utterly wretched.

Tom walked up homeward, very ill at ease. He had played, to use his nomenclature, two trump cards running, and was by no means satisfied that he had played them well. He had no right, certainly, to be satisfied with either move, for both had been made in a somewhat evil spirit, and certainly for no very disinterested end.

That was a view of the matter, however, which never entered his mind, there was only that general dissatisfaction with himself which is, though men try hard to deny the fact, none other than the supernatural sting of conscience. He tried 'to lay to his soul the flattering unction' that he might, after all, be of use to Mrs. Vavasour, by using his power over her husband, but he knew in his secret heart that any move of his in that direction was likely only to make matters worse, that to-day's explosion might only have sent home the hapless Vavasour in a more irritable temper than ever. And thinking over many things, backward and forward, he saw his own way so little, that he actually condescended to go and 'pump' Frank Headley. So he termed it, but after all, it was only like asking advice of a good man, because he did not feel himself quite good enough to advise himself.

T. Y. A.

The curate was preparing to sally forth, after his frugal dinner. The morning he spent at the schools, or in parish secularities, the afternoon, till dusk, was devoted to visiting the poor, the night, not to sleep, but to reading and sermon writing. Thus, by sitting up till two in the morning, and rising again at six for his private devotions, before walking a mile and a half up to church for the morning service, Frank Headley burnt the candle of life at both ends very effectually, and showed that he did so by his pale cheeks and red eyes.

'Ah!' said Tom, as he entered. 'As natural poor nature is being robbed and murdered by rich grace.'

'What do you mean now?' asked Frank, smiling, for he had become accustomed enough to Tom's quaint parables, though he had to scold him often for their irreverence.

'Nature says, "after dinner sit awhile"; and even the dumb animals hear her voice, and lie by for a while when their stomachs are full. Grace says, "Jump up and rush out the moment you have swallowed your food, and if you get an indigestion, blame poor Nature for it, and lay the blame on Adam's fall!"'

'You are irreverent, my good sir, as usual, but you are unjust also this time.'

'How then?'

'Unjust to grace, as you phrase it,' answered Frank, with a quaint sad smile. 'I assure you on my honour that grace has nothing whatsoever to do with my "rushing out" just now, but simply the desire to do my good works that they may be seen of men. I hate going out. I should like to sit and read the whole afternoon but I am afraid lest the dysentery should say, "He has not been to see us and so for the last three days", so off I go, and no credit to me.'

Why had Frank dared, upon a month's acquaintance, to lay bare his own heart thus to a man of no creed at all? Because, I suppose, and all differences, he had found one point of likeness between himself and Thurnall, he had found that Tom at heart was a truly genuine man, sincere and faithful to his own scheme of the universe.

Now that man, through all his eventful life, had been enabled to

'Bate not a jot of heart or hope,
But steer right on ward,

was a problem which Frank longed curiously, and yet fearfully vital, to solve. There were many qualities in him which Frank could not but admire, and long to imitate, and, 'Whence had they come?' was another problem at which he looked, trembling as many a new thought crossed him. He longed, too, to learn from Tom somewhat at least of that *serior fare*, that power of 'becoming all things to all men,' which St. Paul had, and for want of which Frank had failed. He saw, too, with surprise, that Tom had gained in one month more real insight into the characters of his parishioners than he had done in twelve, and besides all, there was the

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craving of the lonely heart for human confidence and friendship. So it befell that Frank spoke out his inmost thought that day, and thought no shame, and it befell also, that Thurnall, when he heard it, said in his heart—

'What a noble, honest fellow you are, when you —'

But he answered enigmatically—

'Oh, I quite agree with you that Grace has nothing to do with it. I only referred it to that source because I thought you would do so.'

'You ought to be ashamed of your dishonesty, then.'

'I know it, but my view of the case is, that you made out after dinner for the very same reason that the Yankee store-keeper does—from — you'll forgive me if I say it!'

'Of course. You cannot speak too plainly to me.'

'Concent, the Yankee fancies himself such an important person that the commercial world will stand still unless he lies back to its help after ten minutes' joshing, with his mouth full of pork and pickled peaches. And you fancy yourself so important in your line that the spiritual world will stand still unless you bolt back to help it in like wise. Substitute a hall craked with tin chips for the pork, and the cases are exact parallels.'

'Your parallel does not hold good, doctor. The Yankee goes back to his store to earn money for himself, and not to keep commerce alive.'

'While you go for utterly disinterested motives. I see.'

'Do you?' said Frank. 'If you think that I fancy myself a better man than the Yankee, you mistake me, but at least you will confess that I am not working for money.'

'No, you have your notions of reward, and he has his. He wants to be paid by material dollars, payable next month; you by spiritual dollars, payable when you die. I don't see the great difference.'

'Only the slight difference between what is material and what is spiritual.'

'They seem to me, from all I can hear in pulpits, to be only two different sorts of pleasant things, and to be sought after, both alike, simply because they are pleasant. Self-interest, if you will forgive me, seems to me the spring of both, only, to do you justice, you are a further-sighted and more prudent man than the Yankee store-keeper, and having more exquisitely developed notions of what your true self-interest is, are content to wait a little longer than he.'

'You staid with a jest, Thurnall. You little know how your words hit home.'

'Well, then, to turn from a matter of which I know nothing—I must keep you in, and give you parish business to do at home. I am come to consult you as my spiritual pastor and master.'

Frank looked a little astonished.

'Don't be alarmed. I am not going to confess my own sins—only other people's.'

'Pray don't, then. I know far more of them already than I can cure. I am worn out with the daily discovery of fresh evil wherever I go.'

'Then why not comfort yourself by trying to find a little fresh good wherever you go?'

Frank sighed.

'Perhaps, though, you don't care for any sort of good except your own sort of good. You are fastidious. Well, you have your expenses. But you can understand a poor fellow like me, who has been dragged through the slums and sewers of this wicked world for fifteen years and more, being very well content with any sort of good which I can light on, and not particular as to either quantity or quality.'

'Perhaps yours is the healthier state of mind, if you can only find the real good. The vulture me nose, which smells nothing but corruption, is no credit to its possessor. And it would be pleasant, at least, to find good in every man.'

'One can't do that in one's study. Mixing with them is the only plan. No doubt they're inconsistent enough. The more you see of them, the less you trust them, and yet the more you see of them, the more you like them. Can you solve that paradox from your books?'

'I will try,' said Frank. 'I generally have more than one to think over when you go. But, surely, there are men so fallen that they are utterly unsalvageable to good.'

'Very likely. There's no saying in this world what may not be. Only I never saw one. I'll tell you a story, you may apply it as you like. When I was on the Texan expedition, and raw to soldiering and camping, we had to sleep in low ground, and suffered terribly from a miasma. Badly cold it was, when it came, and the men who once got chilled through with it, just died. I was lying on the bare ground one night, and chilly enough I was. For I was short of clothes, and had lost my buffalo robe—but fell asleep. And on waking the next morning, I found myself covered up in my comrade's blankets, even to his coat, while he was sitting shivering in his shirt sleeves. The cold fog had come down in the night, and the man had stripped himself, and sat all night with death staring him in the face, to save my life. And all the reason he gave was, that if one of us must die, it was better the older should go first, and not a youngster like me. And, said Tom, lowering his voice, 'that man was a murderer!'

'A murderer?'

'Yes, a drunken, gambling, cut-throat rowdy as ever grew ripe for the gallows. Now, will you tell me that there was nothing in that man but what the devil put there?'

Frank sat meditating awhile on this strange story, which is moreover a true one, and then looked up with something like tears in his eyes.

'And he did not die?'

'Not he. I saw him die afterwards—shot through the heart, without time even to cry out. But I have not forgotten what he did for

me that night, and I'll tell you what, sir! I do not believe that God has forgotten it either.'

Frank was silent for a few moments, and then Tom changed the subject.

'I want to know what you can tell me about this Mr. Vavasour.'

'Hardly anything, I am sorry to say. I was at his house at tea, two or three times, when I first came, and I had very agreeable evenings, and talks on art and poetry, but I believe I offended him by hinting that he ought to come to church, which he never does, and since then our acquaintance has all but ceased. I suppose you will say, as usual, that I played my cards badly there also.'

'Not at all!' said Tom, who was disposed to take any one's part against Elsie. 'If a clergyman has not a right to tell a man that, I don't see what right he has of any kind. Only,' added he, with one of his quaint smiles, 'the clergyman, if he compels a man to deal at his store, is bound to furnish him with the articles which he wants.'

'Which he needs, or which he likes? For "wanting" has both those meanings.'

'With something that he finds by experience does him good, and so learns to like it, because he knows that he needs it, as my patients do in physic.'

'I wish my patients would do so by mine, but, unfortunately, half of them seem to me not to know what their disease is, and the other half do not think they are diseased at all.'

'Well,' said Tom duly, 'perhaps some of them are more right than you fancy. Every man knows his own business best.'

'If it were so, they would go about it some what differently from what most of the poor creatures do.'

'Do you think so? I fancy myself that not one of them does a wrong thing, but what he knows it to be wrong just as well as you do, and is much more ashamed and frightened about it already than you can ever make him by preaching at him.'

'Do you?'

'I do. I judge of others by myself.'

'Then would you have a clergyman never warn his people of their sins?'

'If I were he, I'd much sooner take the sins for granted, and say to them, "Now, my friends, I know you are all, ninety-nine out of the hundred of you, not such bad fellows at bottom, and would all like to be good, if you only knew how, so I'll tell you as far as I know, though I don't know much about the matter. For the truth is, you must have a hundred troubles every day which I never felt in my life, and it must be a very hard thing to keep body and soul together, and to get a little pleasure on this side the grave without making blackguards of yourselves. Therefore I don't pretend to set myself up as a better or a wiser man than you at all, but I do know a thing or two which I fancy may be useful to you. You can but try it. So come up, if you like, any of you, and

talk matters over with me as between gentleman and gentleman. I shall keep your secret, of course, and if you find I can't cure your complaint, why, you can but go away and try elsewhere."

'And so the doctor's model sermon ends in proposing private confession!'

'Of course. The thing itself which will do them good, without the red rag of an official name, which sends them cackling off like frightened turkeys. Such private confession as is going on between you and me now. Here am I confessing to you all my unorthodoxy.'

'And I my ignorance,' said Frank, 'for I really believe you know more about the matter than I do.'

'Not at all. I may be all wrong. But the fault of your cloth seems to me to be that they apply their medicines without dignifying most of them, to take the least diagnosis of the case. How could I cure a man without first examining what was the matter with him?'

'So say the old casuists, of whom I have read enough. Some would say too much, but they do not satisfy me. They deal with actions, and motives, and so forth, but they do not go down to the one root of wrong which is the same in every man.'

'You're getting beyond me. But why do you not apply a little of the worldly wisdom which these same casuists taught you?'

'To tell you the truth, I have tried in past years, and found that the medicine would not act.'

'Humph! Well, that would depend, again, on the previous diagnosis of human nature being correct, and those old monks, I should say, would know about as much of human nature as any clavis in a steeple. Still you wouldn't say that what was the matter with old Heale was the matter also with Vavasour?'

'I believe from my heart that it is.'

'Humph! Then you know the symptoms of his complaint?'

'I know that he never comes to church.'

'Nothing more? I am really speaking in confidence. You surely have heard of disagreements between him and Mrs. Vavasour?'

'Never, I assure you, you shock me.'

'I am exceedingly sorry, then, that I said a word about it, but the whole parish talks of it,' answered Tom, who was surprised at this fresh proof of the little confidence which Abernethy put in their parish.

'Ah!' said Frank sadly, 'I am the last person in the parish to hear any news, but this is very distressing.'

'Very, to me. My honour, to tell you the truth, as a medical man, is concerned in the matter, for she is growing quite ill from unhappiness, and I cannot cure her, so I come to you, as soul-doctor, to do what I, the body doctor, cannot.'

Frank sat pondering for a minute, and then—

'You set me on a task for which I am as little fit as any man, by your own showing.

What do I know of disagreements between man and wife? And one has a delicacy about offering her comfort. She must bestow her confidence on me before I can use it, while he—

'While he, as the cause of the disease, is what you ought to treat, and not her unhappiness, which is only a symptom of it.'

'Spoken like a wise doctor but to tell you the truth, Thurnall, I have no influence over Mr. Vavasour, and see no means of getting any. If he recognised my authority, as his parish priest, then I should see my way. Let him be as bad as he might, I should have a fixed point from which to work, but with his free-thinking notions, I know well—one can judge it too easily from his points—he would look on me as a pedant assuming a spiritual tyranny to which I have no claim.'

Tom sat awhile musing his knee, and then—

'If you saw a man fallen into the water, what do you think would be the shortest way to prove to him that you had authority from heaven to pull him out? Do you give it up? Pulling him out, would it not be, without more ado?'

'I should be happy enough to pull poor Vavasour out, if he would let me. But till he believes that I can do it, how can I even begin?'

'How can you expect him to believe, if he has no proof?'

'There are proofs enough in the Bible and elsewhere, if he will but accept them. If he refuses to examine into the credentials, the fault is his, not mine. I really do not wish to be hard, but would not you do the same, if any one refused to employ you, because he chose to deny that you were a legally qualified practitioner?'

'Not so badly put, but what should I do in that case? Go on quietly curing his neighbours, till he began to alter his mind as to my qualifications, and came in to be cured himself. But here's this difference between you and me. I am not bound to attend any one who don't send for me, while you think that you are, and carry the notion a little too far, for I expect you to kill yourself by it some day.'

'Well?' said Frank, with something of that lazy Oxford tone, which is intended to save the speaker the trouble of giving his arguments, when he has already made up his mind, or thinks that he has so done.

'Well, if I thought myself bound to doctor the man, willy-nilly, as you do, I would certainly go to him, and show him, at least, that I understood his complaint. That would be the first step towards his letting me cure him. How else on earth do you fancy that Paul cured those Corinthians about whom I have been reading lately?'

'Are you, too, going to quote Scripture against me? I am glad to find that your studies extend to St. Paul.'

'To tell you the truth, your sermon last Sunday puzzled me. I could not comprehend (on your showing) how Paul got that wonderful

influence over those pagans which he evidently had, and as how to get influence is a very favourite study of mine, I borrowed the book when I went home, and read for myself, and the matter at last seemed clear enough, in Paul's own showing.'

'I don't doubt that, but I suspect your interpretation of the fact and mine would not agree.'

'Mine is simple enough. He says that what proved him to be an apostle was his power. He is continually appealing to his power, and what can he mean by that, but that he could do, and had done, what he professed to do? He promised to make those poor heathen rascals of Greeks better, and wiser, and happier men, and, I suppose, he made them so, and then there was no doubt of his commission, or his authority, or anything else. He says himself he did not require any credentials, for they were his credentials, real and known of every one, he had made good men of them out of bad ones, and that was proof enough whose apostle he was.'

'Well,' said Frank, half sadly, 'I might say a great deal, of course, on the other side of the question, but I prefer hearing what you laymen think about it all.'

'Will you be angry if I tell you honestly?'

'Did you ever find me angry at anything you said?'

'No. I will do you the justice to say that. Well, what we laymen say is this. If the parsons have the authority of which they boast, why don't they use it? If they have commission to make bad people good, they must have power too, for he whose commission they claim is not likely, I should suppose, to set a man to do what he cannot do.'

'And we can do it if people would but submit to us. It all comes round again to the same point.'

'So it does. How to get them to listen. I tried to find out how Paul achieved that first step, and when I looked he told me plainly enough. By becoming all things to all men, by showing these people that he understood them, and knew what was the matter with them. Now do you go and do likewise by Vavasour, and then exercise your authority like a practical man. If you have power to bind and loose, as you told us last Sunday, bind that fellow's ungovernable temper, and loose him from the real slavery which he is in to his miserable conceit and self-indulgence! and then, if he does not believe in your "sacerdotal power," he is even a greater fool than I take him for.'

'Honestly, I will try. God help me,' added Frank in a lower voice, 'but as for quarrelling between man and wife, as I told you, no one understands them less than I.'

'Then marry a wife yourself and quarrel a little with her for experiment, and then you'll know all about it.'

Frank laughed in spite of himself.

'Thank you. No man is less likely to try that experiment than I.'

'Hum!'

'I have quite enough as a bachelor to distract me from my work without adding to them those of a wife and family, and those little home lessons in the frailty of human nature, in which you advise me to copy Mr. Navasour.'

'And so,' said Tom, 'having to doctor human beings, nineteen-twentieths of whom are married, and being aware that three parts of the miseries of human life come either from wanting to be married, or from married cares and troubles—you think that you will improve your chance of doctoring your flock rightly by avoiding carefully the least practical acquaintance with the chief cause of their disease. Philosophical and logical, truly!'

'You seem to have acquired a little knowledge of men and women, my good friend, without encumbering yourself with a wife and children.'

'Would you like to go to the same school to which I went?' asked Thurnall, with a look of such grave meaning that Frank's pure spirit shrank within him. 'And I'll tell you this, whenever I see a woman nursing her baby, or a father with his child upon his knees, I say to myself—they know more, at this minute, of human nature, as of the great law of "C'est l'amour, l'amour, l'amour, which makes the world go round," than I am likely to do for many a day. I'll tell you what, sir! These simple natural ties, which are common to us and the dumb animals—as I live, sir! they are the divinest things I see in the world! I have but one, and that is love to my poor old father, that's all the religion I have as yet—but I tell you it alone has kept me from being a ruffian and a blackguard! And I'll tell you more,' said Tom, warning, 'of all diabolical dodges for preventing the parsons from seeing who they are, or what human beings are, or what their work in the world is, or anything else, the neatest is that celibacy of the clergy. I should like to have you with me in Spanish America, or in France either, and see what you thought of it then. How it ever came into mortal brains is to me the puzzle. I've often fancied, when I've watched those priests—and very good fellows, too, some of them are—that there must be a devil after all abroad in the world, as you say, for no human sanity could ever have hit upon so complete and 'cute a device for making parsons do the more harm, the more good they try to do. There, I've preached you a sermon, and made you angry.'

'Not in the least—but I must go now and see some sick.'

'Well, go, and prosper, only recollect that the said sick are men and women.'

And away Tom went, thinking to himself 'Well, that is a noble, straightforward, honest fellow, and will do yet, if he'll only get a wife. He is not one of those asses who have made up their minds by book that the world is square, and won't believe it to be round for any ocular

demonstration. He'll find out what shape the world is before long, and behave as such, and act accordingly.'

Little did Tom think as he went home that day, in full-blown satisfaction with his sermon to Frank, of the misery he had caused, and was going to cause for many a day, to poor Grace Harvey. It was a rude shock to her to find herself thus suspected, though perhaps it was one which she needed. She had never, since one first trouble ten years ago, known any real grief, and had therefore had all the more time to make a luxury of mental ones. She was treated by the simple folk around her as all but inspired, and being possessed of real powers as marvellous in her own eyes as those which were imputed to her were in theirs (for whatever real spiritual experiences but daily miracles?), she was just in that temper of mind in which she required, as ballast, all her real goodness, lest the mental balance should topple headlong after the intellectual, and the downward course of vanity, excitement, deception, blasphemous assumptions, be entered on. Happy for her that she was in Protestant and common-sense England, and in a country parish, where mesmerism and spirit-rapping were unknown. Had she been an American, she might have become one of the most lucrative 'mediums', had she been born in a Romish country, she would have probably become an even more famous personage. There is no reason why she should not have equalled, or surpassed, the ecstasies of St. Theresa, or of St. Hildegardis, or any other sweet dreamer of sweet dreams, have founded a new order of charity, have enriched the clergy of a whole province, and have died in seven years, maddened by alternate paroxysms of self-conceit and revulsions of self-abasement. Her own preachers and class-readers, indeed (so do extremes meet), would not have been sorry to make use of her in somewhat the same manner, however feebly and coarsely, but her innate self-respect and modesty had preserved her from the snares of such clumsy poachers, and more than one good-looking young preacher had fled desperately from a station where, instead of making a tool of Grace Harvey, he could only madden his own foolish heart with love for her.

So Grace had reigned upon her pretty little throne of not unbearable sorrows, till a real and bitter woe came, one which could not be hugged and cherished, like the rest, one which she tried to fling from her angrily, scornfully, and found to her horror that, instead of her possessing it, it possessed her, and coiled itself round her heart, and would not be flung away. She—she, of all beings, to be suspected as a thief, and by the very man whose life she had saved! She was willing enough to confess herself—and confessed herself night and morning—a miserable sinner, and her heart a cage of unclean birds, deceitful, and desperately wicked—except in that. The conscious innocence flashed up in pride and scorn, in thoughts, even when she

was alone, in words, of which she would not have believed herself capable. With hot brow and dry eyes she paced her little chamber, sat down on the bed, staring into vacancy, sprang up and paced again, but she went into no trance—she dare not. The grief was too great, she felt that, if she once gave way enough to lose her self-possession, she should go mad. And the first, and perhaps not the least good effect of that fiery trial was, that it compelled her to a stern self-restraint, to which her will, weakened by mental luxuriance, had been long a stranger.

But a fiery trial it was. That first wild (and yet not unnatural) fancy, that heaven had given Thurnall to her, had deepened day by day by the merciful benignity of it. But she never dreamt of him as her husband, only as a friendless stranger to be helped and comforted. And that he was worthy of help, that some great future was in store for him, that he was a chosen vessel marked out for glory, she had persuaded herself utterly, and the persuasion grew in her day by day, as she heard more and more of his cleverness, honesty, and kindness, mysterious and, to her, unaccountable. The closer she did not make haste, she did not even try to see him, or to speak to him, a civil bow in passing was all that she took or gave, and she was content with that, and waited till the time came when she was destined to do for him—what she knew not, but it would be done if she were strong enough. So she set herself to learn, and read, and trained her mind and temper more earnestly than ever, and waited in patience for God's good time. And now, behold, a black, unfathomable gulf of debt and shame had opened between them, perhaps for ever. And a tumult arose in her soul, which cannot be, perhaps ought not to be, analysed in words, but which made her know too well, by her own crimson cheeks, that it was none other than human love strong as death, and jealousy cruel as the grave.

At last long and agonising prayer brought gentler thoughts, and mere physical exhaustion a calmer mood. How wicked she had been, how rebellious! Why not forgive him, as One greater than she had forgiven? It was ungrateful of him, but was he not human? Why should she expect his heart to be better than hers? Besides, he might have excuses for his suspicion. He might be the best judge, being a man, and much cleverer one too. Yes, it was God's cross, and she would bear it, she would try and forget him. No, that was impossible, she must hear of him, if not see him, day by day, besides, was not her fate linked up with his? And yet shut out from him by that dark wall of suspicion! It was very bitter. But she could pray for him, she would pray for him now. Yes, it was God's cross, and she would bear it. He would right her if He thought fit, and if not, what matter? Was she not born to sorrow? Should she complain if another drop, and that the bitterest of all, was added to the cup?

And bear her cross she did, about with her, coming in, and going out, for many a weary day. There was no change in her habits or demeanour, she was never listless for a moment in her school, she was more gay and amusing than ever, when she gathered her little ones around her for a story, but still there was the unseen burden, grinding her heart slowly, till she felt as if every footstep was stained with a drop of her heart's blood. Why not? It would be the sooner over.

Then at times came that strange woman's pleasure in martyrdom, the secret pride of suffering unjustly, but even that, after a while, she cast away from her as a snare, and tried to believe that she deserved all her sorrow. Deserved it, that is, in the real honest sense of the word, that she had worked it out, and earned it, and brought it on herself—how, she knew not, but longed and strove to know. No, it was no martyrdom. She would not allow herself so silly a cloak of pride, and she went daily to her favourite *Book of Martyrs*, to contemplate there the stories of those who, really innocent, really suffered for well doing. And out of that book she began to draw a new and a strange enjoyment, for she soon found that her intense imagination enabled her to re-enact those sad and glorious stories in her own person, to trouble, agonise, and conquer with those heroines who had been for years her highest ideals—and what higher ones could she have? And many a night, after extinguishing the light and closing her eyes, she would lie motionless for hours on her little bed, not to sleep, but to feel with Perpetua the wild bull's horns, to hang with St. Maura on the cross, or lie with Julia on the rack, or see with triumphant smile, by Anne Askew's side, the fire flare up around her at the Smithfield stake, or to promise, with dying Dorothea, celestial roses to the nursing youth, whose face too often took the form of Thurnall's, till every nerve quivered responsive to her fancy in agonies of actual pain, which died away at last into heavy slumber, as body and mind alike gave way before the strain. Sweet fool! she knew not—how could she know? that she might be rearing in herself the seeds of riotous and death, but who that applauds a Rachel or a Ristori for being able to make awhile their souls and their countenances the homes of the darkest passions, can blame her for enacting in herself, and for herself alone, incidents in which the highest and holiest virtue takes shape in perfect tragedy?

But soon another, and yet darker cause of sorrow arose in her. It was clear, from what Willis had told her, that she had held the lost belt in her hand. The question was, how had she lost it?

Did her mother know anything about it? That question could not but arise in her mind, though for very reverence she dared not put it to her mother, and with it arose the recollection of her mother's strange silence about the matter. Why had she put away the subject

carelessly, and yet peevishly, whenever it was mentioned? Yes! Why? Did her mother know anything? Was she - ? Grace dared not pronounce the adjective, even in thought, dashed it away as a temptation of the devil, dashed away, too, the thought which had lured itself on her too often already, that her mother was not altogether one who possessed the single eye, that in spite of her deep religious feeling, her assurance of salvation, her fits of bitter self-humiliation and despondency, there was an inclination to scheming and intrigue, ambition, covetousness, that the secrets which she gained as class-leader too, were too often (Grace could but fear) used to her own advantage, that in her dealings her morality was not above the average of little country shopkeepers, that she was apt to have two prices, to keep her books with unnecessary carelessness when the person is not whom the account stood was no scholar (Grace had more than once remonstrated in her gentle way, and had been silenced, rather than satisfied, by her mother's commonplace as to the right of 'making those who could pay, pay for those who could not', that 'it was very hard to get a living, and the Lord knew her temptations,' and 'that God saw no sin in His elect,' and 'Christ's merits were infinite,' and 'Christians had always been a backsliding generation', and all the other commonplaces by which such people drug their consciences to a degree which is utterly incredible, except to those who have seen it with their own eyes, and heard it with their own ears, from childhood.

Once, too, in those very days, some little weakness on her mother's part brought the tears into Grace's eyes, and a gentle rebuke to her lips, but her mother bore the interference less patiently than usual, and answered, not by cant, but by counter-reproach. 'Was she the person to accuse a poor widowed mother, struggling to leave her child something to keep her out of the workhouse? A mother that lived for her, would die for her, sell her soul for her, perhaps——'

And there Mrs Harvey stopped short, turned pale, and burst into such an agony of tears that Grace, terrified, threw her arms round her neck and entreated forgiveness, all the more intensely on account of those thoughts within which she dared not reveal. So the storm passed over. But not Grace's sadness. For she could not but see, with her clear, pure, spiritual eye, that her mother was just, in that state in which some fearful and shameful fall is possible, perhaps wholesome. 'She would sell her soul for me.' What it she have sold it, and stopped short just now because she had not the heart to tell me that love for me had been the cause? Oh! if she have minded for my sake! Wretch that I am! Miserable myself, and bringing misery with me! Why was I ever born? Why cannot I die—the world be rid of me?'

No, she would not believe it. It was a wicked, horrible temptation of the devil. She would rather believe that she herself had been the thief, tempted during her unconsciousness, that

she had hidden it somewhere, that she should recollect, confess, restore all some day. She would carry it to him herself, grovel at his feet, and entreat forgiveness. 'He will surely forgive, when he finds that I was not myself when—that it was not altogether my fault—not as if I had been waking—yes, he will forgive.' And then on that thought followed a dream of what might follow, so wild that a moment after she had had 'er blushes in her hands, and fled to books to escape from thoughts.

CHAPTER XI

THE FIRST INSTALMENT OF AN OLD DEBT

WE must now return to Elsie, who had walked home in a state of mind truly pitiable. He had been flattering his soul with the hope that Thurnall did not know him, that his beard, and the change which years had made, formed a sufficient disguise, but he could not conceal from himself that the very same alterations had not prevented his recognising Thurnall, and he had been living for two months past in continual fear that that would come which now had come.

His rage and terror knew no bounds. Fancying Thurnall a merely mean and self-interested workling, unbought by those higher aspirations which stood to him in place of a religion, he imagined him making every possible use of his power, and longed to escape to the uttermost ends of the earth from his old tormentor, whom the very sea would not put out of the way, but must needs cast ashore at his very feet, to plague him afresh.

What a net he had spread around his own feet by one act of foolish vanity! He had taken his present name, merely as a *nom de guerre*, when first he came to London as a penniless and friendless scribbler. It would hide him from the ridicule (and, as he believed, spite) of Thurnall, whom he dreaded meeting every time he walked London streets, and who was for years, to his melancholic and too intense fancy, his *l'âné noir*, his Frankenstein's monster. Besides, he was ashamed of the name of Briggs. It certainly is not an enphannous or aristocratic name, and 'The Soul's Agency,' by John Briggs, would not have sounded as well as 'The Soul's Agency,' by Elsie Vavasour. Vavasour was a very pretty name, and one of those which is supposed by novelists and young ladies to be aristocratic, why so is a puzzle, as its plain meaning is a tenant farmer, and nothing more nor less. So he had played with the name till he became fond of it, and considered that he had a right to it, through seven long years of weary struggles, penury, disappointment, as he climbed the Parnassian Mount, writing for magazines and newspapers, sub-editing this periodical and that, till he began to be known as a ready, graceful, and trustworthy workman, and was befriended by one kind-hearted *littérateur* after another.

For in London, at this moment, any young man of real power will find friends enough, and too many, among his fellow-bookwrights, and is more likely to have his head turned by flattery than his heart crushed by envy. Of course whatsoever flattery he may receive, he is expected to return, and whatsoever eliquo he may be tossed into on his *début*, he is expected to stand by, and fight for, against the universe, but that is but fair. If a young gentleman, invited to enrol himself in the Mutual-puffery Society which meets every Monday and Friday in Hatchgoose the publisher's drawing room, is willing to pledge himself thereto in the mystic cup of tea, is he not as solemnly bound thenceforth to support those literary Catulines in their efforts for the subversion of common sense, good taste, and established things in general, as if he had pledged then, as he would have done in Rome of old in his own life blood? Bound he is, alike by honour and by green tea, and it will be better for him to fulfil his bond. For if association is the cardinal principle of the age, will it not work as well in book-making as in clothes-making? And shall not the motto of the poet (who will also do a little reviewing on the sly) be henceforth that which shines triumphant over all the world, on many a valiant Scotchman's shield—

'Caw me, an I'll caw thee''

But to do John Briggs justice, he kept his hands, and his heart also, cleaner than most men do during this stage of his career. After the first excitement of novelty, and of mixing with people who could really talk and think, and who freely spoke out whatever was in them, right or wrong, in language which at least sounded grand and deep, he began to find in the literary world about the same satisfaction for his inner life which he would have found in the sporting world or the commercial world, or the religious world, or the fashionable world, or any other world, and to suspect strongly that where-soever a world is, the flesh and the devil are not very far off. Tired of talking when he wanted to think, of asserting when he wanted to discover, and of hearing his neighbours do the same, tired of little meanesses, envyings, intrigues, jobberies (for the literary world too, has its jobs), he had been for some time withdrawing himself from the Hatchgoose sources into his own thoughts, when his *Soul's Agonies* appeared, and he found himself, if not a lion, at least a lion's cub.

There is a house or two in town where you may meet, on certain evenings, everybody, where duchesses and unfledged poets, bishops and red republican refugees, fox-hunting noblemen and briefless barristers who have taken to politics, are jumbled together for a couple of hours, to make what they can out of each other, to the exceeding benefit of them all. For each and every one of them finds his neighbour a pleasanter person than he expected, and none need leave those rooms without knowing some

thing more than he did when he came in, and taking an interest in some human being who may need that interest. To one of these houses, no matter which, Elsieley was invited on the strength of the *Soul's Agonies*, found himself, for the first time, face to face with high-bred Englishwomen, and fancied—small blame to him that he was come to the mountains of the Peris, and to Fairy Land itself. He had been flattered already, but never with such grace, such sympathy, or such seeming understanding, for there are few high-bred women who cannot seem to understand, and delude a hapless genius into a belief in their own surpassing brilliance and penetration, while they are cunningly retailing again to him the thoughts which they have caught up from the man to whom they spoke last, perhaps—for this is the very triumph of their art—from the very man to whom they are speaking. Small blame to bashful, clumsy John Briggs, if he did not know his own stammered and fragmentary fancies, when they were re-echoed to him the next minute, in the prettiest shape, and with the most delicate articulation, from lips which (like those in the fairy tale) never opened without dropping pearls and diamonds.

Oh, what a contrast, in the eyes of a man whose sense of beauty and grace, whether physical or intellectual, was true and deep, to that ghastly ring of prophetesses in the Hatchgoose drawing-room, strong minded and emancipated women, who prided themselves on having cast off conventionalities, and on being rule and awkward, and dogmatic and novel, and sometimes slightly improper, women who had missions to amend everything in heaven and earth, except themselves, who had quarrelled with their husbands, and had therefore felt a mission to assert women's rights, and reform marriage in general, or who had never been able to get married at all, and therefore were especially competent to promulgate a novel method of educating the children whom they never had had, women who wrote poetry about Lady Blanches whom they never had met, and novels about male and female blackguards whom (one hopes) they never had met, or about whom (if they had) decent women would have held their peace; and every one of whom had, in obedience to Emerson, 'followed her impulses,' and despised fashion, and was accordingly clothed and bedizened as was right in the sight of her own eyes, and probably in those of no one else.

No wonder that Elsieley, ere long, began drawing comparisons, and using his wit upon ancient patronesses, of course behind their backs, likening them to idols fresh from the car of Juggernaut, or from the stern of a South-sea canoe, or, most of all, to that famous wooden image of Freya, which once leapt lumbering forth from her bullock-cart, creaking and rattling in every oaken joint, to belabour the too daring Viking who was flirting with her priestess. Even so.

whispered Elsley, did those brains and tongues creak and rattle, limbering before the blasts of Pythonic inspiration, and so, he verily believed, would the awkward arms and legs have done likewise, if one of the Pythonesses had ever so far degraded herself as to dance.

No wonder, then, that those gifted dames had soon to complain of Elsley Vavasour as a traitor to the cause of progress and civilisation, a renegade who had fled to the camp of aristocracy, flimkeydom, obscurantism, frivolity, and dissipation, though there was not one of them but would have given an eye—perhaps no great loss to the aggregate loveliness of the universe—for one of his invitations to 999 Cavendish Street, south east, with the chance of being presented to the Duchess of Lyons.

To do Elsley justice, one reason why he liked his new acquaintances so well was that they liked him. He behaved well himself, and therefore people behaved well to him. He was, as I have said, a very handsome fellow in his way, therefore it was easy to him, as it is to all physically beautiful persons, to acquire a graceful manner. Moreover, he had steeped his whole soul in old poetry, and especially in Spenser's *Fairy Queen*. Good for him, had he followed every lesson which he might have learnt out of that most noble of English books. But one lesson at least he learnt from it, and that was, to be chivalrous, tender, and courteous to all women, however old or ugly, simply because they were women. The Hathegoss Pythonesses did not wish to be women, but very bad imitations of men, and therefore he considered himself absolved from all knightly duties towards them but towards these Peris of the West, and to the dowagers who had been Peris in their time, what adoration could be too great? So he bowed down and worshipped, and, on the whole, he was quite right in so doing. Moreover, he had the good sense to discover that though the young Peris were the prettiest to look at, the older Peris were the better company and that it is, in general, from married women that a poet or any one else will ever learn what woman's heart is like. And so well did he carry out his creed, that before his first summer was over he had quite captivated the heart of old Lady Knockdown, aunt to Lucia St. Just, and wife to Lucia's guardian, a charming old Irishwoman, who affected a pretty brogue, perhaps for the same reason that she wore a wig and who had been, in her day, a beauty and a blar, a friend of the Miss Berrys, and Tommy Moore, and Grattan, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and Dan O'Connell, and all other lions and lionesses which had roared for the last sixty years about the Emerald Isle. There was no one whom she did not know, and nothing she could not talk about. Married up, when a girl, to a man for whom she did not care, and having no children, she had indemnified herself by many flirtations, and the writing of two or three novels, in which she

penned on paper the superfluous feeling which had no vent in real life. She had deserted, as she grew old, the novel for unfulfilled prophecy, and was a distinguished leader in a distinguished religious coterie but she still prided herself upon having a green head upon gray shoulders, and not without reason, for underneath all the worldliness and intrigue, and petty affectation of girlishness, which she contrived to jumble in with her religiosity, beat a young and kindly heart. So she was charmed with Mr Vavasour's manners, and commended them much to Lucia, who, a shrinking girl of seventeen, was peeping at her first season from under Lady Knockdown's sheltering wing.

"Me dear, let Mr Vavasour be who he will, he has not only the intellect of a true genius, but what is a great deal better for practical purposes, that is, the manners of one. Give me the man who will let a woman of our rank say what we like to him, without supposing that he may say what he likes in return, and considers one's familiarity as an honour, and not as an excuse for taking liberties. A most agreeable contrast, indeed, to the young men of the present day, who come in their shooting jackets, and talk slang to their partners—though really the girls are just as bad—and stand with their backs to the fire, and smell of smoke, and go to sleep after dinner, and pay no respect to old age, nor to youth either, I think. 'Tou me word, Lucia, the answers I've heard young gentlemen make to young ladies, this very season—they'd have been called out the next morning in my time, me dear. As for the age of chivalry, nobody expects that to be restored. But really one might have been spared the substitute for it which we had when I was young, in the grand air of the old school. It was a "sham," I dare say, as they call every thing nowadays—but really, me dear, a pleasant sham is better to live with than an unpleasant reality, especially when it smells of cigars."

So it befall that Elsley Vavasour was asked to Lady Knockdown's, and that there he fell in love with Lucia, and Lucia fell in love with him.

The next winter old Lord Knockdown, who had been decrepit for some years past, died, and his widow, whose income was under five hundred a year—for the estates were entailed, and mortgaged, and everything else which can happen to an Irish property—came to live with her nephew, Lord Scoutbush, in Eaton Square, and take such care as she could of Lucia and Valentin.

So, after a dreary autumn and winter of parting and silence, Elsley found himself the next season invited to Eaton Square, there the mischief, if mischief it was, was done, and Elsley and Lucia started in life upon two hundred a year. He had inherited some fifty of his own, she had about a hundred and fifty, which, indeed, was not yet her own by right, but little Scoutbush (who was her sole surviving guardian) behaved on the whole very well for

a young gentleman of twenty-two in a state of fury and astonishment. The old lord had, wisely enough, settled in his will that Lucia was to enjoy the interest of her fortune from the time that she came out, provided she did not marry without her guardian's leave, and Southbush, to avoid scandal and misery, thought it as well to waive the proviso, and paid her her dividends as usual.

But how had she contrived to marry at all without his leave? That is an ugly question I will not say that she had told a falsehood, or that Elsley had forsworn himself when he got the licence, but certainly both of them were guilty of something very like a white lie, when they declared that Lucia had the consent of her sole surviving guardian, on the strength of a half-angry, half-jesting expression of Southbush's, that she might marry whom she chose, provided she did not plague him. In the first triumph of success and intoxication of wedded bliss, Lucia had written him a saucy letter, reminding him of his permission, and saying that she had taken him at his word. But her conscience smote her, and Elsley's smote him likewise, and smote him all the more, because he had been married under a false name, a fact which might have ugly consequences in law which he did not like to contemplate. To do him justice, he had been, half a dozen times during his courtship, on the point of telling Lucia his real name and history. Happy for him had he done so, whatever might have been the consequences, but he wanted moral courage, the indomitable sound of Briggs had become horrible to him, and once his foolish heart was frightened away from honesty, just as honesty was on the point of conquering, by old Lady Knockdown's saying that she could never have married a man with an ugly name, or let Lucia marry one.

'Conceive becoming Mrs. Natty Bunjago, no dear, even for twenty thousand a year! If you could summon up courage to do the deed, I couldn't summon up courage to continue my correspondence with ye.'

Elsley knew that that was a lie, that the old lady would have let her marry the most triumphant snob in England, if he had half that income, but unfortunately Lucia rapped her aunt's nonsense with 'There is no man of my ever marrying any one who has not a graceful name,' and a look at Vavasour, which said, 'And you have one, and therefore I—' For the matter had then been settled between them. This was too much for his vanity, and too much, also, for his fears of losing Lucia by confessing the truth. So Elsley went on, ashamed of his real name, ashamed of having concealed it, ashamed of being afraid that it would be discovered—in a triple complication of shame, which made him gradually, as it makes every man, moody, suspicious, apt to take offence where none is meant. Besides, they were very poor. He, though neither extravagant nor profligate, was, like most literary men who are accustomed to live from hand to mouth, careless, self-indulgent,

unmethodical. She knew as much of house-keeping as the Queen of Ondo does, and her charming little dreams of shopping for herself were rudely enough broken ere the first week was out, by the horrified looks of Clara, when she returned from her first morning's marketing for the weekly consumption, with nothing but a woodcock, some truffles, and a bunch of celery. Then the landlady of the lodgings robbed her, even under the nose of the faithful Clara, who knew as little about housekeeping as her mistress, and Clara, faithful as she was, repaid herself by grumbling and taking liberties for being degraded from the luxurious post of lady's maid to that of servant of all work, with a landlady and 'marchioness' to wrestle with all day long. Then, what with imprudence and anxiety, Lucia of course lost her first child, and after that came months of illness, during which Elsley tended her, it must be said for him, as lovingly as a mother, and perhaps they were both really happier during that time of sorrow than they had been in all the delicious bliss of the honey-moon.

Valentia meanwhile defied old Lady Knockdown (whose horror and wrath knew no bounds), and walked off one morning with her maid to see her prodigal sister, a visit which not only brought comfort to the weary heart, but important practical benefits. For, going home, she seized upon Southbush, and so moved his heart with pathetic pictures of Lucia's unheard of prunty and misery, that his heart was softened, and though he absolutely refused to call on Vavasour, he made him an offer, through Lucia, of Penalva Court for the time being, and thither they went, perhaps the best thing they could have done.

There, of course, they were somewhat more comfortable. A very cheap country, a comfortable house rent free, and a lovely neighbourhood, were a pleasant change after dear London lodgings, but it is a question whether the change made Elsley a better man.

In the first place, he became a more idle man. The rich, invigorating climate began to tell upon his mind, as it did upon Lucia's health. He missed that perpetual spur of nervous excitement, change of society, influx of ever-fresh objects, which makes London, after all, the best place in the world for hard working, and which makes even a walk along the streets an intellectual tonic. In the soft and luxurious West country, nature invited him to look at her, and dream, and dream he did, more and more, day by day. He was tired, too—as who would not be?—of the drudgery of writing for his daily bread, and relieved from the importunities of publishers and printers' devils, he sent up fewer and fewer contributions to the magazines. He would keep his energies for a great work, poetry was, after all, his forte, he would not fritter himself away on prose and periodicals, but would win for himself, etc. etc. If he made a mistake, it was at least a pardonable one.

But Elsley became not only a more idle, but a more morose man. He began to feel the evils of solitude. There was no one near with whom he could hold rational converse, save an anti-quarian parson or two, and parsons were not to his taste. So, never measuring his wits against those of his peers, and despising the few men whom he met as inferior to himself, he grew more and more wrapt up in his own thoughts and his own tastes. His own poems, even to the slightest turn of expression, became more and more important to him. He grew more jealous of criticism, more confident in his own little theories about this and that, more careless of the opinion of his fellow-men, and, as a certain consequence, more unable to bear the little crosses and contradictions of daily life, and as Lucia, having brought one and another child safely into the world, settled down into motherhood, he became less and less attentive to her, and more and more attentive to himself which was fast becoming the centre of his universe.

True, there were excuses for him, for whom are there none? He was poor and struggling, and it is much more difficult (as Becky Sharp, I think, pathetically observes) to be good when one is poor than when one is rich. It is (and all rich people should consider the fact) much more easy, if not to go to heaven, at least to think one is going, rather, on three thousand a year, than on three hundred. Not only is respectability more easy, as is proved by the broad fact that it is the poor people who fill the jails, and not the rich ones, but virtue, and religion of the popular sort. It is undeniably more easy to be resigned to the will of Heaven, when that will seems tending just as we would have it, much more easy to have faith in the goodness of Providence, when that goodness seems safe in one's pocket in the form of bank-notes, and to believe that one's children are under the protection of Omnipotence, when one can hire for them in half an hour the best medical advice in London. One need only look into one's own heart to understand the disciples' astonishment at the news that 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

'Who then can be saved?' asked they, being poor men, accustomed to see the wealthy Pharisees in possession of 'the highest religious privileges and means of grace.' Who, indeed, if not the rich? If the noblemen, and the bankers, and the dowagers, and the young ladies who go to church, and read good books, and have been supplied from youth with the very best religious articles which money can procure, and have time for all manner of good works, and give their hundreds to charities, and head reformatory movements, and build churches, and work altar-cloths, and can taste all the preachers and father-confessors round London, one after another, as you would taste wines, till they find the spiritual panacea which exactly suits their complaint—if they are not sure of salvation, who can be saved?

Without further comment, the fact is left for the consideration of all readers, only let them not be too hard upon Elsley and Lucia, if, huddling themselves sometimes literally at their wits' end, they went beyond their poor wits into the region where foolish things are said and done.

Moreover, Elsley's ill-temper (as well as Lucia's) had its excuses in physical ill-health. Poor fellow! Long years of sedentary work had begun to tell upon him, and while Tom Thurnall's chest, under the influence of hard work and oxygen, measured round perhaps six inches more than it had done sixteen years ago, Elsley's, thanks to stooping and carbonic acid, measured six inches less. Short breath, lassitude, loss of appetite, heartburn, and all that fair company of miseries which Mr Cockle and his antihumous pills profess to cure, are no cheering bosom friends, but when a man's breast-bone is gradually growing into his stomach, they will make their appearance, and small blame to him whose temper suffers from their gentle hints that he has a mortal body as well as an immortal soul.

But most fretting of all was the discovery that Lucia knew it not altogether his original name—still enough to keep him in dread lest she should learn more.

It was now twelve months and more that this new terror had leapt up and stared in his face. He had left a letter about—a thing which he was apt to do—in which the Whitbury lawyer made some allusions to his little property, and he was sure that Lucia had seen it, the hated name of Buggs certainly she had not seen, for Elsley had torn it out the moment he opened the letter, but she had seen enough, as he soon found, to be certain that he had, at some time or other, passed under a different name.

If Lucia had been a more thoughtful or high-minded woman, she would have gone straight to her husband, and quietly and lovingly asked him to tell her all, but in her left-handed Irish fashion, she kept the secret to herself, and thought it a very good joke to have him in her power, and to be able to torment him about that letter when he got out of temper. It never occurred, however, to her that his present name was the feigned one. She fancied that he had, in some youthful escapade, assumed the name to which the lawyer alluded. So the next time he was cross, she tried laughingly the effect of her newly-discovered spell, and was horror-struck at the storm which she evoked. In a voice of thunder Elsley commanded her never to mention the subject again, and showed such signs of terror and remorse, that she obeyed him from that day forth, except, when now and then she lost her temper as completely, too, as he. Little she thought, in her heedlessness, what a dark cloud of fear and suspicion, ever-deepening and spreading, she had put between his heart and hers.

But if Elsley had dreaded her knowledge of his story, he dreaded ten times more Tom's knowledge of it. What if Thurnall should tell

Lucia? What if Lucia should make a confidant of Thurnall? Women told their doctors everything, and Lucia, he knew too well, had cause to complain of him. Perhaps, thought he, maddened into wild suspicion by the sense of his own wrong-doing, she might complain of him, she might combine with Thurnall against him—for what purpose he knew not, but the wildest imaginations flashed across him, as he hurried desperately home, intending as soon as he got there to forbid Lucia's ever calling in his dreaded enemy. No, Thurnall should never cross his door again! On that one point he was determined, but on nothing else.

However, his intention was never fulfilled. For long before he reached home he began to feel himself thoroughly ill. His was a temperament upon which mental anxiety acts rapidly and severely, and the hurrying sun and his rapid walk combined with rage and terror to give him such a 'turn' that, as he hurried down the lane, he found himself feeling like a drunken man. He had just time to hurry through the garden, and into his study, when pulse and sense failed him, and he rolled over on the sofa in a dead faint.

Lucia had seen him come in, and heard him fall, and rushed in. The poor little thing was at her wife's end, and thought that he had had nothing less than a *complot-de-solet*. And when he recovered from his faintness, he began to be so horribly ill that Clara, who had been called in to help, had some grounds for the degrading hypothesis (for which Lucia all but boxed her ears) that 'Master had got away into the woods, and gone eating toadstools, or some such poisonous stuff', for he lay a full half-hour on the sofa, death cold, and almost pulseless, moaning, shivering, hiding his face in his hands, and refusing cordials, medicines, and, above all, a doctor's visit.

However, this could not be allowed to last. Without Elsley's knowledge, a messenger was despatched for Thurnall, and luckily met him in the lane, for he was returning to the town in the footsteps of his victim.

Elsley's horror was complete when the door opened, and Lucia brought in none other than his tormentor.

'My dearest Elsley, I have sent for Mr Thurnall. I knew you would not let me, if I told you, but you see I have done it, and now you must really speak to him.'

Elsley's first impulse was to motion them both away angrily, but the thought that he was in Thurnall's power stopped him. He must not show his disgust. What if Lucia were to ask its cause, even to guess it? for to his fears even that seemed possible. A fresh anxiety! Just because he shrank so intensely from the man, he must endure him!

'There is nothing the matter with me,' said he languidly.

'I should be the best judge of that, after what Mrs. Vavasour has just told me,' said Tom, in his most professional and civil voice, and

slipped, cat-like, into a seat beside the unresisting poet.

He asked question on question, but Elsley gave such unsatisfactory answers, that Lucia had to detail everything afresh for him, with—'You know, Mr Thurnall, he is always overtasking his brain, and will never confess himself ill'—and all a woman's anxious comments.

Rogue Tom knew all the while well enough what was the cause, but he saw, too, that Elsley was very ill. He felt that he must have the matter out at once, and, by a side glance, sent the obedient Lucia out of the room to get a table-spoonful of brandy.

'Now, my dear sir, that we are alone,' began he blandly.

'Now, sir,' answered Vavasour, springing off the sofa, his whole pent-up wrath exploding in hissing steam, the moment the safety-valve was lifted. 'Now, sir! What—what is the meaning of this insolence, this intrusion?'

'I beg your pardon, Mr Vavasour,' answered Tom, rising, in a tone of bland and stolid surprise.

'What do you want here, with your unmannery and meddlesome, when you know the cause of my malady well enough already? Go, sir! and leave me to myself.'

'My dear sir,' said Tom firmly, 'you seem to have forgotten what passed between us this morning.'

'Will you insult me beyond endurance?' cried Elsley.

'I told you that, as long as you chose, you were Elsley Vavasour, and I the country doctor. We have met in that character. Why not sustain it? You are really ill, and if I know the cause, I am all the more likely to know the cure.'

'Cure?' 'Why not? Believe me, it is in your power to become a much happier man, simply by becoming a healthier one.'

'Impertinence!'

'Push! What can I gain by being impertinent, sir? I know very well that you have received a severe shock, but I know equally well, that if you were as you ought to be, you would not feel it in this way. When one sees a man in the state of prostration in which you are, common sense tells one that the body must have been neglected, for the mind to gain such power over it.'

Elsley replied with a grunt; but Tom went on, bland and imperturbable.

'Believe me, it may be a very materialist view of things, but fact is fact—the *corpus animi* is father to the *mens sana*—tonics and exercise make the ills of life look marvellously smaller. You have the frame of a strong and active man, and all you want to make you light-hearted and cheerful is to develop what nature has given you.'

'It is too late,' said Elsley, pleased, as most men are, by being told that they might be strong and active.

'Not in the least. Three months would

strengthen your muscles, open your chest again, settle your digestion, and make you as fresh as a lark, and able to sing like one. Believe me, the poetry would be the better for it, as well as the stomach. Now, positively, I shall begin questioning you.

So Elsley was won to detail the symptoms of internal *malaise*, which he was only too much in the habit of watching himself, but there were some among them which Tom could not quite account for on the ground of mere effeminate habits. A thought struck him.

'You sleep ill, I suppose?' said he carelessly.

'Very ill.'

'Did you ever try opiates?'

'No—yes—that is, sometimes.'

'Ah!' said Tom, more carelessly still, for he wished to hide, by all means, the importance of the confession. 'Well, they give relief for a time, but they are dangerous things—disorder the digestion, and have their revenge on the nerves next morning, as spitefully as brandy itself. Much better try a glass of strong ale or water just before going to bed. I've known it give sleep, even in consumption—try it, and exercise. You shoot?'

'No.'

'Pity; there ought to be noble cocking in these woods. However, the season's past. You fish?'

'No.'

'Pity again. I hear Alva is full of trout. Why not try sailing? Nothing oxygenates the lungs like a sail, and your friends the fishermen would be delighted to have you as supercargo. They are always full of your stories to them, and your jacking their brains for old legends and adventures.'

'They are noble fellows, and I want no better company, but, unfortunately, I am always sea-sick.'

'Ah! wholesome, but unpleasant you are fond of gardening?'

'Very, but stooping makes my head swim.'

'True, and I don't want you to stoop. I hope to see you soon as erect as a Guardsman. Why not try walks?'

'Abominable bores—lonely, aimless—'

'Well, perhaps you're right. I never knew but three men who took long constitutionals on principle, and two of them were cracked. But why not try a companion; and persuade that curate, who needs just the same medicine as you, to accompany you, I don't know a more gentleman-like, agreeable, well-informed man than he is.'

'Thank you. I can choose my acquaintances for myself.'

'You touchy as!' said Thurnall to himself. 'If we were in the blessed state of nature now, wouldn't I give you ten minutes' double thonging, and then set you to work, as the runaway nigger did his master, Bird o' freedom Sawin, till you'd learnt a thing or two.' But blandly still he went on.

'Try the dumb-bells then. Nothing like

them for opening your chest. And do get a lugh desk made, and stand to your writing instead of sitting.' And Tom actually made Vavasour promise to do both, and bade him farewell with—

'Now, I'll send you up a little tonic, and trouble you with no more visits till you send for me. I shall see by one glance at your face whether you are following my prescriptions. And, I say, I wouldn't meddle with those opiates any more, try good malt and hops instead.'

'Those who drink beer, think beer,' said Elsley, smiling, for he was getting more hopeful of himself, and his terrors were vanishing beneath Tom's skilful management.

'And those who drink water, think water. The Elizabethans, Spencey and Shakespeare, Bulleigh and Queen Bess, worked on beef and ale—and you would not class them among the muddle-headed of the earth. Believe me, to write well, you must live well. If you take it out of your brain, you must put it in again. It's a question of *but*. Try it for yourself.' And off Tom went, while Lucia rushed back to her husband, covered him with caresses, assured him that he was seven times as ill as he really was, and so nursed and potted him, that he felt himself, for that time at least, a beast and a fool for having suspected her for a moment. Ah, woman, if you only knew how you carry our hearts in your hands, and would but use your power for our benefit, what angels you might make us all!

'So,' said Tom, as he went home, 'he has found his way to the elevation bottle, has he, as well as Mrs. Heale? It's no concern of mine, but as a professional man, I must stop that. You will certainly be no credit to me if you kill yourself under my hands.'

Tom went straight home, showed the blacksmith how to make a pair of dumb-bells, covered them himself with leather, and sent them up the next morning with directions to be used for half an hour morning and evening.

And something—whether it was the dumb-bells, or the tonic, or wholesome fear of the terrible doctor—kept Elsley for the next month in better spirits and temper than he had been in for a long while.

Moreover, Tom set Lucia to coax him into walking with Headley. She succeeded at last, and, on the whole, each of them soon found that he had something to learn from the other. Elsley improved daily in health, and Lucia wrote to Valentin flaming accounts of the wonderful doctor who had been cast on shore in their world's end, and received from her after a while thick and much more—for fancy is not exuberant enough to reproduce the whole of a young lady's letter.

'—I am so ashamed. I ought to have told you of that doctor a fortnight ago, but, rattlo-pate as I am, I forgot all about it. Do you know, he is Salina Mellot's dearest friend, and she begged me to recommend him to you, but I put it off, and then it slipped my memory,

like everything else good. She has told me the most wonderful stories of his courage and goodness, and conceive—she and her husband were taken prisoners with him by the savages in the South Seas, and going to be eaten, she says but he helped them to escape in a canoe—such a story—and lived with them for three months on the most beautiful desert island.

It is all like a fairy tale. I'll tell it you when I come, darling—which I shall do in a fortnight, and we shall be all so happy. I have such a box ready for you and the chicks, which I shall bring with me, and some pretty things from Scoutbush besides, who is very low, poor fellow, I cannot conceive what about, but wonderfully tender about you. I fancy he must be in love, for he stood up the other day about you to my aunt, quite solemnly, with, "Let her alone, my lady. She's not the first whom love has made a fool of, and she won't be the last, and I believe that some of the moves which look most foolish turn out best after all. Live and let live, everybody knows his own business best, anything is better than marriage without real affection." Conceive my astonishment at hearing the dear little fellow turn sage on that way!

By the way, I have had to quote his own advice against him, for I have refused Lord Chalkclere after all. I told him (C not S), that he was much too good for me, far too perfect and complete a person, that I preferred a husband whom I could break in for myself, even though he gave me a little trouble. Scoutbush was cross at first, but he said afterwards that it was just like Baby Blake (the wretch always calls me Baby Blake now, after that dreadful girl in Lover's novel), and I told him frankly that it was, if he meant that I had sooner break in a thoroughbred for myself, even though I had a fall or two in the process, than jog along on the most finished little pony in earth, who would never go out of an amble. Lord Chalkclere may be very finished, and learned, and excellent, and so forth, but, *ma chère*, I want, not a white rabbit (of which he always reminds me), but a lion, even though he be a naughty one. I always fancy people must be very little if they can be finished off so rapidly, if there was any real nerve in them, they would take somewhat longer to grow. Lord Chalkclere would do very well to bind in Russian leather, and put on one's library shelves, to be consulted when one forgot a date, but really even your Ulysses of a doctor—provided, of course, he turned out a prince in disguise, and don't leave out his h's—would be more to the taste of your naughtiest of sisters.

CHAPTER XII

A PEER IN TROUBLE

SOMEWHERE in those days, so it seems, did Mr. Bowie call unto himself a cab at the barrack

gate, and, dressed in his best array, repair to the wilds of Brompton, and request to see either Claude or Mrs. Mellot.

Bowie is an ex-Scots Fusilier, who, damaged by the kick of a horse, has acted as valet, first to Scoutbush's father, and next to Scoutbush himself. He is of a patronising habit of mind, is befits a tolerably 'lesterary' Scotsman of forty-five years of age and six feet three in height, who has full confidence in the integrity of his own virtue, the infallibility of his own opinion, and the strength of his own right arm, for Bowie, though he has a rib or two 'duged in,' is mighty still as Theseus's self, and both astonished his red-bearded compatriots, and won money for his master, by his prowess in the late feat of arms at Holland House.

Mr. Bowie is asked to walk into Salma's boudoir (for Claude is out in the garden), to sit down, and deliver his message, which he does after a due military salute, sitting bolt upright in his chair, and in a solemn and monotonous voice.

'Well, madam, it's just this, that his lordship would be very glad to see you and Mr. Mellot, for he's very ill indeed, and that's truth, and if he wunda tell ye the cause, then I will, and it's just a' for love of this play-acting lady here, and more's the pity.'

'More's the pity, indeed!'

'And it's my opinion the poor larkie will just die, if nobody sees to him, and I've taken the liberty of writing to Major Cawmill myself, to beg him to come up and see to him, for it's a pity to see his lordship cast an ay, for want of an understanding body to advise him.'

'So I am not an understanding body, Bowie!'

'Oh, madam, ye're young and bonny,' says Bowie, in a tone in which admiration is not unmingled with pity.

'Young indeed! Mr. Bowie, do you know that I am almost as old as you?'

'Hoot, hnt, hnt,' says Bowie, looking at the wax-like complexion and bright hawk-eyes.

'Really I am. I'm just five and-thirty this many a day.'

'Well, then, madam, if you'll excuse me, ye're old enough to be wiser than to let his lordship be inveigled with any such play-acting.'

'Really he's not inveigled,' says Salma, laughing. 'It is all his own fault, and I have warned him how absurd and impossible it is. She has refused even to see him, and you know yourself he has not been near our house for these three weeks.'

'Ah, madam, you'll excuse me, but that's the way with that sort of people, just to draw back and draw back, to make a poor young gentleman follow them all the keener, as a trout does a minnow, the faster you spin it.'

'I assure you no. I can't let you into ladies' secrets: but there is no more chance of her listening to him than of me. And as for me, I have been trying all the spring to marry him to a young lady with eighty thousand pounds, so you can't complain of me.'

'Eh? No. That's more like and fitting.'

'Well, now Tell his lordship that we are coming, and trust us, Mr Bowie. we do not look very villainous, do we?'

'Faith, 'deed then, and I suppose not,' said Bowie, using the verb which, in his cautious Scotch tongue, expresses complete certainty. The truth is, that Bowie adores both Sabina and her husband, who are, he says, 'just fit to be put under a glass case on the sideboard, like two wee china angels.'

In half an hour they were in Scotchbush's rooms. They found the little man lying on his sofa in his dressing-gown, looking pale and pitiable enough. He had been trying to read, for the table by him was covered with books, but either ginnery and mathematics had injured his eyes, or he had been crying, Sabina inclined to the latter opinion.

'This is very kind of you both, but I don't want you, Claude, I want Mrs. Mellot. You go to the window with Bowie.'

Bowie and Claude shrugged their shoulders at each other, and departed.

'Now, Mrs. Mellot, I can't help looking up to you as a mother.'

'Complimentary to my youth,' says Sabina, who always calls herself young when she is called old, and old when she is called young.

'I didn't mean to be rude. But one does long to open one's heart. I never had any mother to talk to, you know, and I can't tell my aunt, and Valentinia is so flighty, and I thought you would give me one chance more. Don't laugh at me, I say. I am really just laughing at.'

'I see you are, you poor creature,' says Sabina, melting, and a long conversation follows, while Claude and Bowie exchange confidences, and arrive at no result beyond the undeniable assertion, 'it is a very bad job.'

Presently Sabina comes out, and Scotchbush calls cheerfully from the sofa—

'Bowie, get my bath and things to dress, and order me the cab in half an hour. Good-bye, you dear people, I shall never thank you enough.'

Away go Claude and Sabina in a hack-cab.

'What have you done?'

'Given him what he entreated for—another chance with Marie.'

'It will only madden him all the more. Why let him try, when you know it is hopeless?'

'Why, I had not the heart to refuse, that's the truth, and besides, I don't know that it is hopeless.'

'All the naughtier of you, to let him run the chance of making a fool of himself.'

'I don't know that he will make such a great fool of himself. As he says, his grandfather married an actress, and why should not he?'

'Simply because she won't marry him.'

'And how do you know that, sir? You fancy that you understand all the women's hearts in England, just because you have found out the secret of managing one little fool.'

'Managing her, quotha! Being managed by

her, till my quiet house is turned into a perfect volcano of match-making. Why, I thought he was to marry Manchestrina.'

'He shall marry who he likes, and if Marie changes her mind, and revenges herself on this American by taking Lord Scotchbush, all I can say is, it will be a just judgment on him. I have no patience with the heartless fellow, going off thus, and never even leaving his address.'

'And because you have no patience, you think Marie will have none?'

'What do you know about women's hearts? Leave us to mind our own matters.'

'Mr Bowie will kill you outright, if your plot succeeds.'

'No, he won't. I know who Bowie wants to marry, and if he is not good, he shan't have her. Besides, it will be such fun to spite old Lady Knockdown, who always turns up her nose at me. How mad she will be! Here we are at home. Now, I shall go and prepare Marie.'

An hour after, Scotchbush was pleading his cause with Marie, and had been met, of course, at starting, with the simple rejoinder—

'But, my lord, you would not surely have me marry where I do not love?'

'Oh, of course not, but you see, people very often get love after they are married, and I am sure I would do all to make you love me. I know I can't bribe you by promising you carriages and jewels, and all that. But you should have what you would like—pictures and statues, and books—and all that I can buy. Oh, madam, I know I am not worthy of you—I never have had any education as you have!'

Marie smiled a sad smile.

'But I would learn—I know I could—for I am no fool, though I say it. I like all that sort of thing, and and if I had you to teach me, I should care about nothing else. I have given up all my nonsense since I knew you, indeed I have—I am trying all day long to read ever since you said something about being useful, and noble and doing one's work. I have never forgotten that, madam, and never shall, and you would find me a pleasant person to live with, I do believe. At all events, I would—oh, madam, I would be your servant, your dog, I would fetch and carry for you like a negro slave!'

Marie turned pale and rose.

'Listen to me, my lord, this must end. You do not know to whom you are speaking. You talk of negro slaves. Know that you are talking to one!'

Scotchbush looked at her in blank astonishment.

'Madam! Excuse me, but my own eyes—'

'You are not to trust them, I tell you bet.'

Scotchbush was silent. She misunderstood his silence, but went on steadily.

'I tell you, my lord, what I expect you to keep secret, and I know that I can trust your honour.'

Scotchbush bowed.

'And what I should never have told you, were

it not my only chance of curing you of this foolish passion I am an American slave !'

'Curse them ! Who dared make you a slave !' cried Scoutbush, turning as red as a game-cock.

'I was born a slave. My father was a white gentleman of good family, my mother was a quadroon, and therefore I am a slave, — a negress, a runaway slave, my lord, who, if I returned to America, should be seized, and chained, and scourged, and sold. Do you understand me !'

'What an infernal shame !' cried Scoutbush, to whom the whole thing appeared simply as a wrong done to Marie.

'Well, my lord !'

'Well, madam !'

'Does not this fact put the question at rest for ever !'

'No, madam ! What do I know about slaves ! No one is a slave in England. No, madam, all that it does is to make me long to cut half a dozen fellows' throats.' and Scoutbush stamped with rage. 'No, madam, you are you and if you become my viscountess, you take my rank, I trust, and my name is yours, and my family yours, and let me see who dares interfere !'

'But public opinion, my lord !' said Marie, half pleased, half-terrified to find the shaft which she had fancied fatal fall harmless at her feet.

'Public opinion ! You don't know England, madam ! What's the use of my being a peer, if I can't do what I like, and make public opinion go my way, and not its !' Though I am no great prince, madam, but only a poor Irish viscount, it's hard if I can't marry whom I like — in reason, that is — and expect all the world to call on her, and treat her as she deserves. Why, madam, you will have all London at your feet after a season or two, and all the more if they know your story — or if you don't like that, or if fools did talk at first, why, we'd go and live quietly at Kilarabeggan, or at Penulva, and you'd have all the tenants looking up to you as a goddess, as I do, madam. Oh, madam, I would go anywhere, live anywhere, only to be with you !'

Marie was deeply affected. Making all allowances for the wilfulness of youth, she could not but see that her origin formed no bar whatever to her marrying a nobleman, and that he honestly believed that it would form none in the opinion of his compere, if she proved herself worthy of his choice, and, full of new emotions, she burst into tears.

'There, now, you are melting. I knew you would ! Madam ! Signora !' and Scoutbush advanced to take her hand.

'Never less,' cried she, drawing back. 'Do not ; you only make me miserable ! I tell you it is impossible. I cannot tell you all. You must not do yourself and yours such an injustice ! Go, I tell you !'

Scoutbush still tried to take her hand.

'Go, I entreat you,' cried she, at her wits' end, 'or I will really ring the bell for Mrs Mellot !'

'You need not do that, madam,' said he, drawing himself up, 'I am not in the habit of being troublesome to ladies, or being turned out of drawing-rooms. I see how it is——' and his tone softened, 'you despise me, and think me a vain, frivolous puppy. Well, I'll do something yet that you shall not despise !' And he turned to go.

'I do not despise you, I think you a generous, high-hearted gentleman—nobleman in all senses,' Scoutbush turned again.

'But again, impossible ! I shall always respect you, but we must never meet again.'

She held out her hand. Little Freddy caught and kissed it till he was breathless, and then rushed out, and blundered over Sabina in the next room.

'No hope ?'

'None.' And though he tried to squeeze his eyes together very tight, the great tears would come dropping down.

Sabina took him to a sofa, and sat him down while he made his little moan.

'I told you that she was in love with the American.'

'Then why don't he come back and marry her ! Hang him, I'll go after him and make him !' cried Scoutbush, glad of any object on which to vent his wrath.

'You can't, for nobody knows where he is. Now do be good and patient, you will forget all this.'

'I shan't !'

'You will, not at first, but gradually, and many times one really more fit for you.'

'Ah, but if I marry her I shan't love her, and then, you know, Mrs Mellot, I shall go to the bad again, just as much as ever. Oh, I was trying to be steady for her sake !'

'You can be that still.'

'Yes, but it's so hard, with nothing to hope for. I'm not fit to take care of myself. I'm fit for nothing, I believe, but to go out and be shot by those Russians — and I'll do it !'

'You must not, you are not strong enough. The doctors would not let you go as you are.'

'Then I'll get strong, I'll—'

'You'll go home and be good.'

'Am't I good now ?'

'Yes, you are a good, sensible fellow, and have behaved nobly, and I honour you for it, and Claude shall come and see you every day.'

That evening a note came from Scoutbush.

'DEAR MRS MELLOT—Whom should I find when I went home but Campbell ! I told him all, and he says that you and everybody have done quite right, so I suppose you have, and that I am quite right in trying to get out to the East, so I shall do it. But the doctor says I must rest for six weeks at least. So Campbell has persuaded me to take the yacht, which is at Southampton, and go down to Aberslva, and then round to Snowdon, where I have a little slate-quarry, and get some fishing. Campbell is coming with me, and I wish Claude would

come too. He knows that brother-in-law of mine, Vavasour, I think, and I shall go and make friends with him. I've got very merciful to foolish lovers lately, and Claude can help me to face him, for I am a little afraid of geniuses, you know. So there we'll pick up my sister (she goes down by land this week), and then go on to Snowden, and Claude can visit his old quarters at the Royal Oak at Bettas, where he and I had that jolly week among the painters. Do let him come, and beg La Signora not to be angry with me. That's all I'll ever ask of her again.

'Poor fellow! But I can't part with you, Claude.'

'Let him,' said La Cordigliera. 'He will comfort his lordship, and do you come with me.'

'Come with you? Where?'

'I will tell you when Claude is gone.'

'Claude, go and smoke in the garden now.'

'Come with me to Germany, Sabina.'

'To Germany? Why on earth to Germany?'

'I only said Germany because it came first into my mind. Anywhere for rest, anywhere to be free of that poor man's way.'

'He will not trouble you any more, and you will not surely throw up your engagement?'

'Of course not!' said she, half jealously.

'It will be over in a fortnight, and then I must have rest. Don't you see how I want rest?'

Sabina had seen it for some time past. That white cheek had been fading more and more to a wax-like paleness, those black eyes glittered with here a unhealthy light, and dark rings round them told, not merely of late hours and excitement, but of wild passion and midnight tears. Sabina had seen all, and could not but give way, as Marie went on.

'I must have rest, I tell you! I am beginning.'

'I can confess all to you—to your stout heart. I am beginning to long for brandy-and-water—pah! to nerve me up to the excitement of doing, and then for morphine to make me sleep after it. The very eau de Cologne flask tempts me! They say that the fine ladies use it, before a ball, for other purposes than scent. You would not like to see me commence that practice, would you?'

'There is no fear, dear.'

'There is fear! You do not know the craving for exhilaration, the capriciousness of self-indulgence, in our wild Tropic blood! Oh, Sabina, I feel at times that I could sink so low—that I could be so wicked, so utterly wicked, if I once began! Take me away, dearest creature, take me away, and let me have fresh air, and faint quiet scenes, and rest—rest! oh, save me, Sabina!' and she put her hands over her face, and burst into tears.

'We will go, then, to the Rhine, shall it be? I have not been there now for those three years, and it will be such fun running about the world by myself once more, and knowing all the while

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that——' and Sabina stopped; she did not like to remind Marie of the painful contrast between them.

'To the Rhine? Yes. And I shall see the beautiful old world, the old vineyards, and castles, and hills which he used to tell me of—taught me to read of in those sweet, sweet books of Longfellow's! So gentle, and pure, and calm—so unlike me!'

'Yes, we will see them, and perhaps——'

Marie looked up at her, guessing her thoughts, and blushed scarlet.

'You too, think then that—that—' she could not finish her sentence.

Sabina stooped over her, and the two beautiful mouths met.

'There, darling, we need say nothing. We are both women and can talk without words.'

'Then you think there is hope?'

'Hope? Do you fancy that he is gone so very far? or that if he were I could not hunt him out? Have I wandered lost round the world alone for nothing?'

'No, but hope—hope that—'

'Not hope, but certainty, if some one I know had but come!'

'Come—to do what?'

'To trust him utterly.'

Marie covered her face with her hands, and shuddered in every limb.

'You know my story. Did I gain or lose by telling my Claude all?'

'I will!' she cried, looking up pale but firm.

'I will!' and she looked steadfastly into the mirror over the chimney piece, as if trying to combat the raptures of that ugly vision which haunted it, and so to nerve herself to the utmost, and face the whole truth.

A little more than a fortnight Sabina and Marie, with mind and courage (for Marie was rich now), were away in the old *Antares*. And Claude was rolling down to Southampton by rail, with Campbell, Scamblush, and last, but not least, the faithful Bowe, who hid under his fringe what he described to the puzzled railway guard as 'gouls and books, and pins and eras, and books and books, enough for a' the coals o' Newfoundland.'

CHAPTER XIII

L'HOMME INCOMPRIS

ESTHER went on, between improved health and the tears of Tom Thonall, a good deal better for the next month. He began to look forward to Valentin's visit with equanimity, and, at last, with interest, and was rather pleased than otherwise when, in the last week of July, a fly drove up to the gate of old Penalva Court, and he handed out therefrom Valentin, and Valentin's maid.

Lucia had discovered that the wind was east, and that she was afraid to go to the gate for

fear of catching cold, her real purpose being that Valentia should meet Elsie first.

'She is so impulsive,' thought the good little creature, always plotting about her husband, 'that she will rush upon me, and never see him for the first five minutes, and Elsie is so sensitive—how can he be otherwise, in his position, poor dear!' So she refrained herself, like Joseph, and stood at the door till Valentia was half-way down the garden-walk having taken Elsie's somewhat shyly-offered arm, and then she could refrain herself no longer, and the two women ran upon each other, and kissed, and sobbed, and talked, till Lucia was out of breath, but Valentia was not so easily silenced.

'My darling' and you are looking so much better than I expected, but not quite yourself yet. That naughty baby is killing you I am sure! And Mr Vavasour, too, I shall begin to call him Elsie to-morrow, if I like him as much as I do now—but he is looking quite thin—wearing himself out with writing so many beautiful books, that "Wreck" was perfect! And where are the children? I must rush upstairs and devour them!—and what a delicious old garden! and chrysanthemums, too, so dark and romantic, and such dear old-fashioned flowers! Mr Vavasour must show me all over it, and over that hanging wood, too. What a duck of a place! And oh, my dear, I am quite out of breath!

And so she swept in, with her arm round Lucia's waist, while Elsie stood looking after her, well enough satisfied with her reception of him, and only hoping that the stream of words would slacken after a while.

'What a magnificent creature!' said he to himself. 'Who would have believed that the three years would make such a change!'

And he was right. The tall little girl had bloomed into full glory, and Valentia St Just, though not delicately beautiful, was as splendid an Irish damsel as men need look upon, with a grand masculine, aquiline features, luxuriant black hair, and—though it was the fog-end of the London season—the marvellous Irish complexion, as of the fair damsels of Kilkenny, whose

'I lips were like roses, her cheeks were the same,
Like a dish of fresh strawberries another'd in crime.'

Her figure was perhaps too tall, and somewhat too stout also, but its size was relieved by the delicacy of those hands and feet of which Miss Valentia was most pardonably proud, and by that indescribable lissomeness and lazy grace which Irishwomen inherit, perhaps, with their tinge of southern blood, and when, in half an hour, she reappeared with broad straw hat, and gown tucked up *à la beryere* over the striped Welsh petticoat, perhaps to show off the ankles, which only looked the liner for a pair of heavy laced boots, Elsie honestly felt it a pleasure to look at her, and a still greater pleasure to talk to her, and to be talked to by her, while she, bent on making herself agreeable, partly from real good taste, partly from natural good-nature, and partly, too, because she saw in his eyes

that he admired her, chatted sentiment about all heaven and earth.

For to Miss Valentia—it is sad to have to say it—admiration had been now, for three years, her daily bread. She had lived in the thickest whirl of the world, and, as most do for a while, found it a very pleasant plate.

She had flirted—with how many must not be told, and perhaps with more than one with whom she had no business to flirt. Little Scoutbush had remonstrated with her on some such affair, but she had silenced him with an Irish jest, 'You're a fisherman, Freddy, and when you can't catch salmon, you catch trout, and when you can't catch trout, you'll whip on the shallows for poor little gubbalawus, and say that it is all to keep your hand in and so do I.'

The old ladies said that this was the reason why she had not married, the men, however, asserted that no one dare marry her, and one club-oracle had given it as his opinion that no man in his rational senses was to be allowed to have anything to do with her, till she had been well pitted two or three times to take the spirit out of her—but that catastrophe had not yet occurred, and Miss Valentia still reigned 'triumphant and alone,' though her aunt, old Lady Knockdown, moved all the earth, and some duty places, too, below the earth, to get the wild Irish girl off her hands, 'for, quoth she, 'I feel with Valentia, indeed, just like one of those men who carry about little dogs in the quadrant. I always pity the poor men so, and think how happy they must be when they have sold one. It is one chance less, you know, of having it bite them horribly, and then run away after all.'

There was, however, no more real harm in Valentia than there is in every child of Adam. Town iniquity had not corrupted her. She was giddy, given up to enjoyment of the present, but there was not a touch of meanness about her, and if she was selfish, as every one must needs be whose thoughts are of pleasure, admiration, and success, she was so unintentionally and she would have been shocked and pained at being told that she was anything but the most kind-hearted and generous creature on earth. Major Campbell, who was her Mentor as well as her brother's, had certainly told her no more than once, at which she had pouted a good deal, and cried a little and promised to amend, then packed up a heap of cast-off things to send to Lucia—half of it much too fine to be of any use to the quiet little woman, and, lastly, gone out and bought fresh finery for herself, and forgot all her good resolutions. Whereby it befell that she was tolerably deep in debt at the end of every season, and had to torment and kiss Scoutbush into paying her bills, which he did like a good brother, and often before he had paid his own.

But, howsoever full Valentia's head may have been of fine garments and London flirtations, she had too much tact and good feeling to talk that evening of a world of which even Elsie

knew more than her sister. For poor Lucia had been but eighteen at the time of her escapade, and had not been presented twelve months, so that she was as 'inexperienced' as any one can be, who has only a husband, three children, and a household to manage on less than three hundred a year. Therefore Valentin talked only of things which would interest Elsley, asked him to read his last new poem—which, I need not say, he did, told him how she devoured everything he wrote, planned walks with him in the country, seemed to consult his pleasure in every way.

'To-morrow morning I shall sit with you and the children, Lucia, of course I must not interrupt Mr Vavasour but really in the afternoon I must ask him to spare a couple of hours from the Muses.'

Vavasour was delighted to do anything—'Where would she walk?'

'Where? of course to see the beautiful school-mistress who saved the man from drowning, and then to see the chateau across which he was swept. I shall understand your poem so much better, you know, if I can but realise the people and the place. And you must take me to see Captain Willis, too, and even the lieutenant it ~~he~~ does not smell too much of brandy. I will be so gracious and civil, quite the lady of the castle.'

'You will make quite a royal progress,' said Lucia, looking at her with sisterly admiration.

'Yes, I intend to usurp as many of Scoutbush's honours as I can till he comes. I must lay down the sceptre in a fortnight, you know, so I shall make as much use of it as I can meanwhile.'

And so on, and so on, meaning all the while to put Elsley quite at his ease, and let him understand that bygones were bygones, and that with her any reconciliation at all was meant to be a complete one, which was wise and right enough. But Valentin had not counted on the excitable and vain nature with which she was dealing, and Lucia, who had her own fears from the first evening, was the last person in the world to tell her of it, first from pride in herself, and then from pride in her husband. For even if a woman has made a foolish match, it is hard to expect her to confess as much, and after all, a husband is a husband, and let his faults be what they might, he was still her Elsley, her idol, once, and perhaps (so she hoped) her idol again hereafter, and if not, still he was her husband, and that was enough.

'By which you mean, sir, that she considered herself bound to endure everything and anything from him, simply because she had been married to him in church?'

Yes, and a great deal more. Not merely being married in church, but what being married in church means, and what every woman who is a woman understands, and lives up to without flinching, 'though she die a martyr for it, or a confessor, a far higher saint, if the truth was known, as it will be some day,

than all the holy virgins who ever fasted and prayed in a convent since the days when Macarius first turned sinner. For, to a true woman, the mere fact of a man's being her husband, put it on the lowest ground that you choose, is utterly sacred, divine, all-powerful, in the might of which she can conquer self in a way which is an everyday miracle, and the man who does not feel about the mere fact of a woman's having given herself utterly to him, just what she herself feels about it, ought to be despised by all his fellows, were it not that, in that case, it would be necessary to despise more human beings than is safe for the soul of any man.

That fortnight was the sunniest which Elsley had passed since he made secret love to Lucia in Eaton Square. Romaine walks, the company of a beautiful woman as ready to listen as she was to talk, free licence to pour out all his fancies, surfs of admiration, if not of flattery, and pardonably satisfied vanity—all these are comfortable things for most men, who have nothing better to comfort them. But, on the whole, this feast did not make Elsley a better or wiser man at home. Why should it? Is a boy's digestion improved by turning him loose into a confectioner's shop? And thus the contrast between what he chose to call Valentin's sympathy and Lucia's want of sympathy made him, unfortunately, all the more cross to her when they were alone, and who could blame the poor little woman for saying one night, angrily enough,

'Ah, yes! Valentin—Valentin is imaginative. Valentin understands you—Valentin sympathises. Valentin thinks Valentin has no children to wash and dress, no accounts to keep, no linen to mend—Valentin's back does not ache all day long, so that she would be glad enough to lie on the sofa from morning till night, if she was not forced to work whether she can work or not. No, no, don't kiss me, for kisses will not make up for injustice, Elsley. I only trust that you will not tempt me to hate my own sister. No don't talk to me now, let me sleep if I can sleep, and go and walk and talk sentiment with Valentin to-morrow, and leave the poor little brood hen to sit on her nest and be despised.' And refusing all Elsley's entreaties for pardon, she sniled herself to sleep.

Who can blame her? If there is one thing more provoking than another to a woman, it is to see her husband Strassengel, Haus teufel, an angel of courtesy to every woman but herself, to see him in society all smiles and good stories, the most amiable and self-restraining of men, perhaps to be complimented on his agreeableness and to know all the while that he is penning up all the accumulated ill-temper of the day, to let it out on her when they get home, perhaps in the very carriage as soon as it leaves the door. Hypocrites that you are, some of you gentlemen! Why cannot the act against cruelty to women, corporal punishment included, be brought to bear on such as you? And yet,

after all, you are not most to blame in the matter! Eve herself tempts you, as at the beginning, for who does not know that the man is a thousand times vainer than the woman? He does but follow the analogy of all nature! Look at the Red Indian, in that blissful state of nature from which (so philosophers inform those who choose to believe them) we all sprang. Which is the boaster, the strutter, the bedizener of his sinul carcass with feathers and beads, fox-tails and bears' claws—the brave, or his poor little squaw? An Australian settler's wife bestows on some poor slaving gin a cast-off French bonnet, before she has gone a hundred yards, her husband snatches it off, puts it on his own mop, quiets her for its loss with a tap of the wadding, and struts on in glory. Why not? Has he not the analogy of all nature on his side? Have not the male birds and the male mollus the fine feathers, while the females go soberly about in drab and brown? Does the lioness, or the hen, rejoice in the grandeur of a mane, the hind, or the stag, in antlered pride? How know we but that, in some more perfect and natural state of society, the women will dress like so many quakers, while the frippery shops will become the haunts of men alone, and 'broches, pearls, and owches' be consecrated to the nobler sex? There are signs already, in the dress of our young gentlemen, of such a return to the law of nature from the present absurd state of things, in which the human peacocks carry about the gaudy trains which are the peacocks' right.

For there is a secret feeling in woman's heart that she is in her wrong place, that it is she who ought to worship the man, and not the man her, and when she becomes properly conscious of her destiny, has not he a right to be conscious of his? If the gray hairs will stand round in the mire clucking humble admiration, who can blame the old black cock for clanking and clanking on the top of a moss hag, with outspread wings and stirring tail, glorious and self-glorifying? He is a splendid fellow, and he was made splendid for some purpose, surely? Why did Nature give him his steel-blue coat and his crimson crest, but for the very same purpose that she gave Mr. A — his intellect to be admired by the other sex? And if young dandies, overflowing with sentiment and Ruskinism, will crowd round him, ask his opinion of this book and that picture, treasure his *bon-mots*, beg for his autograph, looking all the while the praiso which they do not speak (though they speak a good deal of it), and when they go home write letters to him on matters about which in old times girls used to ask only their mothers, — who can blame him if he finds the little wife at home a very uninteresting body, whose head is so full of petty cares and gossip that he and all his talents are quite unappreciated? *Les femmes incompréhensibles* of France used to (perhaps do now) form a class of married ladies, whose sorrows were especially dear to the novelists, male or female, but what are their woes com-

pared to those of *Thomme incompris*? What higher vocation for a young maiden than to comfort the martyr during his agonies? And, most of all, where the sufferer is not merely a genius, but a saint, persecuted, perhaps, abroad by vulgar tradesmen and Philistine bishops, and snubbed at home by a stupid wife, who is quite unable to appreciate his magnificent projects for regenerating all Heaven and earth, and only, humdrum, practical creature that she is, tries to do justly, and live merry, and walk humbly with her God? Fly to his help, all you maidens, and pour into the wounded heart of the holy man the healing balm of self-conceit, cover his table with confidential letters, choose him as your father-confessor, and lock yourself up alone with him for an hour or two every week, while the wife is mending his shirts upstairs. True, you may break the stupid wife's heart by year-long misery, as she slaves on, bearing the burden and heat of the day, of which you never dream, keeping the wretched man, by her unassuming good example, from making a fool of himself three times a week, and sowing the seed of which you steal the fruit. What matter? If your immortal soul requires it, what matter what it costs her carnal heart? She will suffer in silence; at least, she will not tell you. You think she does not understand you. Well, and she thinks in return that you do not understand her, and her married joys and sorrows, and her five children, and her butcher's lull, and her long agony of fear for the husband of whom she is ten times more proud than you could be, for whom she has slaved for years, whose defects she has tried to cure, while she cured her own, for whom she would die to-morrow, did he fall into disgrace, when you had flounced off to find some new idol, and so she will not tell you, and what the can be well not, that the heart giveth not. Go on and prosper! You may, too, ruin the man's spiritual side by vanity, you may mar his discontent with the place where God has put him, till he ends by flying off to 'some pure Communion,' and taking you with him. Never mind. He is a most delightful person, and his intercourse is so improving. Why were sweet things made, but to be eaten? Go on and prosper.

Ah, young ladies, if some people had (as it is perhaps well for them that they have not) the ordering of this same British nation, they would certainly follow your example, and try to restore various ancient institutions. And first among them would be that very ancient institution of the cuckoo-stool, to be employed, however, not as of old, against married scolds (for whom those who have been behind the scenes have all respect and sympathy), but against unmarried prophesies, who, under whatsoever high pretence of art or religion, flirt with their neighbours' husbands, be they parson or poet.

Not, be it understood, that Valentin had the least suspicion that Kelsey considered himself 'incompris.' If he had hunted the notion to her,

she would have resented it as an insult to the St. Justs in general, and to her sister in particular, and would have said something to him in her off-hand way, the like whereof he had seldom heard, even from adverse reviewers.

Elsley himself soon divined enough of her character to see that he must keep his sorrows to himself, if he wished for Valentin's good opinion, and soon—so easily does a vain man lend himself to meanness—he found himself trying to please Valentin, by praising to her the very woman with whom he was discontented. He felt shocked and ashamed when first his own baseness flashed across him; but the hurt was too pleasant to be left easily, and, after all, he was trying to say to his guest what he knew his guest would like, and what was that but following those very rules of good society, for breaking which Lucia was always calling him *gauche* and morose? So he actually quieted his own conscience by the fancy that he was bound to be civil, and to keep up appearances, 'even for Lucia's sake,' said the self-deceiver to himself. And thus the mischief was done, and the breach between Lucia and her husband, which had been somewhat bridged over during the last month or two, opened more wide than ever, without a suspicion on Valentin's part that she was doing all she could to break her sister's heart.

She, meanwhile, had plenty of reasons which justified her new intimacy to herself. How could she better please Lucia? How better show that hygeines were to be hygeines, and that Elsley was henceforth to be considered as one of the family, than by being as intimate as possible with him? What matter how intimate? For, after all, he was only a brother, and she his sister.

She had law on her side in that last argument, as well as love of amusement. Whether she had either common sense or Scripture is a very different question.

Poor Lucia, too, tried to make the best of the matter, and to take the new intimacy, as Valentin would have had her take it, in the light of a compliment to herself, and so, in her pride, she said to Valentin, and told her that she should love her for ever for her kindness to Elsley, while her heart was ready to burst.

But ere the fortnight was over the Nemesis had come, and Lucia, woman as she was, could not repress a thrill of malicious joy, even though Elsley became more intolerable than ever at the change.

What was the Nemesis, then?

Simply that this naughty Miss St. Just began to smile upon Frank Headley the curate, even as she had smiled upon Elsley Vavasour.

It was very naughty, but she had her excuses. She had found Elsley out, and it was well for both of them that she had done so. Already, upon the strength of their supposed relationship, she had allowed him to talk a great deal more nonsense to her—harmless perhaps, but nonsense still—than she would have listened to from any

other man, and it was well for both of them that Elsley was a man without self-control, who began to show the weak side of his character freely enough as soon as he became at ease with his companion, and excited by conversation. Valentin quickly saw that he was vain as a peacock, and weak enough to be led by her in any and every direction, when she chose to work on his vanity. And she despised him accordingly, and suspected, too, that her sister could not be very happy with such a man.

None are more quick than sisters-in-law to see faults in the brother-in-law, when once they have begun to look for them, and Valentin soon remarked that Elsley showed Lucia no *petits soins*, while he was ready enough to show them to her, that he took no real trouble about his children, or about anything else, and twenty more faults, which she might have perceived in the first two days of her visit, if she had not been in such a hurry to amuse herself. But she was too delicate to ask Lucia the truth, and contented herself with watching all parties closely, and measuring herself meanwhile—for amusement she must have—in

• Breaking a country heart.
For justice, etc. she went to town.

She had met Frank several times about the parish and in the schools, and had been struck at once with his grace and high breeding, and with that air of melancholy which is always interesting in a true woman's eyes. She had seen, too, that Elsley tried to avoid him, naturally enough not wishing an intrusion on their pleasant *fraternité*. Whereon, half to spite Elsley, and half to show her own right to chat with whom she chose, she made Lucia ask Frank to tea, and next contrived to go to the school when he was teaching there, and to make Elsley ask him to walk with them, and all the more because she had discovered that Elsley had discontinued his walks with Frank as soon as she had appeared at Pinalva.

Lucia was not sorry to countenance her in her naughtiness, it was a comfort to her to have a fourth person in the room at times, and thus to compel Elsley and Valentin to think of something beside each other, and when she saw her sister gradually transferring her favours from the married to the unmarried victim she would have been more than woman if she had not rejoiced thereat. Only, she began soon to be afraid for Frank, and at last told Valentin so.

'Do take care that you do not break his heart!'

'My dear! You forget that I sit under Mr. O'Blacaway, and am to him as a heathen and a publican. Fresh from St. Nepomud's as he is, he would as soon think of falling in love with an "Oniah Protestant" as with a malignant and a turbaned Turk. Besides my dear, if the mischief is going to be done, it's done already.'

'I dare say it is, you naughty beautiful thing. If anybody is goose enough to fall in love with you, he'll be also goose enough, I don't doubt,

to do so at first sight. There, don't look perpetually in that glass but take care!

'What use? If it is going to happen at all, I say, it has happened already, so I shall just please myself, as usual.'

And it had happened and poor Frank had been, ever since the first day he saw Valentinia, over head and ears in love. His time had come, and there was no escaping his fate.

But to escape he tried. Convinced, with many good men of all ages and creeds, that a celibate life was the fittest one for a clergyman, he had fled from St. Nepomuc's into the wilderness to avoid temptation, and behold at his cell-door a fairer fiend than ever came to St. Dunstan. A fairer fiend, no doubt, for St. Dunstan's imagination created his temptress for him, but Valentinia was a reality, and fact and nature may be safely backed to produce something more charming than any monk's brain can do. One question whether St. Dunstan's apparition was not something as coarse as his own mind, clever though that mind was. At least, he would never have had the heart to apply the hot tongs to such a nose as Valentinia's, but at most have bowed her out pityingly, as Frank tried to bow out Valentinia from the sacred place of his heart, but failed.

Hard he tried, and humbly too. He had no proud contempt for married parsons. He was ready enough to confess that he, too, might be weak in that respect, as in a hundred others. He conceived that he had no reason, from his own inner life, to believe himself worthy of any higher vocation—proving his own real nobleness of soul by that very humility. He had rather not marry. He might do so some day, but he would sacrifice much to avoid the necessity. If he was weak, he would use what strength he had to the uttermost ere he yielded. And all the more, because he felt, and reasonably enough, that Valentinia was the last woman in the world to make a parson's wife. He had his ideal of what such a wife should be, if she were to be allowed to exist at all—the same ideal which Mr. Paget has drawn in his charming little book (would that all parsons' wives would read and perpend), the *Outlet of Orkney Edge*. But Valentinia would surely not make a Beatrice. Beautiful she was, glorious, lovable, but not the helpmeet whom he needed. And he fought against the new dream like a brave man. He fasted, he wept, he prayed. But his prayers seemed not to be heard. Valentinia seemed to have enthroned herself, a true *Venus victrix*, in the centre of his heart, and would not be dispossessed. He tried to avoid seeing her, but even for that he had not strength. He went again and again when asked, only to come home more miserable each time, as hence against himself and his own weakness as if he had given way to wine or to oaths. In vain, too, he represented to himself the ridiculous hopelessness of his passion; the impossibility of the London beauty ever stooping to marry the poor country curate. Fancies would come in, how such things,

strange as they might seem, had happened already, might happen again. It was a class of marriage for which he had always felt a strong dislike, even suspicious and contempt, and though he was far more fitted, in family as well as personal excellence, for such a match, than three out of four who make them, yet he shrank with disgust from the notion of being himself classed at last among the match-making parsons. Whether there was 'carnal pride' or not in that last thought, his soul so loathed it that he would gladly have thrown up his cure at Aberlva, and would have done so actually, but for one word which Tom Thurnall had spoken to him, and that was—Cholera.

That the cholera might come, that it probably would come, in the course of the next two months, was news to him which was enough to keep him at his post, let what would be the consequences. And gradually he began to see a way out of his difficulty—and a very simple one, and that was, to die.

'That is the solution after all,' said he. 'I am not strong enough for God's work, but I will not shrink from it, if I can help. If I cannot master it, let it kill me, so at least I may have peace. I have failed utterly here, all my grand plans have crumbled to ashes between my fingers. I find myself a numberer of the ground, where I fancied that I was going forth like a very Michael—fool that I was!—leader of the armies of heaven. And now, in the one remaining point on which I thought myself strong, I find myself weakest of all. Useless and helpless! I have one chance left, one chance to show these poor souls that I really love them, really wish their good—selfish that I am! What matter whether I do show it or not? What need to justify myself to them? Self, self, creeping in everywhere! I shall begin next, I suppose, longing for the cholera to come, that I may show off myself in it, and make spiritual capital out of their dying agonies! Ah me! that it were all over! That this cholera, if it is to come, would wipe out of this head what I verily believe nothing but death will do!' And there, with Frank laid his head on the table, and cried till he could cry no more.

It was not over manly, but he was weakened with overwork and sorrow, and, on the whole, it was perhaps the best thing he could do, for he fell asleep there, with his head on the table, and did not wake till the dawn blazed through his open window.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DOCTOR AT DAY

Did you ever, in a feverish dream, climb a mountain which grew higher and higher as you climbed, and scramble through passages which changed perpetually before you, and up and down broke-neck stairs which broke off just

petnally behind you? Did you ever spend the whole night, foot in stirrup, mounting that phantom hunter which never gets mounted, or, if he does, turns into a pen between your knees, or in going to fish that phantom stream which never gets fished? Did you ever, late for that mysterious dinner-party in some enchanted castle, wander disconsolately, in unaccountable rags and dirt, in search of that phantom carpet-bag which never gets found? Did you ever 'realise' to yourself the sieve of the Danaides, the stone of Sisyphus, the wheel of Ixion, the pleasure of shearing that domestic animal who (according to the experience of a very ancient observer of nature) produces more cry than wool, the perambulation of that fishman's moul'd bog, where you slip two steps backward for one forward, and must, therefore, in order to progress at all, turn your face homeward, and progress as a pig does into a steamer, by going the opposite way? Were you ever condemned to spin ropes of sand to all eternity, like Treggalo the wrecker, or to extract the cube roots of a million or two of hopeless surds, like the mad mathematician, or last, and worst of all, to work the Nuisance Removal Act? Then you can enter, as a man and a brother, into the sorrows of Tom Thurnall, in the months of June and July 1854.

He had made up his mind, for certain good reasons of his own, that the cholera ought to visit Aberlva in the course of the summer, and, of course, tried his best to persuade people to get ready for their ugly visitor, but in vain. The cholera came there? Why, it never had come yet, which signified, when he inquired a little more closely, that there had been only one or two doubtful cases in 1837, and five or six in 1849. In vain he answered, 'Very well, and is not that a proof that the causes of cholera are increasing here? If you had one case the first time, and five times as many the next, by the same rule you will have five times as many more if it comes this summer.'

'Nonsense! Aberlva was the healthiest town on the coast.'

'Well but,' would Tom say, 'in the census before last, you had a population of 1300 in 112 houses, and that was close packing enough, in all conscience, and in the last census I find you had a population of over 1400, which must have increased since, and there are eight or nine old houses in the town pulled down, or turned into stores, so you are more closely packed than ever. And mind, it may seem no very great difference, but it is the last drop that fills the cup.'

What had that to do with cholera? And more than one gave him to understand that he must be either a very silly or a very impertinent person, to go poking into how many houses there were in the town, and how many people lived in each. Tardrew, the steward, indeed, said openly that Mr Thurnall was making disturbance enough in people's property up at Pentremochyn, without bothering himself with Aberlva too. He had

no opinion of people who had a finger in everybody's pie. Whom Tom tried to soothe with honeyed words, knowing him to be of the original British bulldog breed, which, once stroked against the hair, shows his teeth at you for ever afterwards.

But staniel was Tardrew, unfortunately on the wrong side, and backed by the collective ignorance, pride, laziness, and superstition of Aberlva, showed to his new assailant that terrible front of stupidity, against which, says Schiller, 'the gods themselves light in vain.'

'Does he think we was all fools afore he came here?'

That was the rallying cry of the Conservative party, worshippers of Baalzebub, god of lies, and of that (so say Syrian scholars) from which lies are bred. And, indeed, there were excuses for them, on the Yankee ground, that 'there's a deal of human natur' in man.' It is hard to human nature to make all the humiliating concessions which must precede sanitary repentance, to say, 'I have been a very nasty, dirty fellow. I have lived contented in evil smells, till I care for them no more than my pig does. I have refused to understand nature's broadest hints, that anything which is so disagreeable is not meant to be left about. I have probably been more or less the cause of half my own illnesses, and of three-fourths of the illness of my children, for aught I know, it is very much my fault that my own baby has died of scarlatina, and two or three of my tenants of typhus. No, hang it! that's too much to make any man confess to! I'll prove my innocence by not reforming!' So sanitary reform is thrust out of sight, simply because its necessity is too humiliating to the pride of all, too frightful to the consciences of many.

Tom went to Trehoove.

'Mr Trehoove, you are a man of position in the county, and own some houses in Aberlva. Don't you think you could use your influence in this matter?'

'Own some houses? Yes,' and Mr Trehoove consigned the wind cottages to a variety of unmentionable places, 'cost me more in rates than they bring in in rent, even if I get the rent paid. I should like to get a six pounder, and blow the whole lot into the sea. Cholera coming, eh? D'ye think it will be there before Michaelmas?'

'I do.'

'Pity I can't blow 'em out before Michaelmas. Else I'd have ejected the lot, and pulled the houses down.'

'I think something should be done meanwhile, though, towards cleaning them.'

Let 'em cleanse them themselves! Soap's cheap enough with your . . . free trade, ain't it? Na, sir! That sort of talk will do well enough for my Lord Minchamstead, sir, the old money-lending Jew! . . . but gentlemen, sir, gentlemen, that are half-ruined with free trade, and your Whig policy, sir, you must give 'em back their rights before they can afford

to throw away their money on cottages. Cottages, indeed! The upstart of a cotton-spinner, coming down here, buying the land over our heads, and pretending to show us how to manage our estates, oh! families that have been in the county this four hundred years, with the finest property in the world ready to die for them, sir, till these new revolutionary doctrines came in—pride and purse-proud conceit, just to show off his money! What do they want with better cottages than their fathers had? Only put notions into their heads, rouse 'em above their station, where they have, more they'll want.

Sir, make Chartists of 'em all before he's done! I'll tell you what, sir, and Mr Treboore attempted a dignified and dogmatic tone—'I never told it you before, because you were my very good friend, sir, but my opinion is, sir, that by what you're doing up at Pentremochyn, you're just spreading Chartist-Chartism, sir! Of course I know nothing. Of course I'm nobody, in these days, but that's my opinion, sir, and you've got it!'

By which motion Tom took little. Mighty is every always, and mighty ignorance, but you become aware of their truly Titian grandeur only when you attempt to touch their owners' pocket.

Tom tried old Heale, but took as little in that quarter. Heale had heard of sanitary reform, of course, but he knew nothing about it, and gave a general assent to Tom's doctrines, for fear of exposing his own ignorance, acting on this was a very different matter. It is always hard for an old medical man to confess that anything has been discovered since the days of his youth, and besides, there were other reasons behind, which Heale tried to avoid giving, and therefore fenced off, and fenced off, till, pressed hard by Tom, wrath came forth, and truth with it.

'And what be you thinking of, sir, to expect me to attend all my best patients? and not one of 'em but rents some two cottages, some a dozen. And what'll they say to me if I get a roasting and rocking in their drains, like an old sow by the wayside, beside putting 'em to all manner of expense? And all on the chance of this cholera coming, which I have no faith in, nor in this new-fangled sanitary reform neither, which is all a dodge for a lot of young government jumpies to fill their pockets, and into and ride over us. And my opinion always was with the Bible, that 'tis judgment, sir, a judgment of God, and we can't escape His holy will, and that's the plain truth of it.'

Tom made no answer to that latter argument. He had heard that 'tis judgment' from every mouth during the last few days, and had mortally offended the Brimble preachers that very morning, by answering his 'tis judgment' with—

'But, my good sir! the Bible, I thought, says that Aaron stayed the plague among the Israelites, and David the one at Jerusalem.'

'Sir, those was miracles, sir! and they was

under the law, sir, and we'm under the Gospel, you'll be pleased to remember.'

'Humph!' said Tom, 'then, by your showing, they were better off under the law than we are now, if they could have their plagues stopped by miracles, and we cannot have ours stopped at all.'

'Sir, be you an infidel?'

To which there was no answer to be made.

In this case, Tom answered Heale with—

'But, my dear sir, if you don't like (as is reasonable enough) to take the responsibility on yourself, why not go to the Board of Guardians, and get them to put the act in force?'

'Board, sir? and do you know so little of Boards as that? Why, there ain't one of them but owns cottages themselves, and it's as much as my place is worth—'

'Your place as medical officer is just worth nothing, as you know, you'll have been out of pocket by it seven or eight pounds this year, even if no cholera comes.'

Tom knew the whole state of the case, but he liked tormenting Heale now and then.

'Well, sir! but if I get turned out next year in such a state that I have to go to Caranow Church town into my district, and into the best of my practice, too. I wonder what sort of a Poor Law district you were medical officer of, if you don't know yet that that's why we take to the poor.'

'My dear sir, I know it, and a good deal more besides.'

'Then why go bothering me this way?'

'Why,' said Tom, 'it's pleasant to have old notions confirmed as often as possible—'

'It is a jest, and all things show it,
I thought no more, but now I know it.'

What an ass the fellow must have been who had that put on his tombstone, not to have found it out many a year before he died!

He went next to Healey the curate, and took little by that move, though more than by any other.

For Frank already believed his doctrines, as an educated London parson of course would, was shocked to hear that they were likely to become fact so soon and so fearfully, offered to do all he could—but confessed that he could do nothing.

'I have been hinting to them, ever since I came, improvements in cleanliness, in ventilation, and so forth—but I have been utterly unheeded—and lally me as you will, doctor, about my cramming doctrines down their throats, and roaring like a Pope's lull, I assure you that, on sanitary reform, my roaring was as of a sucking dove, and ought to have prevailed, if soft persuasion can.'

'You were a dove where you ought to have been a bull, and a bull where you ought to have been a dove. But roar now, if ever you roared, in the pulpit and out. Why not preach to them on it next Sunday?'

'Well, I'd give a lecture gladly, if I could get

any one to come and hear it, but that you could do better than me.

'I'll lecture them myself, and show them hogges, if my quarter-inch will do its work. If they want seeing to believe, see they shall, I have half a dozen specimens of water already which will astonish them. Let me lecture, you must preach.'

'You must know that there is a feeling—you would call it a prejudice—against introducing such purely secular subjects into the pulpit.'

Tom gave a long whistle.

'Pardon me, Mr. Headley, you are a man of sense, and I can speak to you as one human being to another, which I have seldom been able to do with your respected cloth.'

'Say on, I shall not be frightened.'

'Well, don't you put up the Ten Commandments in your church?'

'Yes.'

'And isn't one of them run "Thou shalt not kill"?''

'Well?'

'And is not murder a moral offence—what you call a sin?'

'*Quæstio*.'

'If you saw your parishioners in the habit of ~~say~~ such other's throats, or their own, shouldn't you think that a matter spiritual enough to be a fit subject for a little of the drum celestiation?'

'Well?'

'Well? Ill! There are your parishioners about to commit wholesale murder and suicide and is that a secular question? If they don't know the fact, is not that all the more reason for your telling them of it? You pointed away, as I warned you once, at the sins of which they are just as well aware as you, why on earth do you hold your tongue about the sins of which they are not aware? You tell us every Sunday that we do Heaven only knows how many more wrong things than we dream of. Tell it us again now. Don't strain at gnats like want of faith and resignation, and swallow such a cruel as twenty or thirty deaths. It's no concern of mine, I've seen plenty of people murdered, and may again. I am accustomed to it, but if it's not your concern, what on earth you are here for is more than I can tell.'

'You are right—you are right, but how to put it on religious grounds—'

Tom whistled again.

'If your doctrines cannot be made to fit such plain matters as twenty deaths, *but per parum* *est*. If they have nothing to say on such scientific facts, why, the facts must take care of themselves, and the doctrines may, for aught I care, go am!—But I won't be really rude. Only think over the matter if you are God's minister, you ought to have something to say about God's view of a fact which certainly involves the lives of His creatures, not by twos and threes, but by tens of thousands.'

So Frank went home, and thought it through, and went once and again to Thurnall, and con-

descended to ask his opinion of what he had said, and whether he said ill or well. What Thurnall answered was—'Whether that's sound Church doctrine is your business, but if it be, I'll say, with the man there in the Acts—what was his name? "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian".'

'Would God that you were one! for you would make a right good one.'

'Humph! at least you see what you can do, if you'll only face fact as it stands, and talk about the realities of life. I'll jaul your sermon beforehand, I assure you, and bring all I can to hear it.'

So Frank preached a noble sermon, most rational, and most spiritual withal, but he, too, like his tutor, took little by his auditors.

All the present fruit upon which he had to congratulate himself was, that the Brampton preacher denounced him in chapel next Sunday as a German Rationalist, who impudently pretended to explain away the Lord's visitation into a casual matter of drums, and pipes, and guses, and such like, and that his rival of another denomination, who was a fanatic on the tactical question, denounced him as bitterly for supporting the cause of drunkenness, by attributing cholera to want of cleanliness, while all rational people knew that its true source was intemperance. Poor Frank! he had preached against drunkenness many a time and oft, but because he would not add a Mohammedan church commandment to those ten which men already find difficult enough in keeping, he was set upon it once by a fanatic whose game it was—as it is that of too many—to subvert any reform, and muddy the spread of plain scientific truth, for the sake of pushing their own nostrum for all human ills.

In despair, Tom went off to Elsie Vavasour. Would he help? Would he join, as one of two householders, in making a representation to the proper authorities?

Elsley had never mixed in local matters, and if he had, he knew nothing of how to manage men, or to read an Act of Parliament, so, angry as Tom was inclined to be with him, he found it useless to quarrel with a man so utterly impractical, who would probably, had he been stirred into exertion, have done more harm than good.

'Only come with me, and satisfy yourself as to the existence of one of these nuisances, and then you will have grounds on which to go,' said Tom, who had still hopes of making a cat's paw of Elsie, and, by his power over him, pulling the strings from behind.

Sorely against his will, Elsie went, saw, and smelt, came home again, was very unwell, and was visited nightly for a week after by that most disgusting of all phantoms, salutary nightmare, which some who have worked in the foul places of the earth know but too well. Evidently his health could not stand it. There was no work to be got out of him in that direction.

'Would he write, then, and represent matters to Lord Southbush?'

How could he? He did not know the man, not a line had ever been exchanged between them. Their relations were so very peculiar. It would seem sheer impertinence on his part to interfere with the management of Lord Southbush's property. Really there was a great deal to be said, Tom felt, for poor Elsley's dislike of meddling in that quarter.

'Would Mrs. Vavasour write, then?'

'For Heaven's sake, do not mention it to her. She would be so terrified about the children, she is worn out with anxiety already,'—and so forth.

Tom went back to Frank Headley.

'You see a good deal of Miss St. Just?'

'I?—No—why?—what?' said poor Frank, blushing.

'Only that you must make her write to her brother about this cholera.'

'My dear fellow, it is such a subject for a lady to meddle with.'

'It has no scruple in meddling with ladies, so ladies ought to have none in meddling with it. You must do it as delicately as you will, but done it must be. It is our only chance. Tell her of Tardrew's obstinacy, or Southbush will go by his opinion, and tell her to keep the secret from her sister.'

Frank did it, and well. Valentin was horror-struck, and wrote.

Southbush was away at sea, nobody knew where, and a full fortnight elapsed before an answer came.

'My dear, you are quite mistaken if you think I can do anything. Nine-tenths of the houses in Albermarle are not in my hands, but copyholds and long leases, over which I have no power. If the people will complain to me of any given nuisance, I'll right it if I can, and if the doctor wants money, and sees any way of laying it out well, he shall have what he wants, though I am very high in Queer Street just now, ma'am, having paid your bills before I left town, like a good brother. But I tell you again, I have no more power than you have, except over a few cottages, and Tardrew assured me, three weeks ago, that they were as comfortable as they ever had been.'

So Tardrew had forestalled Thurnall in writing to the Viscount. Well, there was one more chance to be tried.

Tom gave his lecture in the schoolroom. He showed them magnified abominations enough to frighten all the children into fits, and dilated on horrors enough to spoil all appetites. He proved to them that, though they had the finest water in the world all over the town, they had contrived to poison almost every drop of it, he waxed eloquent, witty, sarcastic, and the net result was a general grumble.

'How did he get hold of all the specimens, as he calls them? What business has he poking his nose down people's wells and waterbutts?'

But an unexpected ally arose at this juncture, in the coastguard lieutenant, who, being valiant after his evening's brandy-and-water, rose and declared 'that Dr Thurnall was a very clever man, that by what he'd seen himself in the West Indies, it was all as true as gospel, that the parish might have the cholera if it liked,'—and here a few expletives occurred—but that he'd see that the coast-guard houses were put to rights at once, for he would not have the lives of Her Majesty's servants endangered by such dirty tricks, not fit for heathen savages,' etc. etc.

Tom struck while the iron was hot. He saw that the great man's speech had produced an impression.

'Would he' (so he asked the lieutenant privately), 'get some one to join him, and present a few of those nuisances?'

He would do anything in his contempt for 'a lot of long-shore merchant-skippers and herringers, who went about calling themselves captains, and fancy themselves, sir, as good as if they wore the Queen's uniform.'

'Well, then, can't we find another householder—some cantankerous dog who don't mind a row?'

Yes, the cantankerous dog was found, in the person of Mr John Penruddock, coal-merchant, who had quarrelled with Tardrew, because Tardrew said he gave short weight—which he very probably did—and had quarrelled also with Thomas Berr senior, ship-builder, about right of passage through a back-yard.

Mr Penruddock suddenly discovered that Mr Berr kept up a dirt-heap in the said back-yard, and with virulent indignation vowed 'he'd save the old beggar out at last.'

So far so good. The weapons of reason and righteousness having failed, Tom felt at liberty to borrow the devil's tools. Now to pack a vestry, and to nominate a local committee.

The vestry was packed, the committee nominated, of course half of them refused to act—they 'didn't want to go quarrelling with their neighbours.'

Tom explained to them cunningly and delicately that they would have nothing to do, that one or two (he did not say that he was the one, and the two also) would do all the work, and bear all the odium, whereas the malcontents subsided, considering it likely that, after all, nothing would be done.

Some may fancy that matters were now getting somewhat settled. Those who do so know little of the charming machinery of local governments. One man has 'summat to say,'—utterly irrelevant, another must needs answer him with something equally irrelevant, a long chatter ensues, in spite of all cries to order and question. Soon one and another gets personal, and temper shows here and there. You would fancy that the go-ahead party try to restore order, and help business on. Not in the least. They have begun to cool a little. They are a little afraid that they have committed themselves. If people quarrel with each other, perhaps they may quarrel with them too. And they begin to

be wonderfully patient and impartial, in the hope of staving off the evil day, and finding some excuse for doing nothing after all. 'Hear 'mun out!' 'Vair and zoft, let ev'ry man ha' his zay!' 'There's vary gudo reason in it!' 'I dahn't think of that avore,—and so forth, till in a quaster of an hour the whole question has to be discussed over again, through the fog of a dozen fresh tales, and the miserable earnest man hurls himself considerably worse off than when he began. Happy for him if one chance word is not let drop which will afford the whole assembly an excuse for falling on him open-mouthed, as the custom of all their

was! That chance word came. Mr. Penruddock gave a spiteful hit, being, as is said, in a tan tankerous turn, to Mr. Treuddra, principal powder, i.e. fish salesman, of Alcralva. Where on Treuddra, whose conscience told him that there was at present in his back yard a cart-load and more of fish in every stage of putrefaction, which he had kept rotting there rather than lower the market-price, rose in wrath.

'An' if any committee juts its nos into my back-yard, if it daunt get the biggest cod's innards as I can collar hold on about its ears, my nose is not Treuddra! A man's house is his castle, says I, and them as takes up with any o' this open-days lurgery, for it's nothing else, has to do wi' me, that's all, and them as knows their interest, knows me!'

Terrible were these words, for old Treuddra, like most powder, combined the profession of money-lender with that of salesman, and there were dozens in the place who were in debt to him for money advanced to buy bait and nets, after wreck and loss. Besides to offend one powder was to offend all. They combined to buy the fish at any price they chose. If angered, they would combine now and then not to buy it at all.

'You old twenty per cent rascal,' roared the lieutenant, 'after making a fortune out of these poor fellows' mishaps, do you want to poison em all with your stinking fish?'

'I say, lieutenant,' says old Beer, whose son owed Treuddra fifty pounds at that moment, 'fair's fair. You mind your coast-guard, and we'll mind our trade. We're free fishermen, by charter and right, you're not our master, and you shall know it.'

'Know it!' says the lieutenant, foaming.

'Iss, you put your head inside my presences, and I'll split 'mun open, if I be hanged for it!'

'You split my head open!'

'Iss, by —'. And the old gray-bearded sea king set his arms akimbo.

'Gentlemen, gentlemen, for Heaven's sake!' cries poor Headley, 'this is really going too far. Gentlemen, the vestry is adjourned!'

'Best thing too! oughtn't never to have been called,' says one and another.

And some one, as he went out, muttered something about 'interloping strange doctors, colloquies with popish curates' which was

answered by a—'Put 'mun in the quay jule,' from Treuddra.

Tom stepped up to Treuddra instantly. 'What were you so kind as to say, sir?'

Treuddra turned very pale. 'I didn't say nought.'

'Oh, but I assure you I heard, and I shall be most happy to jump into the quay jule this afternoon, if it will afford you the slightest amusement. Say the word, and I'll borrow a flute, and play you the Roger's March all the while with my right hand, swimming with my left. Now, gentlemen, one word before we part!'

'Who be you?' cries some one.

'A man, at least, and ought to have a fair hearing. Now, I ask you, what possible interest can I have in this matter? I knew when I began that I should give myself a frightful quantity of trouble, and get only what I have got.'

'Why did you begin at all, then?'

'Because I was a very foolish, indolent ass, who fancied that I ought to do my duty once in a way by my neighbours. Now, I have only to say, that if you will but forgive and forget, and let bygones be bygones, I promise you solemnly, I'll never do my duty by you again as long as I live, nor interfere with the sacred privilege of every free-born Englishman, to do that which is right in the sight of his own eyes, and wrong too!'

'You're making fun at us,' said old Beer dubiously.

'Well, Mr. Beer, and isn't that better than quarrelling with you? Come along, we'll all go home and forget it, like good Christians. Perhaps the children won't come, and if it does, what's the odds so long as you're happy, eh?'

And to the intense astonishment both of the lieutenant and Frank, Tom walked home with the malcontents, making himself so agreeable that he was forgiven freely on the spot.

'What does the fellow mean? He's deserted us, sir, after bringing us here to make fools of us!'

Frank could give no answer, but Thimall gave one himself that evening, both to Frank and the lieutenant.

'The cholera will come, and these fellows are just mad, but I mustn't quarrel with them, mad or not.'

'Why, then?'

'For the same reason that you must not. If we keep our influence, we may be able to do some good at the last, which means, in plain English, saving a few human lives. As for you, lieutenant, you have behaved like a hero, and have been served as heroes generally are. What you must do is this. On the first hint of disease, pack up your traps and your good lady, and go and live in the watch-house across the river. As for the men's houses, I'll set them to rights in a day, if you'll get the commander of the district to allow you a little chloride of lime and whetwash.'

And he said, "Dorothea sends you these, out of the heavenly garden which she told you of, will you believe her now?" And then, before they could reply, he vanished away. And Theophilus looked at the flowers, and tasted the fruit, and a new heart grew up within him, and he said, "Dorothea's God shall be my God, and I will die for Him like her."

'So you see, darling, there are sweeter fruits than these, and gayer flowers, in the place to which you go, and all the lovely things in this world here will seem quite poor and worthless beside the glory of that better land which He will show you, and yet you will not care to look at them, for the sight of Him will be enough, and you will care to think of nothing else.'

'And you are sure He will accept me, after all?' asked the mock girl, opening her eyes, and looking up at Grace. 'She saw Him standing in the doorway, and gave a little scream.'

Tom came forward, bowing. 'I am very sorry to have disturbed you. I suspect Miss Harvey was giving you better medicine than I can give.'

Now why did Tom say that, to whom the legend of St. Dorothea, and, indeed, that whole belief in a better land, was as a dream fit only for girls?

Not altogether because he must needs say something civil. True, he felt, on the whole, about the future state as Goethe did—'To the able man this world is too dumb, why should he run off into eternity?' Such incomprehensible subjects he too far off, and only disturb our thoughts, if made the subject of daily meditation. That there was a future state he had no doubt. Our having been born once, he used to say, is the strongest possible presumption in favour of our being born again, and probably, as nature always works upward and develops higher forms, in some higher state. Indeed, for aught he knew, the old ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs might be alive now as lions, or as men. He himself, indeed, he had said, ere now had been probably a pterodactyl of the Liass, neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring, but crocodile and bat in one, able alike to swim, or run, or fly, eat anything, and live in any element. Still it was no concern of his. He was here, and here was his business. He had not thought of this life before he came into it, and it would be time enough to think of the next life when he got into it. Besides, he had all a doctor's dislike of those terrors of the unseen world with which some men are wont to oppress still more failing nature, and break the bruised reed. His business was to cure his patients' bodies, and if he could not do that, at least to see that life was not shortened in them by nervous depression and anxiety. Accustomed to see men of every character die under every possible circumstance, he had come to the conclusion that the 'safety of a man's soul' could by no possibility be inferred from his death-bed temper. The vast majority, good or bad, died in peace, why not let them die so? If nature kindly took off the edge of sorrow, by

blunting the nervous system, what right had man to interfere with so merciful an arrangement? Every man, he held in his easy optimism, would go where he ought to go, and it could be no possible good to him—indeed, it might be a very bad thing for him, as in this life—to go where he ought not to go. So he used to argue, with three-fourths of mankind, mingling truth and falsehood, and would on these grounds have done his best to turn the dissenting preacher out of that house, had he found him in it. But to-day he was in a more lenient, perhaps in a more human, and therefore more spiritual mood. It was all very well for him, full of life, and power, and hope, to look on death in that cold, careless way, but for that poor young thing, cut off just as life opened from all that made life lovely—was not death for her a painful, ugly anomaly? Could she be blamed, if she shuddered at going forth into the unknown blank, she knew not whither? All very well for the old emperor of Rome, who had lived his life and done his work, to play with the dreary question—

'Annulla, vana, blanda,
Hopes consueque corporis,
Qua nunc abibis in loca,
Ignota, nulla, pallida?'

But she, who had lived no life, and done no work—only had passed through weary years of hideous suffering, crippled and ulcerated with scrofula, now dying of consumption, was it not a merciful dream, a beautiful dream, a just dream so beautiful and just that perhaps it might be true that in some far-off world, all this, and more, might be made up to her? If not, was it not a mistake and an injustice that she should ever have come into the world at all? And was not Grace doing a rational as well as a loving work, in telling her, under whatever symbols, that such a home of rest and beauty awaited her? It was not the sort of place to which he expected, perhaps even wished, to go, but it fitted well enough with a young girl's hopes, a young girl's powers of enjoyment. Let it be, perhaps there was such a place—why not?—fitted for St. Dorothea, and those cut off in youth like her, and other places fit for such as he. And he spoke more tenderly than usual (though he was never untender), as he said—

'And you feel better to-day? I am sure you must, with such a kind friend to tell you such sweet tales.'

'I do not feel better, thank you. And why should I wish to do so? You all take too much trouble about me, why do you want to keep me here?'

'We are loth to lose you, and besides, while you can be kept here, it is a sign that you ought to be here.'

'So Grace tells me. Yes, I will be patient, and wait till He has done His work. I am more patient now, am I not, Grace?' And she fondled Grace's hand, and looked up in her face.

'Yes,' said Grace, who was standing near, with downcast face, trying to avoid Tom's eye.

'Yes, you are very good, but you must not talk,' but the girl went on, with kindling eye—

'Ah! I was very fretful at first, because I could not go to Heaven at once, but Grace showed me how it was good to be here, as well as there, as long as He thought that I might be made perfect by sufferings. And since then my pain has become quite pleasant to me, and I am ready to wait and bear—wait and hear.'

'You must not talk, see, you are beginning to cough,' said Tom, who wished somehow to stop a form of thought which so utterly puzzled him. Not that he had not heard it before, commonplace enough indeed it is, thank God, but that day the words came home to him with spirit and power, all the more solemnly from their contrast with the scene around without, all sunshine, joy, and glory, all which could tempt a human being to linger here, and within, that young girl longing to leave it all, and yet content to stay and suffer. What mysteries there were in the human spirit—mysteries to which that knowledge of mankind on which he prided himself gave him no key.

'What if I were laid on my back to-morrow for life, by a fall, a blow, as I have seen many a better man than me, should I not wish to have one to talk to me, as she was talking to that child?' And for a moment a yearning after Grace came over him, as it had done before, and swept from his mind the dark cloud of suspicion.

'Now I must talk with your mother,' said he, 'for you have better company than mine, and I hear her just coming in.'

He settled little matters for his patient's comfort with the farmer's wife. When he returned to find her good-bye Grace was gone.

'I hope I have not driven her away.'

'Oh no, she had been here an hour, and she must go back now, to get her mother's supper.'

'That is a good girl,' said Tom, looking after her as she went down the field.

'She's an angel from Heaven, sir. Not a three days go over without her walking up here all this way after her work to comfort my poor maid, and all of us as well. It's like the dew of heaven upon us. Fity, sir, you didn't see her home.'

'I should have liked it well enough, but folks might talk, if two young people were seen walking together Sunday evening.'

'Oh, sir, they know her too well by now for miles round, and you too, sir, I'll make bold to say.'

'Well, at least I'll go after her.'

So Tom went and kept Grace in sight till she had crossed the little moor, and disappeared in the wood below.

He had gone about a hundred yards into the wood, when he heard voices and laughter, then a loud shriek. He hurried forward. In another minute, Grace rushed up to him; her eyes wide with terror and indignation.

'What is it?' cried he, trying to stop her, but, not seeming to see him, she dashed past

him, and ran on. Another moment and a man appeared in full pursuit.

It was Trebooz, of Trebooze, an evil laugh upon his face.

Tom planted himself across the narrow path in an attitude which there was no mistaking.

Not a word passed between them. Silently and instinctively, like two fierce dogs, the two men flew upon each other, Tom full of righteous wrath, and Trebooz of half drunken passion, turned to fury by the interruption.

He was a far taller and heavier man than Thurnall, and, as the bully of the neighbourhood, counted on an easy victory. But he was mistaken. After the first rush was over, he found it impossible to close with his foe, and saw in the doctor's face, now grown cool and business-like as usual, the wily smile of superior science and expected triumph.

'Brandy and water in the morning ought not to improve the wind,' said Tom to himself, as his left hand countered provokingly, while his right rattled again and again upon Trebooz's watch-chain. 'Justice will overtake you in the offending part, which I take to be the epigastric region.'

In a few minutes more the scuffle ended shamefully enough for the sottish squireen.

Tom stood over him for a minute, as he sat grovelling and groaning among the long grass.

'I may as well see that I have not killed him. No, he will do as well as ever—which is not saying much. . . . Now, sir! Go home quietly, and ask Mrs. Trebooz for a little rhubarb and salvolatile. I'll call up in the course of to-morrow to see how you are.'

'I'll kill you if I catch you!'

'As a man, I am open of course to be killed by any fair means; but as a doctor, I am still bound to see after my patient's health.' And Tom bowed civilly, and walked back up the path to find Grace, after washing face and hands in the brook.

He found her up at Tolehard's farm, trembling and thankful.

'I cannot do less than see Miss Harvey safe home.'

Grace hesitated.

'Mrs. Tolehard, I am sure, will walk with us, it would be safer, in case you felt faint again.'

But Mrs. Tolehard would not come to save Grace's notions of propriety, so Tom passed Grace's arm through his own. She offered to withdraw it.

'No, you will require it. You do not know yet how much you have gone through. My fear is, that you will feel it all the more painfully when the excitement is just. I shall send you up a cordial, and you must promise me to take it. You owe me a little debt, you know, to-day, you must pay it by taking my medicines.'

Grace looked up at him adoringly, for there was a playful tenderness in his voice which was new to her, and which thrilled her through and through.

'I will indeed, I promise you. But I am so

much better now. Really, I can walk alone!" And she withdrew her arm from his, but not hastily.

After that they walked on a while in silence. Grace kept her veil down, for her eyes were full of tears. She loved that man intensely, utterly. She did not seek to deny it to herself. God had given him to her, and here he was. The very sea, the devourer whom she hated, who hungered to swallow up all young fair life, the very sea had yielded him up to her, alive from the dead. And yet that man, she knew, suspected her of a base and hateful crime. It was too dreadful! She could not exculpate herself, save by blank denial and what would that avail? The large hot drops ran down her cheeks. She had need of all her strength to prevent sobbing.

She looked round. In the bright summer evening, all things were full of joy and love. The hedge-banks were gay as flower gardens, the swills chased each other, screaming harsh delight, the ring-dove murmured in the wood beneath his world-old song, which she had taught the children a hundred times.

Curiously, curiously,
You love me, and I love you."

The woods slept golden in the evening sunlight, and overhead brooded, like one great smile of God, the everlasting blue.

"He will light me," she said. "Hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently, and He will make thy righteousness clear as the light, and thy just dealing as the noon day!" And after that thought she wept no more.

Was it as a reward for her faith that Tom began to talk to her? He had gazed on by her side, serious, but not sad. True, he had suspected her, he suspected her still. But that scene with the flying child had been so shaming. There, at least, there was nothing to suspect, nothing to sneer at. The calm purity, self-sacrifice, hope, which was contained in it, had softened his world-hardened spirit, and woke up in him feelings which were always pleasant, feelings which the sight of his father, or the writing to his father, could only awaken. Quietly enough, the thought of Grace and of his father seemed intertwined, inextinguishable. If the old man had but such a nurse as she! And for a moment he felt a glow of tenderness toward her, because he thought she would be tender to his father. She had stolen his money, certainly, or, if not, she knew where it was, and would not tell him. Well, what matter just then? He did not want the money at that minute. How much pleasanter and wiser to take things as they came, and enjoy himself while he could, and fancy that she was always what he had seen her that day. After all, it was much more pleasant to trust people than to suspect them.

"Handsome is who handsome does!" And besides, she did me the kindness of saving my life, so it would but be civil to talk to her a little.

He began to talk to her about the lovely scenes around, and found, to his surprise, that she

saw as much of it as he, and saw a great deal more in it than he. Her answers were short, modest, faltering, but each one of them suggestive, and Tom soon found that he had met with a mind which contained all the elements of poetry, and needed only education to develop them.

"What a blood-stocking, pre-Raphaelite, seventh-heaven man she would have been, if she had had the misfortune to be born in that station of life!" But where a clever man is talking to a beautiful woman, talk he will, and must, for the mere sake of showing off, though she be but a village schoolmistress, and Tom soon found himself, with a secret sneer at his own vanity, displaying before her all the much finer things that he had seen in his travels, and as he talked, she answered, with quiet expressions of wonder, sympathy, regret at her own narrow sphere of experience, till, as if the truth was not enough, he found himself running to the very edge of exaggeration, and a little over it in the enjoyment of calling out her passion for the marvellous, especially when called out in honour of himself.

And she, simple creature, drank it all in as sparkling wine, and only dreaded lest the stream should cease. Adventures with noble savages in palm fringed coral islands, with greedy robbers and the finger-hills of Greece, with fierce Indians beneath the snow peaks of the Far West, with coward Mexicans among tumors of cactus and agave, beneath the burning tropic sun. What a man he was! Where had he not been? and what had he not seen? And how he had been preserved for her! And his image seemed to her utterly beautiful and glorious, clothed as it was in the beauty and glory of all that he had seen, and done, and suffered. O Love, Love, Love, the same in peasant and in peer! The more honour to you, then, old Love, to be the same thing in the world which is common to peasant and to peer. They say that you are blind, a deceiver, an exaggerator, a liar, in short. They know just nothing about you, then. You will not see people as they seem, and as they have become, no doubt, but why? because you see them as they ought to be, and are, in some deep way, eternally, in the sight of Him who conceived and created them.

At last she started, as if waking from a pleasant dream, and spoke, half to herself.

"Oh, how foolish of me—to be idling away this opportunity, the only one, perhaps, which I may have! Oh, Mr. Thurnall, tell me about this cholera!"

"What about it?"

"Everything. Ever since I heard of what you have been saying to the people, ever since Mr. Headley's sermon, it has been like fire in my ears!"

"I am truly glad to hear it. If all parsons had preached about it for the last fifteen years as Mr. Headley did last Sunday, if they had told people plainly that, if the cholera was God's

judgment at all, it was His judgment of the sin of dirt, and that the repentance which He required was to wash—and be clean in literal earnest, the cholera would be impossible in England by now.

'Oh, Mr Thurnall but is it not God's doing? and can we stop His hand?'

'I know nothing about that, Miss Harvey. I only know that wheresoever cholera breaks out, it is some one's fault and if deaths occur, some one ought to be tried for manslaughter—I had almost said murder—and transported for life.'

'Some one! Who?'

'That will be settled in the next generation, when men have common sense enough to make laws for the preservation of their own lives, against the dirt, and covetousness, and idleness of a set of human hogs.'

Grace was silent for a while.

'But can nothing be done to keep it off now? Must it come?'

'I believe it must. Still, one may do enough to save many lives in the meanwhile.'

'Enough to save many lives—lives!—immortal souls, too! Oh, what could I do?'

'A great deal, Miss Harvey,' said Tom, across whom the recollection of Grace's influence flashed for the first time. What a help she might be to him!

And he talked on and on to her, and found that she entered into his plans with all her wild enthusiasm, but also with sound practical common sense, and Tom began to respect her intellect as well as her heart.

At last, however, she faltered.

'Oh, if I could but believe all this! Is it not fighting against God?'

'I do not know what sort of God yours is, Miss Harvey. I believe in some One who made all that!' and he pointed round him to the glorious woods and glorious sky, 'I should have fancied from your speech to that poor girl, that you believed in Him also. You may, however, only believe in the same being in whom the Methodist parson believes; one who intends to hurl into endless agony every human being who has not had a chance of hearing the said preacher's nostrum for delivering men out of the hands of Him who made them!'

'What do you mean?' asked Grace, startled alike by Tom's words, and the intense scorn and bitterness of his tone.

'That matters little. What do you mean in turn? What did you mean by saying that saving lives is saving immortal souls?'

'Oh, is it not giving them time to repent? What will become of them, if they are cut off in the midst of their sins?'

'If you had a son whom it was not convenient to you to keep at home, would his being a bad fellow—the greatest scoundrel on the earth—be a reason for your turning him into the streets to live by thieving, and end by going to the dogs for ever and a day?'

'No, but what do you mean?'

'That I do not think that God, when He

sends a human being out of this world, is more cruel than you or I would be. If we transport a man because he is too bad to be in England, and he shows any signs of mending, we give him a fresh chance in the colonies, and let him start again, to try if he cannot do better next time. And do you fancy that God, when He transports a man out of this world, never gives him a fresh chance in another—especially when one out of ten poor rascals have never had a fair chance yet?'

Grace looked up in his face astonished.

'Oh, if I could but believe that! Oh! it would give me some gleam of hope for my two —' But no—it's not in Scripture. Where the tree falls there it lies.'

'And as the fool dies, so dies the wise man, and there is one account to the righteous and to the wicked. And a man has no pre-eminence over a beast, for both turn alike to dust, and Solomon does not know, he says, or any one else, anything about the whole matter, or even whether there be any life after death at all, and so, he says, the only wise thing is to leave such deep questions alone, for Him who made us to settle in His own way, and just to fear God and keep His commandments, and do the work which lies nearest us with all our might.'

Grace was silent.

'You are surprised to hear me quote Scripture, and well you may be—but that same Book of Ecclesiastes is a very old favourite with me, for I am no Christian, but a worldling, if ever there was one. But it does puzzle me why you, who are a Christian, should talk one half-hour as you have been talking to that poor girl, and the next go for information about the next life to poor old disappointed, broken-hearted Solomon, with his three hundred and odd idolatrous wives, who confesses fairly that this life is a failure, and that he does not know whether there is any next life at all.'

Whether Tom were altogether right or not, is not the question here, the novelist's business is to represent the real thoughts of mankind, when they are not absolutely unfit to be told, and certainly Tom spoke the doubts of thousands when he spoke his own.

Grace was silent still.

'Well,' he said, 'beyond that I can't go, being no theologian. But when a preacher tells people in one breath of a God who so loves men that He gave His own Son to save them, and in the next that the same God so hates men that He will cast nine-tenths of them into hopeless torture for ever (and if that is not hating, I don't know what is), unless he, the preacher, gets a chance of talking to them for a few minutes—Why, I should like, Miss Harvey, to put that gentleman upon a real fire for ten minutes, instead of his comfortable Sunday's dinner, which stands ready frying for him, and which he was going home to eat, as jolly as if all the world was not going to destruction, and there let him feel what fire was like, and reconsider his statements.'

suspicion, of which she had spoken! There was no harm in asking.

'But, Grace—Miss Harvey—You will not be angry with me if I ask? Why speak so often, as if finding this money depended on you alone? You wish me to recover it, I know, and if you can counsel me, why not do so? Why not tell me whom you suspect?'

Her old wild terror returned in an instant. She stopped short—

'Suspect? I suspect! Oh, I have suspected too many already! Suspected till I began to hate my fellow-creatures—hate life itself, when I fancied that I saw "thief" written on every forehead. Oh, do not ask me to suspect any more!'

Tom was silent.

'Oh,' she cried, after a moment's pause. 'Oh, that we were back in those old times I have read of, when they used to put people to the torture to make them confess!'

'Why, in Heaven's name?'

'Because then I should have been tortured, and have confessed it, true or false, in the agony, and have been hanged. They used to hang them then, and put them out of their misery, and I should have been put out of mine, and no one have been blamed but me for evermore.'

'You forget,' said Tom, lost in wonder, 'that then I should have blamed you, as well as every one else.'

'True, yes, it was a foolish faithless word I did not take it, and it would have been no good to my soul to say I did. Lies cannot prosper, cannot prosper, Mr Thurnall!' and she stopped short again.

'What, my dear Grace?' said he, kindly enough, for he began to fear that she was losing her wits.

'I saved your life!'

'You did, Grace.'

'Then, I never thought to ask for payment. But, oh, I must now. Will you promise me one thing in return?'

'What you will, as I am a man and a gentleman, I can trust you to ask nothing which is not worthy of you.'

Tom spoke truth. He felt,—perhaps love made him feel it all the more easily,—that whatever was behind, he was safe in that woman's hands.

'Then promise me that you will wait one month, only one month, ask no questions, mention nothing to any living soul! And if, before that time, I do not bring you that belt back, send me to Bodmin gaol, and let me bear my punishment.'

'I promise,' said Tom. And the two walked on again in silence, till they neared the head of the village.

Then Grace went forward, like Nausicaa when she left Ulysses, lest the townsfolk should talk, and Tom sat down upon a bank and watched her figure vanishing in the dusk.

Much he puzzled, hunting up and down in his cunning head for an explanation of the

mystery. At last he found one which seemed to fit the facts so well, that he rose with a whistle of satisfaction, and walked homewards.

Evidently, her mother had stolen the belt, and Grace was, if not a repentant accomplice—for that he could not believe—at least aware of the fact.

'Well, it is a hard knot for her to untie, poor child, and on the strength of having saved my life, she shall untie it her own way. I can wait. I hope the money won't be spent meanwhile, though, and the empty leather returned to me when wanted no longer. However, that's done already, if done at all. I was a fool for not acting at once, a double fool for suspecting her! As that I was, to take up with a false scent, and throw myself off the true one! My everlasting unbelief in people has punished itself this time. I might have got a search-warrant three months ago, and had that old watch safe in the bulboes. But no—I might not have found it, after all, and there would have been only an esculandre, and if I knew that girl's heart, she would have been ten times more miserable for her mother than for herself, so it's as well as it is. Besides, it's really good fun to watch how such a pretty plot will work itself out, as good as a pack of harriers with a cold scent and a squatted hare. So, live and let live. Only, Thomas Thurnall, if you go for to come for to go for to make such an abominable ass of yourself with that young lady any more, like a miserable schoolboy, you will be pleased to make tracks, and vanish out of these parts for ever. For my purse can't afford to have you marrying a schoolmistress in your impoverished old age, and my character, which also is my purse, can't afford worse.'

One word of Grace's had fixed itself in Tom's memory. What did she mean by 'her two'?

He continued to ask Willis that very evening. 'Oh, don't you know, sir? She had a young brother drowned, a long while ago, when she was sixteen or so. He went out bathing on the Sabbath, with another like him, and both were swamped. Wild young lads, both, as lads will be. But she, sweet maid, took it so to heart, that she never held up her head since, nor will, I think at times, to her dying day.'

'Humph! Was she fond of the other lad, then?'

'Sir,' said Willis, 'I don't think it's fair like—not decent, if you'll excuse an old sailor—to talk about young maids' affairs, that they wouldn't talk of themselves, perhaps not even to themselves. So I never asked any questions myself.'

'And think it rude in me to ask any. Well, I believe you're right, good old gentleman that you are. What a nobleman you'd have made, if you had had the luck to have been born in that station of life!'

'I have found too much trouble, in doing my duty in my humble place, to wish to be in any higher one.'

'So!' thought Tom to himself, 'a girl's

fancy but it explains so much in the character, especially when the temperament is melancholic. However, to quote Solomon once more, "A live dog is better than a dead lion", and I have not much to fear from a rival who has been washed out of this world ten years since. Heyday! Rival! quotha? Tom Thurnall, you are going to make a fool of yourself. You must go, sir. I warn you, you must flee, for you have recovered your senses."

There appeared next morning in Tom's shop a new phenomenon. A smart youth, dressed in what he considered to be the newest London fashion, but which was really that translation of last year's fashion which happened to be current in the windows of the Bodinn tailors. Tom knew him by sight and name—one Mr. Creed, a squireen like Trebooze, and an especial friend of Trebooze's, under whose tutelage he had learned to smoke cavendish assiduously from the age of fifteen, thereby improving neither his stature nor his digestion, his nerves nor the intelligence of his countenance.

He entered with a lofty air, and paused awhile as he spoke.

"Is it possible," said Tom to himself, "that Trebooze has sent me a challenge? It would be too good fun. I'll wait and see." So he went on rolling jills.

"I say, sir," quoth the youth, who had determined, as an owner of land, to treat the doctor duly *de haut en bas*, and had a vague notion that a liberal use of the word "sir" would both help thereto, and be consonant with professional style of duel diplomacy, whereof he had read in novels.

Tom turned slowly, and then took a long look at him over the counter through half-shut eyelids, with chin upraised, as if he had been suddenly afflicted with short sight, and worked on meanwhile steadily at his jills.

"That is, I wish—to speak to you, sir—ahem!"—went on Mr. Creed, being gradually but surely discomfited by Tom's steady gaze.

"Don't trouble yourself, sir. I see your case in your face. A slight nervous affection—will pass as the digestion improves. I will make you up a set of jills for the night, but I should advise a little ammonia and valerian at once. May I mix it?"

"Sir! you mistake me, sir."

"Not in the least, you have brought me a challenge from Mr. Trebooze."

"I have, sir!" said the youth, with a grand air, at once relieved by having the awful words said for him, and exalted by the dignity of his first, and perhaps last employment in that line.

"Well, sir," said Tom deliberately, "Mr. Trebooze does me a kindness for which I cannot sufficiently thank him, and you also, as his second. It is full six months since I fought, and I was getting hardly to know myself again."

"You will have to fight now, sir!" said the youth, trying to brazen off by his discourtesy increasing suspicion that he had "caught a Tartar."

"Of course, of course. And of course, too, I fight you afterwards."

"I—I, sir? I am Mr. Trebooze's friend, his second, sir. You do not seem to understand, sir!"

"Parlon me, young gentleman," said Tom, in a very quiet, determined voice. "It is I who have a right to tell you that you do not understand in such matters as these. I had fought my man, and more than one of them, while you were eating blackberries in a short jacket."

"What do you mean, sir?" quoth the youth in fury, and began swearing a little.

"Simple fact. Are you not about twenty-three years old?"

"What is that to you, sir?"

"No business of mine, of course. You may be growing into your second childhood for aught I care. But if, as I guess, you are about twenty-three, I, as I know, am thirty-six. Then I fought my first duel when you were five years old, and my tenth, I should say, when you were fifteen, at which time, I suppose, you were not advanced either of the jacket or the blackberries."

"You will find me a man now, sir, at all events," said Creed, justly wrath at what was, after all, a sophism, for if a man is not a man at twenty, he never will be one.

"*Tout mure.* You know, I suppose, that as the challenged, I have the choice of weapons?"

"Of course, sir," said Creed, in an off-hand generous tone, because he did not very clearly know.

"Then, sir, I always fight across a handkerchief. You will tell Mr. Trebooze so, he is, I really believe, a brave man, and will accept the terms. You will tell yourself the same, whether you be a brave man or not."

"The youth lost the last words in those which went before them. He was no coward would have stood up to be shot at, at fifteen paces, like any one else, but the deliberate butchery of fighting across a handkerchief—

"Do I understand you, sir?"

"That depends on whether you are clever enough, or not, to comprehend your native tongue. Across a handkerchief, I say, do you hear that?" And Tom rolled on at his jills.

"I do."

"And when I have fought him, I fight you!" And the jills rolled steadily at the same pace.

"But—sir? Why—sir?"

"Because," said Tom, looking him full in the face, "because you, calling yourself a gentleman, and being more shame for you, one by birth, dare to come here, for a foolish vulgar superstition called honour, to ask me, a quiet medical man, to go and be shot at by a man whom you know to be a drunken, profligate blackguard, simply because, as you know as well as I, I interfered to prevent his insulting a poor helpless girl, and in so doing, was forced to give him what you, if you are (as I believe) a gentleman, would have given him also, in my place."

"I don't understand you, sir!" said the lad, blushing all the while, as one honestly con-

science stricken, for Tom had spoken the exact truth, and he knew it.

'Don't lie, sir, and tell me that you don't understand, you understand every word which I have spoken, and you know that it is true.'

'Liar!'

'Yes, lie. Look you, sir, I have no wish to fight—'

'You will fight, though whether you wish it or not,' said the youth with a hysterical laugh, 'meant to be defiant.'

'But I can sniff a candle, I can split a bullet on a penknife at fifteen paces.'

'Do you mean to frighten us by boasting? We shall see what you can do when you come on the ground!'

'Across a handkerchief, but on no other condition, and, unless you will accept that condition, I will assuredly, the next time I see you, be where we may, treat you as I treated your friend Mr Trebooz. I'll do it now! Get out of my shop, sir! What do you want here, interfering with my honest business?'

And, to the astonishment of Mr Trebooz's second, Tom vaulted clean over the counter, and rushed at him open mouthed.

Sacred be the honour of the gallant West country, but, 'both being friends,' as Aristotle has it, 'it is a sacred duty to speak the truth.' Mr Creed vanished through the open door.

'I rid myself of the fellow jollily,' said Tom to Frank that day, after telling him the whole story. 'And no credit to me. I saw from the minute he came in there was no fight in him.'

'But suppose he had accepted on suppose Trebooz accepts still?'

'There was my game—to frighten him. He'll take care Trebooz shan't fight, for he knows that he must fight next. He'll go home and patch the matter up, trust him. Meanwhile, the cat had not even *savour faire* enough to ask for my second. Lucky for me, for I don't know where to have found one, save the lieutenant, and though he would have gone out safe enough, it would have been a bore for the good old fellow.'

'And,' said Frank, utterly taken aback by Tom's business-like levity, 'you would actually have stood to shoot, and be shot at, across a handkerchief?'

Tom stuck out his great chin, and looked at him with one of his quaint sidelong *mones*.

'You are my very good friend, sir, but not my father-confessor.'

'I know that, but really—as a mere question of human curiosity—'

'Oh, if you ask me on the human ground, and not on the sacerdotal, I'll tell you. I've tried it twice, and I should be sorry to try it again, though it's a very easy dodge. Keep your right elbow up—up to your ear—and the moment you hear the word, fire. A high elbow and a cool heart—that's all, and that wins.'

'Wins? Good heavens! As you are here alive you must have killed your man?'

'No. I only shot my men each through the

body, and each of them deserved it, but it is an ugly chance, I should have been sorry to try it on that yokel. The boy may make a man yet. And what's more,' said Tom, bursting into a great laugh, 'he will make a man, and go down to his fathers in peace, *quant à moi*, and so will that wretched Trebooz. For I'll bet you my head to a China orange, I hear no more of this matter, and don't even lose Trebooz's custody.'

'Upon my word, I envy your sanguine temperament!'

'Mr Headley, I shall quietly make my call at Trebooz's to-morrow, as if nothing had happened. What will you bet me that I am not received as usual?'

'I never bet,' said Frank.

'Then you do well. It is a foolish and a dirty trick, playing with edge tools, and cutting one's own fingers. Nevertheless, I speak truth, as you will see.'

'You are a most extraordinary man. All this is so contrary to your usual caution.'

'When you are driven against the ropes, "hit out" is the old rule of Fustiana and common sense. It is an extreme bore, all the more reason for showing such an ugly front as to give people no chance of its happening again. Nothing so dangerous as half measures, Headley. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you," your creed says. Mine only translates it into practice.'

'I have no liking for half-measures myself.'

'Dul you ever,' said Tom, 'hear the story of the two Sandhurst broomsquires?'

'Broomsquires?'

'So we call, in Berkshire, squatters on the moor who live by tying heath into brooms. Two of them met in Reading market once, and fell out—'

'How ever do you manage to sell your brooms for three halfpence? I steal the heath, and I steal the binds, and I steal the handles, and yet I can't afford to sell them under two pence.'

'Ah, but you see,' says the other, 'I steal mine ready made.'

'Moral. If you're going to do a thing, do it outright.'

That very evening, Tom came in again.

'Well, I've been to Trebooz.'

'And fared how?'

'Just as I warned you. Inquired into his symptoms, prescribed for his digestion—if he goes on as he is doing, he will soon have none left to prescribe for, and finally, plastered, with a sublime generosity, the nose which my own knuckles had contused.'

'Impossible! you are the most miraculously impudent of men!'

'Fish! simple common sense. I know that Mrs Trebooz would suspect that the world had heard of his mishap, and took care to let her know that I knew, by coming up to inquire for him.'

'*Cui bono?*'

'Power To have them, or any one, a little more in my power. Next I knew that he dared not fly out at me, for fear I should tell Mrs. Treboozie what he had been after—you see? Ah, it was delicious to have the great oaf sitting sulking under my fingers, longing to knock my head off, and I plastering away, with words of deepest astonishment and cordialence. I venily believe that, before we parted, I had persuaded him that his black eye proceeded entirely from his having run up against a tree in the dark.'

'Well,' said Frank, half sadly, though enjoying the joke in spite of himself, 'I cannot help thinking it would have been a fit moment for giving the poor wretch a more solemn lesson.'

'My dear son—a good licking—and he had one, and something over—is the best lesson for that manner of humped. That's the way to school him, but as we are on lessons, I'll give you a hint.'

'Go on, model of self-sufficiency!' said Frank.

'Scull at me if you will, I am proud. But hearken—you mustn't turn out that school mistress. She's an angel, and I know it, and if I say so of any human being, you may believe I have pretty good reasons.'

'I am beginning to be of your mind myself,' said Frank.

CHAPTER XV

THE CRUISE OF THE 'WATERWITCH'

'The middle of August is come at last, and with it the solemn day on which Frederick Viscount Scouthush may be expected to revisit the home of his ancestors. Elsley has gradually made up his mind to the inevitable, with a stately sulkingness—and comforts himself, as the time draws near, with the thought that, after all, his brother-in-law is not a very formidable personage.'

But to the population of Aberlva in general, the coming event is one of awful jubilation. The shipping is all decked with flags, and the Sunday clothes have been looked out, and many a yard of new ribbon and pound of bad powder bought, there have been arrangements for a procession, which could not be got up, for a speech which nobody would undertake to pronounce, and, lastly, for a dinner, about which last there was no hanging back. Yes, also, they have hired from Cararrow Churchtown sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, for Frank has put down the old choir band at Aberlva—another of his mistakes—and there is but one fiddle and a clarionet now left in the town. So the said town waits all the day on tiptoe, ready to worship, till out of the soft brown haze the stately *Waterwitch* comes sliding in, like a white ghost, to fold her wings in Aberlva Bay.

And at that sight the town is all astir. Fishermen shake themselves up out of their mid-day snooze, to admire the beauty, as she slips on and on through water smooth as glass, her hull hidden by the vast curve of the balloon-

jib, and her broad wings boomed out aloof and aloft, till it seems marvellous how that vast screen does not topple headlong, instead of floating (as it seems) self-supporting above its image in the mirror. Women hurry to put on their best bonnets, the sexton toddles up with the church key in his hand, and the ringers at his heels, the coast guard lieutenant bustles down to the Manby's mortar, which he has hauled out in readiness on the pebbles. Old Willis hoists a flag before his house, and half a dozen merchant skippers do the same. Bang goes the harmless mortar, humming the British nation's powder without leave or licence, and all the rocks and woods catch up the echo, and kick it from cliff to cliff, playing at football with it till its wrath is beaten out, a rolling fire of old muskets and bird-pieces crackles along the shore, and in five minutes a puff of hot blast has blown a rumour through his hand. Never mind, lords do not visit Penlva every day. Out burst the bells above with merry peal, Lord Scouthush and the *Waterwitch* are duly 'rung in' to the home of his lordship's ancestors, and he is received, as he scrambles up the four steps from his boat, by the mate, the churchwardens, the lieutenant, and old Tardw, huddled by half a dozen ancient sons of Anak, lineal descendants of the free fishermen to whom, six hundred years before, St. Just of Penlva did grant privileges hard to spell, and harder to understand, on the condition of receiving whosoever he should land at the quay head, three brass bathtubs from the 'free fishermen of Aberlva.'

Scouthush shakes hands with curate, lieutenant, Tardw's churchwardens, and then comes forward the three farthings, in an ancient leather purse.

'Hope your lordship will do us the honour to shake hands with us too, we are your lordship's free fishermen, as we have been your father's,' says a magnificent old man, gravely acknowledging the feudal tie, while he claims the exemption.

Little Scouthush, who is the kindest-hearted of men, clasps the great brown fist in his little white one, and shakes hands heartily with every one of them, saying, 'If your forefathers were as much taller than mine, as you are than me, gentlemen, I shouldn't wonder if they took their own freedom, without asking his leave for it!'

A lord who begins his progress with a jest! That is the sort of ancestor to rule in Aberlva! And all agree that evening, at the Mariner's Rest, that his lordship is as nice a young gentleman as ever trod deck board, and deserves such a yacht as he's got, and long may he sail her!

How easy it is to buy the love of men! Gold will not do it, but there is a little angel, may be, in the corner of every man's eye, who is worth more than gold, and can do it free of all charges unless a man drives him out, and 'hates his brother, and so walks in darkness, not knowing whither he goeth,' but running full

butt against men's prejudices, and treading on their corns, till they knock him down in despair—and all just because he will not open his eyes, and use the light which comes by common human good-nature!

Presently Tom hurries up, having been originally one of the deputation, but kept by the necessity of binding up the three fingers which the ramrod had spared to poor Jom Burinan's hand. He bows, and the lieutenant—who (Frank being a little shy) acts as her Majesty's representative—introduces him as 'deputy medical man to our district of the Union, sir—Mr Thurnall.'

'Dr. Heale was to have been here, by the bye. Where is Doctor Heale?' says some one.

'Very sorry, my lord, I can answer for him—professional calls, I don't doubt—nobody more devoted to your lordship.'

One need not inquire where Dr. Heale was, but if elderly men will drink much brandy-and-water in hot summer days, after a heavy early dinner, then will those men be too late for deputations and for more important employments.

'Never mind the doctor, darsay he's asleep after dinner do him good!' says the Viscount, hitting the mark with a random shot, and thereby raising his repute for sagacity immensely with his audience, who laugh outright.

'Ah! Is it so, then? But—Mr Thurnall, I think, you said?—I am glad to make your acquaintance, sir. I have heard your name often: you are my friend Mellot's old friend, are you not?'

'I am a very old friend of Claudio Mellot's.'

'Well, and there he is on board, and will be delighted to do the honours of my yacht to you whenever you like to visit her. You and I must know each other better, sir.'

Tom bows low—his lordship does him too much honour: the cunning fellow knows that his fortune is made in Aberlva, if he chooses to work it out: but he humbly slips into the rear, for Frank has to be supported, not being over popular, and the lieutenant may 'turn rusty,' unless he has his lordship to himself before the gaze of assembled Aberlva.

Scoutbush progresses up the street, bowing right and left, and stopped half a dozen times by red-cloaked old women, who crouch under his nose, and will needs inform him how they knew his grandfather, or nursed his uncle, or how his 'dear mother, God rest her soul, gave me this very cloak as I have on,' and so forth, till Scoutbush comes to the conclusion that they are a very loving and lovable set of people—as indeed they are—and his heart smites him somewhat for not having seen more of them in past years.

No sooner is Thurnall released than he is off to the yacht as fast as oars can take him, and in Claudio's arms.

'Now!' (after all salutations and inquiries have been gone through) 'let me introduce you to Major Campbell.' And Tom was presented to a tall and thin personage, who sat at the cabin table, bending over a microscope.

'Excuse my rising,' said he, holding out a left hand, for the right was busy. 'A single jar will give me ten minutes' work to do again. I am delighted to meet you. Mellot has often spoken to me of you as a man who has seen more, and faced death more carelessly, than most men.'

'Mellot flatters, sir. Whichever I have done, I have given up being careless about death, for I have some one beside myself to live for.'

'Married at last? has Diogenes found his Aspasia?' cried Claudio.

'Tom did not laugh.'

'Since my brothers died, Claudio, the old gentleman has only me to look to. You seem to be a naturalist, sir.'

'A dabbler,' said the major, with eye and hand still busy.

'I ought not to begin our acquaintance by doubting your word: but these things are no dabbler's work,' and Tom pointed to some exquisite photographs of minute corallines, evidently taken under the microscope.

'They are Mellot's.'

'Mellot turned man of science? Impossible!'

'No, only photographer. I am tired of painting nature clumsily, and then seeing a snapshot outdo all my efforts—so I am turned photographer, and have made a vow against painting for three years and a day.'

'Why, the photograph's only gave you light and shade.'

'They will give you colour, too, before seven years are over—and that is more than I can do, or any one else. No; I yield to the new dynasty. The artist's occupation is gone henceforth, and the painter's studio, like "all charms, must fly, at the mere touch of cold philosophy." So Major Campbell prepares the charming little cocky birds, and I call in the sun to immortalise them.'

'And perfectly you are succeeding! They are quite new to me, recollect. When I left Melbourne, the art had hardly risen there above guinea portraits of bearded desperadoes, a nugget in one hand and a £50 note in the other: but this is a new, and what a forward step for science!'

'You are a naturalist, then?' said Campbell, looking up with interest.

'All my profession are, more or less,' said Tom carelessly, 'and I have been lucky enough here to fall on untrodden ground, and have hunted up a few sea-monsters this summer.'

'Really? You can tell me where to search then, and where to dredge, I hope. I have set my heart on a fortnight's work here, and have been dreaming at night, like a child before a twelfth-night party, of all sorts of impossible hydras, gorgons, and chimeras dre, fished up from your western deeps.'

'I have none of them, but I can give you Turbanolia Milletiana and Zoanthus Couchii. I have a party of the last gentlemen alive on shore.'

The major's face worked with almost childish delight.

'But I shall be robbing you.'

'They cost me nothing, my dear sir. I did very well, moreover, without them, for five-and-thirty years, and I may do equally well for five-and-thirty more.'

'I ought to be able to say the same, surely,' answered the major, composing his face again, and rising carefully. 'I have to thank you, exceedingly, my dear sir, for your prompt generosity, but it is better discipline for a man, in many ways, to find things for himself than to have them put into his hands. So, with a thousand thanks, you shall let me see if I can dredge a *Turbinella* for myself.'

This was spoken with so sweet and polished a modulation, and yet so sadly and severely withal, that Tom looked at the speaker with interest.

He was a very tall and powerful man, and would have been a very handsome man, both in face and figure, but for the high cheekbone, long neck, and narrow shoulders, so often seen north of Tweed. His brow was very high and full, his eyes—grave, but very gentle, with large drooping eyelids—were buried under shaggy gray eyebrows. His mouth was gentle as his eyes, but compressed, perhaps by the habit of command, perhaps by secret sorrow, for of that, too, as well as of intellect and magnanimity, Thurnall thought he could discern the traces. His face was bronzed by long exposure to the sun, his close-cut curls, which had once been auburn, were fast turning white, though his features looked those of a man under five-and-forty, his cheeks were as smooth shaven as his chin. A right, self-possessed, valiant soldier he looked, one who could be very loving to little innocents, and very terrible to full-grown knaves.

'You are practising at self-denial, as usual, said Claude.

'Because I may, at any moment, have to exercise it in earnest. Mr. Thurnall, can you tell me the name of this little glass arrow, which I just found shooting about in the sweeping net?'

Tom did know the wonderful little link between the fish and the insect, and the two clattered over its strange form till the boat returned to take them ashore.

'Do you make any stay here?'

'I propose to spend a fortnight here in my favourite pursuit, I must draw on your kindness and knowledge of the place to point me out lodgings.'

Lodgings, as it befell, were to be found, and good ones, close to the beach, and away from the noise of the harbour, on Mrs. Harvey's first floor, for the local preacher, who generally occupied them, was away.

'But Major Campbell might dislike the noise of the school?'

'The school? What better music for a lonely old bachelor than children's voices?'

So by sunset the major was fairly established over Mrs. Harvey's shop. It was not the place

which Tom would have chosen, he was afraid of 'running over' poor Grace, if he came in and out as often as he could have wished. Nevertheless, he accepted the major's invitation to visit him that very evening.

'I cannot ask you to dinner yet, sir, for my *ménage* will be hardly settled, but a cup of coffee, and an exceedingly good cigar, I think my establishment may furnish you by seven o'clock to-night,—if you think them worth walking down for.'

Tom, of course, said something civil, and made his appearance in due time. He found the coffee really, and the cigars also, but the major was busy, in his shirt sleeves, unpacking and arranging jars, nets, microscopes, and what not of scientific lumber, and Tom rendered his help.

'I am ashamed to make use of you the first moment that you become my guest.'

'I shall enjoy the mere handling of your tackle,' said Tom, and began breaking the tenth commandment over almost every article he touched, for every thing was hirsute of its kind.

'You seem to have devoted money, as well as thought, plentifully to the pursuit.'

'I have little else to which to devote either, and more of both than is, perhaps, safe for me.'

'I should hardly complain of a superfluity of thought, if superfluity of money was the conclusion of it.'

'Pity misunderstand me. I am no Dives, but I have learned to want so little, that I hardly knew how to spend the little which I have.'

'I should hardly have called that an unusual state.'

'The penniless Faquir who lives on chance handfuls of rice has his dangers, as well as the rich Parsee who has his ventures out from Madagascar to Canton. Yes, I have often envied the schemer, the man of business, almost the man of pleasure, then money wants at least absorb them in outward objects, instead of leaving them too easily satisfied, to sink in upon themselves, and waste away in useless dilemmas.'

'You found out the best time for that malady when you took up the microscope and the collecting-box.'

'So I fancied once. I took up natural history in India years ago to drive away thought, as other men might take to opium, or to brandy-paunch, but, like them, it has become a passion now and a tyranny, and I go on hunting, discovering, wondering, craving for more knowledge, and—*cas bono*? I sometimes ask—'

'Why, this at least, sir, that, without such men as you, who work for mere love, science would be now fifty years behind her present standing-point, and we doctors should not know a thousand important facts which you have been kind enough to tell us, while we have not time to find them out for ourselves.'

'*Sic vos non vobis*—'

'Yes, you have the work, and we have the pay, which is a very fair division of labour, considering the world we live in.'

'And have you been skilful enough to make science pay you here, in such an out-of-the-way little world as that of Abetia? must be!'

'She is a good stalking-horse anywhere,' and Tom detailed, with plenty of humour, the effect of his microscope and his lecture on the drops of water. But his wit seemed so much lost on Campbell, that he at last stopped almost short, not quite sure that he had not taken a liberty.

'No, go on, I beg you, and do not fancy that I am not interested and amused too, because my laughing muscles are a little stiff from want of use. Perhaps, too, I am apt to take things too much *au grand sérieux* but I could not help thinking, while you were speaking, how sad it was that people were utterly ignorant of matters so vitally necessary to health.'

'And I, perhaps, might not to jest over the subject but indeed, with cholera staring us in the face here, I must indulge in some emotion, and as it is unprofessional to weep, I must laugh as long as I dare.'

The major dropped his coffee-cup upon the floor, and looked at Thurnall with so horrified a gaze, that Tom could hardly believe him to be the same man. Then recollecting himself, he darted down upon the remains of his cup, and looking up again—'A thousand pardons, but—did I hear you aright? cholera staring us in the face?'

'How can it be otherwise? It is drawing steadily on from the eastward week by week, and in the present state of the town, nothing but some miraculous caprice of Dame Fortune can deliver us.'

'Don't talk of fortune, sir! at such a moment talk of God!' said the major, rising from his chair, and leaving the room. 'It is too horrible! Intolerable! When do you expect it here?'

'Within the month, perhaps, hardly before I should have warned you of the danger, I assure you, had I not understood from you that you were only going to stay a fortnight.'

The major made an impatient gesture.

'Do you fancy that I am afraid for myself? No, but the thought of its coming to—to the poor people in the town, you know. It is too dreadful. I have seen it in India—among my own men—among the natives. Good heavens, I never shall forget—and to meet this fiend again here, of all places in the world! I shudder at so clean and healthy, swept by fresh sea-breezes.'

'And by nothing else. A half-hour's walk round would convince you, sir, I only wish that you could persuade his lordship to accompany you.'

'Scoutbush? Of course he will,—he shall,—he must. Good heavens! whose concern is it more than his? You think, then, that there is a chance of staying it off—by cleansing, I mean?'

'If we have heavy rains during the next week or two, yes. If this drought last, better leave it alone, we shall only provoke the devil by stirring him up.'

'You speak confidently,' said the major, gradually regaining his own self-possession, as

he saw Tom so self-possessed. 'Have you—allow me to ask so important a question—have you seen much of cholera?'

'I have worked through three. At Paris, at St. Petersburg, and in the West Indies, and I have been thinking up my old experience for the last six weeks, foreseeing what would come.'

'I am satisfied, sir, perhaps I ought to ask your pardon for the question.'

'Not at all. How can you trust a man, unless you know him?'

'And you expect it within the month? You shall go with me to Lord Scoutbush to-morrow, and—and now we will talk of something more pleasant.' And he began again upon the zoophytes.

Tom, as they chatted on, could not help wondering at the major's unexpected passion, and could not help remarking, also, that in spite of his desire to be agreeable, and to interest his guest in his scientific discoveries, he was yet distraught, and full of other thoughts. What could be the meaning of it? Was it mere excess of human sympathy? The countenance hardly betokened that, but still, who can trust altogether the expression of a weather-hardened visage of forty-five? So the doctor set it down to tenderness of heart, till a fresh vista opened on him.

Major Campbell, he soon found, was as fond of insects as of sea-moulders, and he began inquiring about the woods, the heaths, the climate, which seemed to the doctor, for a long time, to mean nothing more than the question which he put plainly, 'Where have I a chance of rare insects?' But he seemed, after a while, to be trying to learn the geography of the parish in detail, and especially of the ground round Vavasour's house. 'However, it is no business of mine,' thought Thurnall, and told him all he wanted, till

'Then the house lies quite in the bottom of the glen? Is there a good fall to the stream for a stream I suppose there is?'

Thurnall shook his head. 'Cold boggy stew ponds in the garden, such as our ancestors loved damming up the stream. They must needs have fish in Lent, we know, and paid the penalty of it by ague and fever.'

'Stew ponds damming up the stream? Scoutbush ought to drain them instantly!' said the major, half to himself. 'But still the house lies high, with regard to the town, I mean. No chance of malaria coming up!'

'Upon my word, sir, as a professional man, that is a thing that I dare not say. The chances are not great, the house is two hundred yards from the nearest cottage, but if there be an east wind—'

'I cannot bear this any longer. It is perfect madness!'

'I trust, sir, that you do not think that I have neglected the matter. I have pointed it all out, I assure you, to Mr. Vavasour.'

And it is not altered?'

I believe it is to be altered—that is—the

truth is, sir, that Mr Vavasour shrinks so much from the very notion of cholera, that—

'That he does not like to do anything which may look like believing in its possibility?'

'He says,' quoth Tom, parrying the question, but in a somewhat shy tone, 'that he is afraid of alarming Mrs Vavasour and the servants.'

The major said something under his breath, which Tom did not catch, and then, in an oppressed tone of voice—

'Well, that is at least a fault on the right side. Mrs Vavasour's brother, as owner of the place, is of course the proper person to make the house fit for habitation.' And he relapsed into silence, while Thornhill, who suspected more than met the ear, rose to depart.

'Are you going? It is not late—not ten o'clock yet.'

'A medical man, who may be called up at my moment, must make some of his "leisure sleep".'

'I will walk with you, and smoke my last cigar.'

So they went out, and up to Heale's. Tom went in, but he observed that his companion, after standing awhile in the street irresolutely, went on up the hill, and, as far as he could see, turned up the lane to Vavasour's.

'A mystery here,' thought he, as he put matters to rights in the surgery ere going upstairs. 'A mystery which I may as well fathom. It may be of use to poor Tom, as most other mysteries are. That is, though, if I do not honourably, for the man is a gallant gentleman. I like him, and I am inclined to trust him. Whatsoever his secret is, I don't think that it is one which he need be ashamed of. Still, "there's a deal of human nature in man," and there may be in him, and what matter if there is?'

Half an hour afterwards the major returned, took the candle from Grace, who was sitting up for him, and went upstairs with a gentle 'good night,' but without looking at her.

He sat down at the open window and looked out, leaning on the sill.

'Well, I was too late, I daresay there was some purpose in it. When shall I learn to believe that God takes better care of His own than I can do? I was faithless and impatient to-night. I am afraid I betrayed myself before that man. He looks like one, certainly, who could be trusted with a secret, yet I had rather that he had not mine. It is my own fault, like everything else. Foolish old fellow that you are, fretting and fussing to the end! Is not that scene a message from above, saying, "Be still, and know that I am God"?''

And the major looked out upon the summer sea, lit by a million globes of living fire, and then upon the waves which broke in flame upon the beach, and then up to the spangled stars above.

'What do I know of these, with all my knowing? Not even a twentieth part of those medusæ, or one in each thousand of those sparks

among the foam. Perhaps I need not know. And yet why was the thirst awakened in me, save to be satisfied at last? Perhaps to become more intense with every fresh delicious draught of knowledge. Death, beautiful, wise, kind Death, when will you come and tell me what I want to know? I courted you once and many a time, brave old Death, only to give rest to the weary. That was a coward's wish, and so you would not come. I ran you close in Afghanistan, old Death, and at Solbrion, too, I was not far behind you, and I thought I had you safe among that jungle grass at Allival, but you slipped through my hand, I was not worthy of you. And now I will not hunt you any more, old Death, do you bide your time, and I mine, though who knows if I may not meet you here? Only when you come, give me not rest, but work. Give work to the idle, freedom to the chained, sight to the blind. Tell me a little about inner things than zoophytes—perhaps about the zoophytes as well, and you shall still be brave old Death, my good! I impudently now to marry a year.'

Was Major Campbell mad? That depends upon the way in which the reader may choose to define the adjective.

Meanwhile Scoutbush had walked into Pen-sylvia Court when an affecting scene of reconciliation took place.

Not in the least. Scoutbush kissed Lucia, shook hands with Elsley, hugged the children, and then settled himself in an arm-chair, and talked about the weather, exactly as if he had been running in and out of the house every week for the last three years, and so the matter was done, and for the first time a *partie mûre* was assembled in the dining room.

The evening passed off at first as unimportant as it could, where three out of the four were well-bred people. Elsley was, of course, shy before Lord Scoutbush, and Scoutbush was equally shy before Elsley, though as civil as possible to him, for the little fellow stood in extreme awe of Elsley's talents, and was afraid of opening his lips before a poet. Lucia was nervous for both their sakes, as well she might be, and Valentin had to make all the talking, and succeeded capitally in drawing out both his brother and her brother-in-law, till both of them found the other, on the whole, more like other people than he had expected. The next morning's breakfast, therefore, was easy and gracious enough, and when it was over, and Lucia fled to household matters—

'You smoke, Vavasour?' asked Scoutbush.

Vavasour did not smoke.

'Really? I thought poets always smoked. You will not forbid my having a cigar in your garden, nevertheless, I suppose? Do walk round with me, too, and show me the place, unless you are going to be busy.'

Oh no, Elsley was at Lord Scoutbush's service, of course, and had really nothing to do. So out they went.

'Charming old pigeon-hole it is,' said its owner. 'I have not seen it since I went into the Guards. Campbell says it's a shame of me, and so it is one, I suppose, but how beautiful you have in it the garden look!'

'Lucia is very fond of gardening,' said Elsley, who was very fond of it also, and had great taste therein, but he was afraid to confess any such tastes before a man who, he thought, would not understand him.

'And that fine old wood full of cocks it used to be—I hope you worked it well last year.'

Elsley did not shout, but he had heard there was plenty of game there.

'Plenty of cocks,' said his guest, correcting him, 'but for game, the less we say about that the better. I really wonder you do not shoot, it fills up time so in the winter.'

'There is really no winter to fill up here, thanks to this delicious climate, and I have my books.'

'Ah! I wish I had. I wish heartily,' said he, in a confidential tone, 'you, or Campbell, or some of your clever men, would sell me a little of their book learning, as Valentinia says to me, "brains are so common in the world, I wonder how none fell to your share."'

'I do not think that they are an article which is for sale, if Solomon is to be believed.'

'And if they were, I couldn't afford to buy, with this Irish Enumbered Estates' Bill. But now, this is one thing I wanted to say. Is overything here just as you would wish? Of course no one could wish a better tenant, but any repairs, you know, or improvements which I ought to do, of course? Only tell me what you think should be done for, of course, you know more about these things than I do—can't know less.'

'Nothing, I assure you, Lord Scoutbush. I have always left those matters to Mr Tardrew.'

'Ah, my dear fellow, you shouldn't do that. He is such a screw, as all honest stewards are. Screws me, I know, and I dare say has screwed you too.'

'Never, I assure you. I never gave him the opportunity, and he has been most civil.'

'Well, in future, just order him to do what you like, and just as if you were landlord, in fact, and if the old man haggles, write to me, and I'll blow him up. Delighted to have a man of taste like you here, who can improve the place for me.'

'I assure you, Lord Scoutbush, I need nothing, nor does the place. I am a man of very few wants.'

'I wish I were,' sighed Scoutbush, pulling out another of Hindson's highest-priced cigars.

'And I am bound to say'—and here Elsley choked a little, but the Viscount's frankness and humility had softened him, and he determined to be very magnanimous—'I am bound in honour, after owing to your kindness such an exquisite retreat—all that either I or Lucia could have fancied for ourselves, and more—not

to trouble you by asking for little matters which we really do not need.'

And so Elsley, instead of simply asking to have the house-drains set right, which Lord Scoutbush would have had done upon the spot, chose to be lofty-minded, at the risk of killing his wife and children.

'My dear fellow, you really must not "lord" me any more, I hate it. I must be plain Scoutbush here among my own people, just as I am in the Guards' mess-room. And as for owing me any,—really, it is we that are in your debt,—to see my sister so happy, and such beautiful children, and so well too—and altogether—and Valentinia so delighted with your poems—and, and altogether—'—and there Lord Scoutbush stopped, having hunted, as he considered, the flag of peace once and for all, and very glad that the thing was over.

Elsley was going to say something in return; but his guest turned the conversation as fast as he could. 'And now, I know you want to be busy, though you are too civil to confess it, and I must be with that old fool Tardrew at ten, to settle accounts, he'll scold me if I do not—the precise old pedant—just as if I was his own child. Good-bye.'

'Where are you going, Frederick?' called Lucia, from the window, who had been watching the interview anxiously enough, and could see that it had ended well.

'To old Stot-and-kyo at the farm, do you want anything?'

'No, only I thought you might be going to the yacht, and Valentinia would have walked down with you. She wants to find Major Campbell.'

'I want to walk Major Campbell,' said Valentinia, tripping out on the lawn in her walking dress. 'Why has he not been here an hour ago? I will undertake to say that he was up at four this morning.'

'He wants to be invited, I suppose,' said Scoutbush.

'I suppose I must do it,' said Elsley to himself, sighing.

'Just like his primness,' said Valentinia. 'I shall go down and bring him up myself this minute, and Mr Vavasour shall come with me. Of course you will! You do not know what a delightful person he is, when once you can break the ice.'

Elsley, like most vain men, was of a jealous temper, and Valentinia's eagerness to see Major Campbell jarred on him. He wanted to keep the exquisite creature to himself, and Headley was quite enough of an intruder already. Besides, the accounts of the newcomer, his learning, his military prowess, the reverence with which all, even Scoutbush, evidently regarded him, made him prepared to dislike the Major, and all the more, now he heard there was an excuse to crack. Impulsive men like Elsley, especially when their self-respect and certainty of their own position is not very strong, have instinctively a defiant fear of the strong, calm,

self-contained man, especially if he has seen the world, and Elsley set down Major Campbell as a proud, sarcastic fellow, before whom he must be at the pains of being continually on his guard. He wished him a hundred miles away. However, there was no refusing Valentin anything, so he got his hat, but with so bad a grace, that Valentin saw his chagrin, and from mere naughtiness of heart amused herself with it by talking all the way of nothing but Major Campbell.

'And Lucia,' she said at last, 'will be so glad to see him again. We knew him so well, you know, in Eaton Square years ago.'

'Really,' said Elsley, wincing, 'I never met him there.' He recollected that Lucia had expressed more pleasure at Major Campbell's coming than even at that of her brother and a dark, undefined phantom entered his heart, which, though he would have been too proud to confess it to himself, was none other than jealousy.

'Oh—did you not? No, it was the year before we first knew you. And we used to laugh at him together, behind his back, and christened him the wild Indian, because he was so gay and shy. He was a major in the Indian army then, but a few months afterwards he sold out and went into the line—no one could tell why, for he threw away very brilliant prospects, they say, and might have been a general by now, instead of a mere major still. But he is so improved since then, he is like an elder brother to Scoutbush, guides him in everything—I call him the blind man, and the major his dog.'

'So much the worse,' thought Elsley, who disliked the notion of Campbell's having power over a man to whom he was indebted for his home-room, but by this time they were at Mrs Harvey's door.

Mrs Harvey opened it, curtseying to the very ground, and Valentin ran upstairs, and knocked at the sitting-room door herself.

'Come in,' shouted a preoccupied voice inside.

'Is that the proper way in which to address a lady, sir?' answered she, putting in her beautiful head.

Major Campbell was sitting, Elsley could see, in his shirt sleeves, cigar in mouth, bent over his microscope, but instead of the unexpected grim voice, he heard a very gay and arch one answer, 'Is that a proper way in which to come peeping into an old bachelor's sanctuary, ma'am? Go away this moment, till I make myself fit to be seen.'

Valentin shut the door again, laughing.

'You seem very intimate with Major Campbell,' said Elsley.

'Intimate? I look on him as my father almost. Now, may we come in?' said she, knocking again in pretty politeness. 'I want to introduce Mr Vavasour.'

'I shall be only too happy,' said the major, opening his door (this time with his coat on), 'there are few persons in the world whom I have more wished to know than Mr. Vavasour.' And

he held out his hand, and quite led Elsley in. He spoke in a tone of grave interest, looking intently at Elsley as he spoke. Valentin remarked the interest—Elsley only the compliment.

'It is a great kindness of you to call on me so soon,' said he. 'I met Mrs Vavasour several times in years past, and though I saw very little of her, I saw enough to long much for the acquaintance of the man who has been worthy to become her husband.'

Elsley blushed, for his conscience smote him a little at that word 'worthy,' and muttered some commonplace civility in return. Valentin saw it, and attributing it to his usual awkwardness, drew off the conversation to herself.

'Really, Major Campbell! You bring in Mr. Vavasour, and let me walk behind as I can, and then let me sit three whole minutes in your house without deigning to speak to me!'

'Ah! my dear Queen Whims!' answered he, returning suddenly to his gay tone, 'and how have you been misbehaving yourself since we met last?'

'I have not been misbehaving myself at all, mon cher Saint Père, as Mr Vavasour will answer for me, during the most delightful fortnight I ever spent!'

'Delightful indeed!' said Elsley, as he was bound to say, but he said it with an earnestness which made the major fix his eyes on him. 'Why should he not find any and every fortnight as delightful as his last?' said he to himself, but now Valentin began bantering him about his books and his animals, wanting to look through his microscope, pulling off her hat for this purpose, laughing when her curls blinded her, letting them blind her in order to toss them back in the prettiest way, jesting at him about 'his old fogies' at the Linnæan Society, clapping her hands in ecstasy when he answered that they were not old fogies at all, but the most charming set of men in England, and that (with no offence to the name of Scoutbush) he was prouder of being an F. L. S. than if he were a peer of the realm and so forth, all which harmless pleasantry made Elsley cross, and more cross—first, because he did not mix in it, next, because he could not mix in it if he tried. He liked to be always in the seventh heaven, and if other people were anywhere else, he thought them bores.

At last—'Now, if you will be good for five minutes,' said the major, 'I will show you something really beautiful.'

'I can see that,' answered she, with the most charming impudence, 'in another glass besides your magnifying one.'

'Be it so—but look here, and see what an exquisite world there is, of which you never dream, and which behaves a great deal better in its station than the world of which you do dream!'

When Campbell spoke in that way, Valentin was good at once, and as she went immediately to the microscope, she whispered, 'Don't be angry with me, mon Saint Père.'

'Don't be naughty, then, *ma chère enfant*,' whispered he, for he saw something about Elsley's face which gave him a painful suspicion.

She looked long, and then lifted up her head suddenly—'Do come and look, Mr Vavasour, at this exquisite little glass fairy, like—I cannot tell what like, but a pure spirit hovering in some nun's dream! Come!'

Elsley came, and looked, and when he looked he started, for it was the very same zoophyte which Thurnall had shown him on a certain memorable day.

'Where did you find the fairy, mon Saint Père?'

'I had no such good fortune. Mr Thurnall, the doctor, gave it me.'

'Thurnall?' said she, while Elsley kept still looking, to hide cheeks which were growing very red. 'He is such a clever man, they say. Where did you meet him? I have often thought of asking Mr Vavasour to invite him up for an evening with his microscope. He seems so superior to the people round him. It would be a charity, really, Mr Vavasour.'

Vavasour kept his eyes fixed on the zoophyte, and said:

'I shall be only too delighted, if you wish it.'

'You will wish it yourself a second time,' chimed in Campbell, 'if you try it once. Perhaps you know nothing of him but professionally. Unfortunately for professional men, that too often happens.'

'Know anything of him? I! I assure you not, save that he attends Mrs Vavasour and the children,' said Vavasour, looking up at last, but with an expression of anger which astonished both Valentin and Campbell.

Campbell thought that he was too proud to allow rank as a gentleman to a country doctor, and despised him from that moment, though, as it happened, unjustly. But he answered quietly:

'I assure you that, whatever sort country practitioners may be, the average of them, as far as I have seen, are cleverer men, and even of higher tone than their neighbours, and Thurnall is beyond the average—he is a man of the world—even too much of one—and a man of science, and I fairly confess that, with his wit, his *amour propre*, and his good good temper, I have quite fallen in love with him in a single evening, we began last night on the microscope, and ended on all heaven and earth.'

'How I should like to make a third!'

'My dear Queen Whims would hear a good deal of solar sense, then? at least on one side—but I shall not ask her—for Mr Thurnall and I have our deep secrets together.'

So spoke the major, in the simple wish to exalt Tom in a quarter where he hoped to get him practical, and his 'secret' was a mere jest, unnecessary, perhaps, as he thought afterwards, to pass off Tom's want of orthodoxy.

'I was a babbler then,' said he to himself the next moment 'how much better to have simply held my tongue!'

Alas, yes, I know men have their secrets as well as women,' said Valentin, for the mere love of saying something—but as she looked at Vavasour she saw an expression in his face which she had never seen before. What was it? All that one can picture in *l'homme* branded into the countenance of a man unable to repress the least emotion, who had worked himself into the belief that Thurnall had betrayed his secret.

'My dear Mrs Vavasour,' cried Campbell, of course unable to guess the truth, and supposing vaguely that he was 'ill', 'I am sure that that the sun has overpowered you' (the only possible thing he could think of). 'Lie down on the sofa a minute' (Vavasour was actually reeling with rage and terror), 'and I will run up to Thurnall's for salvolatile.'

Elsley, who thought him the most consummate of hypocrites, cast on him a look which he intended to have been withering, and rushed out of the room, leaving the two staring at each other.

Valentin was half inclined to laugh, knowing Elsley's petulance and vanity—but the impossibility of guessing a cause kept her quiet.

Major Campbell stood for full five minutes, not as one astounded, but as one in deep and anxious thought.

'What can be the matter, mon Saint Père?' asked she at last, to break the silence.

'That there are more whims in the world than yours, dear Queen Whims, and I fear darker ones. Let us walk up together after this man—I have offended him.'

'Nonsense! I dare say he wanted to get home to write poetry, as you did not press what he had written. I know his vanity and flightiness.'

'You do?' asked he quickly, in a painful tone. 'However, I have offended him, I can see, and deeply. I must go up, and make things right, for the sake of for everybody's sake.'

'Then do not ask me anything. Lucia loves him intensely, and let that be enough for us.'

The major saw the truth of the last sentence no more than Valentin herself did, for Valentin would have been glad enough to point out to him, with every exaggeration, her sister's woes and wrongs, real and fancied, had not the sense of her own folly with Vavasour kept her silent and conscience-stricken.

Valentin remarked the major's pained look as they walked up the street.

'You dear conscientious Saint Père, why will you fret yourself about such a foolish matter? He will have forgotten it all in an hour, I know him well enough.'

Major Campbell was not the sort of person to admire Elsley the more for throwing away capriciously such deep passion as he had seen him show, any more than for showing the same.

'He must be of a very volatile temperament.' 'Oh all gamines are.'

I have no respect for genius, Miss St. Just.

I do not even acknowledge its existence when there is no strength and steadiness of character. If any one pretends to be more than a man, he must begin by proving himself a man at all. Genius? Give me common sense and common decency! Does he give Mrs. Vavasour, pray, the benefit of any of these pretty flights of genius?

Valentia was frightened. She had never heard her Saint Père speak so severely and sarcastically, and she feared that if he knew the truth, he would be terribly angry. She had never seen him angry, but she knew well enough that that passion, when it rose in him in a righteous cause, would be very awful to see, and she was one of those women who always grow angry when they are frightened. So she was angry at his calling her Mrs. St. Just, she was angry because she chose to think he was talking at her, though she reasonably might have guessed it, seeing that he had scolded her a hundred times for want of steadiness of character. She was more angry than all, because she knew that her own vanity had caused at least disagreement—between Lania and Elsley. All which (combined with her natural wish not to confess an unpleasant truth about her sister) puzzled her, of course, in answering—

'Miss St. Just don't intrude into the secrets of my sister's married life, and if she did, she would not repeat them.'

Major Campbell sighed, and walked in a few moments in silence, then

'Pardon, Miss St. Just, I asked a rude question, and I am sorry for it.'

'Pardon you, my dear Saint Père,' cried she, almost catching at his hand. 'Never! I must either believe you infallible, or hate you eternally. It is I that was naughty, I always am, but you will forgive Queen Whims.'

'Who could help it?' said the major, in a sad, sweet tone. 'But here is the postman. May I open my letters?'

'You may do as you like, now you have forgiven me. Why, what is it, mon Saint Père?'

A sudden shock of horror had passed over the major's face, as he read his letter, but it had soon subsided into stately calm.

'A gallant officer, whom we and all the world knew well, is dead of cholera at his post, where a man should die. And, my dear Miss St. Just, we are going to the Crimea.'

'We? you?'

'Yes. The expedition will really sail, I find.'

'But not you?'

'I shall offer my services. My leave of absence will, in any case, end on the first of September, and even if it did not, my health is quite enough restored to enable me to walk up to a cannon's mouth.'

'Ah, mon Saint Père, what words are these?'

'The words of an old soldier, Queen Whims, who has been so long at his trade that he has got to take a strange pleasure in it.'

'In killing?'

'No, only in the chance of— But I will not cast an unnecessary shadow over your bright soul. There will be shadows enough over it soon, without my help.'

'What do you mean?'

'That you, and thousands more as delicate, if not as fan as you, will see, ere long, what the realities of human life are, and in a way of which you have never dreamed.'

And he murmured, half to himself, the words of the prophet, "'Thou saist, I shall sit as a lady for ever: but these two things shall come upon thee in our day, widowhood and the loss of children. They shall even come upon thee.' No! not in our fineness! There are noble elements underneath the crust, which will come out all the purer from the fire, and we shall have heroes and heroines rising up among us as of old, sincere and earnest, ready to face their work, and to do it, and to call all things by their right names once more. And Queen Whims herself will become what Queen Whims might be.'

Valentia was awed, as well she might have been, for there was a very deep sadness about Campbell even.

'You think there will be del. disasters?' said she at last.

'How can I tell? That we are what we always were, I doubt not. Scouthush will light us mainly as I. But we owe the penalty of many sins, and we shall pay it.'

It would be as nothing, perhaps, is easy, to make Major Campbell a prophet after the fact, by attributing to him any distinct expectation of those mistakes which have been but too notorious since. Much of the sadness in his tone may have been due to his habitual melancholy, his strong belief that the world was deeply diseased, and that some terrible purgation would surely come, when it was needed. But it is difficult, again, to conceive that those errors were altogether unforeseen by many an officer of Campbell's experience and thoughtfulness.

'We will talk no more of it just now.' And they walked up to Penolva Court, seriously enough.

'Well, Scouthush, any letters from town?' said the major.

'Yes.'

'You have heard what has happened at D. Barracks?'

'Yes.'

'You had better take care, then, that the like of it does not happen here.'

'Here?'

'Yes. I'll tell you all presently. Have you heard from headquarters?'

'Yes, all right,' said Scouthush, who did not like to let out the truth to fine Valentia.

Campbell saw it, and signed to him to speak out.

'All right?' asked Valentia. 'Then you are not going?'

'Ay, but I am! Orders to join my regiment by the first of October, and to be shot as soon afterwards as is fitting for the honour of my country. So, Miss Val, you must be quick in making good friends with the hen-at-law, or else you won't get your bills paid any more.'

'Oh, dear, dear!' and Valentin began to cry bitterly. It was her first real sorrow.

Strangely enough, Major Campbell, instead of trying to comfort her, took Scoutbush out with him, and left her alone with her tears. He could not rest till he had opened the whole cholera question.

Scoutbush was honestly shocked. Who would have dreamed it! No one had ever told him that the cholera had really been there before. 'What could he do?' said he to Thurnall.

Tom was sent for, and Scoutbush found, to his horror, that what little he could have ever done ought to have been done three months ago, with Lord Munchampstead's improvements at Pentremochyn.

The little man walked up and down, and wrung his hands. He cursed Tardrew for not telling him the truth, he cursed himself for letting the cottages go out of his power, he cursed A, B, and C for taking the said cottages off his hands, he cursed up, he cursed down, he cursed all around, things which ought to have been cursed, and things which really ought not—for half of the worst sanitary sinners, in this blessed age of ignorance, yclept of progress and science (how our grandchildren will laugh at the epithets!), are utterly unconscious and guiltless ones.

But cursing leaves him, as it leaves other men, very much where he had started.

To do him justice, he was in one thing a true nobleman, for he was above all pride, as are most men of rank, who know what their own rank means. It is only the upstart, unaccustomed to his new eminence, who stands on his dignity, and asserts his power.

So Scoutbush begged humbly of Thurnall only to tell him what he could do.

'You might use your moral influence, my lord.'

'Moral influence!' in a tone which implied naively enough, 'I'd better get a little morals myself before I talk of using the same.'

'Your position in the parish—'

'My good sir!' quoth Scoutbush in his shrewd way, 'do you not know yourself what these fine fellows who were ready yesterday to kiss the dust off my feet would say, if I asked leave to touch a single hair of their rights?' 'Tell you what, my lord, we pay you your rent, and you takes it. You mind your business, and we'll mind our'n.' 'You forget that times are changed since my seventeenth progenitor was lord of life and limb over man and maid in Aberlva.'

'And since your seventeenth progenitor took the trouble to live at Penalva Court,' said Campbell, 'instead of throwing away what little moral influence he had by going into the Guards, and spending his time between Rotten Row and Cowes.'

'Hardly fair, Major Campbell!' quoth Tom, 'you forget that in the old times, if the Lord of Aberlva was responsible for his people, he had also by law the power of making them obey him.'

'The long and the short of it is, then,' said Scoutbush, a little tartly, 'that I can do nothing.'

'You can put to rights the cottages which are still in your hands, my lord. For the rest, my only remaining hope lies in the last person whom one would usually depute on such an errand.'

'Who is that?'

'The schoolmistress.'

'The who?' asked Scoutbush.

'The schoolmistress, at whose house Major Campbell lodges.'

And Tom told them, succinctly, enough to justify his strange assertion.

'If you doubt me, my lord, I advise you to ask Mr Headley. He is no friend of hers, being a high churchman, while she is a little inclined to be schismatic, but an enemy's opinion will be all the more honest.'

'She must be a wonderful woman,' said Scoutbush, 'I should like to see her.'

'And I too,' said Campbell. 'I passed a lovely gal on the stairs last night, and thought no more of it. Lovely girls are common enough in West-country parts.'

'We'll go and see her,' quoth his lordship.

Meanwhile Aberlva pier was astonished by a strange phenomenon. A boat from the yacht landed at the pier-head not only Claude Mellot, whose beard was an object of wonder to the fishermen, but a tall three-legged box and a little black tent, which, being set upon the pier, became the scene of various mysterious operations, carried on by Claude and a sailor lad.

'I say!' quoth one of the fishing elders, after long suspicious silence, 'I say, lais, this won't do. We can't have no outlandish foreigners taking observations here!'

And then dropped out one wild suspicion after another.

'Maybe he's spyin' for a railroad!'

'Maybe he's from the Trinity House, going to make a new harbour, or maybe a lighthouse. And then we'd better not meddle wi' him!'

'I'll tell you what he be. He's that here government chap as the doctor said he'd bring down to set our drains right.'

'If he goes meddling with our drains, and knocking of our back-yards about, he'll find himself over quay before he's done.'

'Steady! steady! He come with my lord's mind!'

'He might n' taken in his lordship, and be a Russian spy to the bottom of him after all. They wak' themselves up into all manner of disguisements, specially beards. I've seed the Russians with their beards many a time.'

'Maybe 'tis witchcraft. Look to mun, putting mun's head under that black bag now! He'm after no good, I'll warrant. If they ben't works of darkness, what be?'

'Leastwise he'm no right to go spyin' here on

our quay, and nger ax with your heavy, or by your leave. I'll just gon' mak' mun out.'

And Claude, who had just retreated into his tent, had the pleasure of finding the curtain suddenly withdrawn, and as a flood of light rushed in, spilling his daguerrotypo plate, hearing a voice as of a sleepy bear—

'Ax your pardon, sir, but what be you arter here?'

'Murder! shnt the screen!'

But it was too late, and Claude came out, while the eldest-horn of Annk stood sternly inquiring—

'I say, what be you arter herp, in k' so bold?'

'Taking sun-pictures, my good an, and you have spoilt one for me.'

'Sun-pictures, saith a?'

in a very merodulous tone

'Daguerrotypes of the place in Lord Seotlandsh!'

'Oh! if it's his lordship's wish, of course! Only things is very well as they are, and needs no mending, thank God. Only, ax pardon, sir. You see, we don't generally allow no interfering on our pier without lave, an, the pier being ours, we pays for the repairing. So if his lordship intends making of alterations, he'd better to have spoken to us first.'

'Alterations?' said Claude, laughing, 'the plan is fu too pretty to need any improvement.'

'Glad you think so, an! But whatever be you arter here?'

'Taking views! I'm a painter, an artist! I'll take your portrait, if you like!'

said Claude, laughing more and more.

'Bless my heart, what rules we be!'

'Tis a painter gentleman, lads!'

reared he

'What on earth did you take me for? A Russian spy?'

The older shook his head, grinned solemnly, and peace was concluded. 'We're old-fashioned folks here, you see, sir, and don't like no new-fangled meddlesomenes. You'll excuse us, you're very welcome to do what you like, and glad to see you here.' And the old fellow made a stately bow, and moved away.

'No, no! you must stay and have your portrait taken, you'll make a fine picture.'

'Hum, might ha', they used to say, thirty years ago, I'm over old now. Still, my old woman might like it. Make so bold, an, but what's your charge?'

'I charge nothing. Five minutes' talk with an honest man will pay me.'

'Hum, if you'd a let me pay you, sir, well and good, but I cannt take up your time for nought, that's not fair.'

However, Claude prevailed, and in ten minutes he had all the sailors on the quay round him, and one after another came forward blushing and grinning to be 'taken off.' Soon the children gathered round, and when Valentin and Major Campbell came on the pier, they found Claude in the midst of a ring of little dark-haired angels, while a dozen honest fellows grinned when their own visages appeared, and chaffed each other about the sweethearts who were to keep them

while they were out at sea. And in the midst little Claude laughed and joked, and told gaudy stories, and gave himself up, the simple, sunny-hearted fellow, to the pleasure of pleasing, till he earned from one and all the character of 'the pleasant-spokenest gentleman that was ever into the town.'

'Here's her ladyship' make room for her ladyship!'

But Claude held up a warning hand. He had just arranged a masterpiece—half a dozen of the prettiest children, sitting beneath a broken boat, on spars, sails, blocks, lobster-pots, and what not, arranged in picturesque confusion, while the black bearded seakings round were promising them rock and bulis-eyes, if they would only sit still like 'gudlo munks.'

But at Valentin's coming the children all looked round, and jumped up and cried, and then were at wad to sit down again.

'You have spoilt my group, Miss St Just, and you must mend it!'

Valentin caught the humour, regrouped them all forthwith, and then placed herself in front of them by Claude's side.

'Now, be good children! Look straight at me, and listen!'

And sitting up in a finger, she began to sing the first song of which she could think, 'The Lamenting of the Pilgrim Fathers.'

She had no need to bid the children look at her and listen, for not only they, but every face upon the pier was fixed upon her, breathless, spell-bound, at once by her magnificent beauty and her magnificent voice, as up rose, leaping into the clear summer air, and rolling away over the still blue sea, that glorious melody which has now become the national anthem to the noblest part of the New World. Honour to woman, and honour to old England, that from Felicia Hemans came the song which will last, perhaps, when modern Europe shall have shared the fate of ancient Rome and Greece!

Valentin's singing was the reflex of her own character, and therefore, perhaps, all the more fitted to the song, the place, and the audience. It was no modest crooning voice, tender, suggestive, trembling with suppressed emotion, such as, even though narrow in compass, and dull in quality, will touch the deepest fibres of the heart, and, as delicate scents will sometimes do, wake up long-forgotten dreams, which seem memories of some antenatal life.

It was clear, rich, massive, of extraordinary compass, and yet full of all the graceful ease, the amiablemishmish, of perfect physical health, and strength, and beauty, and there had been a trace of effort in it, it might have been accused of 'travura' but there was no need of effort where nature had bestowed already an all but perfect organ, and all that was left for science was to teach not power, but control. Above all, it was a voice which you trusted, after the first three notes you felt that that perfect ear, that perfect throat, could never, even by the thousandth part of a note, fall short of melody.

and you gave your soul up to it, and cast yourself upon it, to bear you up and away, like a fairy steed, whither it would, down into the abysses of sadness, and up to the highest heaven of joy, as did those wild and rough, and yet tender-hearted and imaginative men that day, while every face spoke new delight, and hung upon those glorious notes—

'As one who drinks from a charmed cup
Of sparkling, and foaming, and murmuring wine—

and not one of them, had he had the gift of words, but might have said with the poet—

'I have no life, Constantia, now but thee,
While, like the world-surrounding air, thy song
Flows on, and fills all things with melody
Now is thy voice tempest swift and strong,
On which, like one in a trance upborne,
Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,
Rejoicing like a cloud of morn
Now 'tis the breath of summer night,
Which, when the starry waters sleep
Round western isles, with lucense blossoms bright,
Languering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.'

At last it ceased and all men drew their breaths once more, while a low murmur of admiration ran through the crowd, too well-bred to applaud openly, as they longed to do.

'Did you ever hear the like of that, Gentleman Jan?'

'Or see? I used to say no one could hold a candle to our Grace, but she—she looked like a born queen all the time!'

'Well, she belongs to us, too, so we've a right to be proud of her. Why, here's our Grace all the while!'

True enough, Grace has been standing among the crowd all the while, rapt, like them, her eyes fixed on Valentin, and full, too, of tears. They had been called up first by the melody itself, and then, by a chain of thought peculiar to Grace, by the faces round her.

'Ah! if Grace had been here!' cried one, 'we'd have had her dra'd off in the midst of the children.'

'Ah! that would ha' been as nat'ral as life!'

'Silence, you!' says Gentleman Jan, who generally feels a mission to teach the rest of the quay good manners. 'Tis the gentleman's pleasure to settle who he'll dra' off, and not werr'n.'

To which abnormal possessive pronoun Claude rejoined—

'Not a bit! whatever you like. I could not have a better figure for the centre. I'll begin again.'

'Oh, do come and sit among the children, Grace!' says Valentin.

'No, thank your ladyship.'

Valentin began urging her; and many a voice round, old as well as young, backed the entreaty.

'Excuse me, my lady,' and she slipped into the crowd; but as she went she spoke low, but clear enough to be heard by all. 'No, it will be time enough to flatter me, and ask for my picture, when you do what I tell you—what God tells you!'

'What's that, then, Grace dear?'

'You know! I've asked you to save your own lives from cholera, and you have not the common sense to do it. Let me go home and pray for you!'

There was an awkward silence among the men, till some fellow said—

'She's gone mad after that doctor, I think, with his muck-hunting notions.'

And Grace went home, to await the hour of afternoon school.

'What a face!' said Mellot.

'Is it not? Come and see her in her school, when the children go in at two o'clock. Ah! there are Scoutbush and Saint Père.'

'We are going to the school, my lord. Don't you think that, as patron of things in general here, it would look well if you walked in, and signified your full approbation of what you know nothing about?'

'So much so, that I was just on my way there with Campbell. But I must just speak to that lime-burning fellow. He wants a new lease of the kiln, and I suppose he must have it. At least, here he comes, running at me open-mouthed, and as dry as his own waistband. It makes one thirsty to look at him. I'll catch you up in five minutes!'

So the three went off to the school.

Grace was telling, in her own sweet way, that charming story of the Three Trouts, which, by the bye, has been lately pirated (as many things are) by a religious author, whose book differs sufficiently from the liberal and wholesome morality of the true author of the tale.

'What a beautiful story, Grace!' said Valentin. 'You will surpass Hans Andersen some day.'

Grace blushed, and was silent a moment.

'It is not my own, my lady.'

'Not your own? I should have thought that no one but you and Andersen could have made such an ending to it.'

Grace gave her one of those beseeching, half reproachful looks, with which she always answered praise, and then—'Would you like to hear the children repeat a hymn, my lady?'

'No. I want to know where that story came from.'

Grace blushed and stammered.

'I know where,' said Campbell. 'You need not be ashamed of having read the book, Miss Harvey. I doubt not that you took all the good from it, and none of the harm, if harm there be.'

Grace looked at him, at once surprised and relieved.

'It was a foolish romance-book, sir, as you seem to know. It was the only one which I ever read, except Hans Andersen's—which are not romances, after all. But the beginning was so full of God's truth, sir—romance though it was—and gave me such precious new light about educating children, that I was led on unawares. I hope I was not wrong.'

'This schoolroom proves that you were not.'

said Campbell. } "To the pure, all things are pure."

"What is this mysterious book? I must know!" said Valentinia.

"A very noble romance, which I made Mellot read once, containing the ideal education of an English nobleman in the middle of the last century."

"*The Fool of Quality!*" said Mellot. "Of course! I thought I had heard the story before. What a well-written book it is, too, in spite of all extravagance and prolixity. And how wonderfully ahead of his generation the man who wrote it, in politics as well as in religion!"

"I must read it," said Valentinia. "You must lend it me, Saint Père."

"Not yet, I think."

"Why?" whispered she, pointing. "I suppose I am not as pure as Grace Harvey?"

"She has the children to educate, who are in daily contact with coarse sins, of which you know nothing—of which she cannot help knowing. It was written in an age when the morals of our class (more shame to us) were on the same level with the morals of her class now. Let it alone. I often have fancied I should edit a corrected edition of it. When I do, you shall read that."

"Now, Miss Harvey," said Mellot, who had never taken his eyes off her face, "I want to turn schoolmaster, and give your children a drawing lesson. Get your slates, all of you!"

And taking possession of the black board and a piece of chalk, Claude began sketching them imps and angels, dogs and horses, till the school rang with shrieks of delight.

"Now," said he, wiping the board, "I'll draw something, and you shall copy it."

And without taking off his hand, he drew a single line, and a profile head sprang up, as if by magic, under his firm, unerring touch.

"Somebody!" "A lady!" "No, 'taint, 'tis schoolmistress!"

"You can't copy that, I'll draw you another face." And he sketched a full face on the board.

"That's my lady!" "No, it's schoolmistress again!" "No, it's not!"

"Not quite sure, my dears!" said Claude, half to himself. "Then here!" and wiping the board once more, he drew a three-quarters face, which elicited a shout of approbation.

"That's schoolmistress, her very self!"

"Then you cannot do anything better than try and draw it. I'll show you how." And going over the lines again, one by one, the crafty Claude pretended to be giving a drawing lesson, while he was really studying every feature of his model.

"If you please, my lady," whispered Grace to Valentinia; "I wish the gentleman would not."

"Why not?"

"Oh, madam, I do not judge any one else. but why should this poor perishing flesh be put into a picture? We wear it but for a little while, and are blessed when we are rid of its burden."

Why wish to keep a copy of what we long to be delivered from?"

"It will please the children, Grace," said Valentinia, puzzled. "See how they are all trying to copy it, from love of you!"

"Who am I? I want them to do things from love of God. No, madam, I was pained (and no offence to you) when I was asked to have my likeness taken on the quay. There's no sin in it, of course, but let those who are going away to sea, and have friends at home, have their pictures taken, not one who wishes to leave behind her no likeness of her own, only Christ's likeness in these children, and to paint Him to other people, not to be painted herself. Do ask him to rub it out, my lady!"

"Why, Grace, we were all just wishing to have a likeness of you. Every one has their picture taken for a remembrance."

"The saints and martyrs never had theirs, as far as I ever heard, and yet they are not forgotten yet. I know it is the way of great people like you. I saw your picture once, in a book Miss Heale had, and did not wonder, when I saw it, that people wished to remember such a face as yours, and since I have seen you, I wonder still less."

"My picture? where?"

"In a book, *The Book of Beauty*, I believe they called it."

"My dear Grace," said Valentinia, laughing and blushing, "if you ever looked in your glass, you must know that you are quite as worthy of a place in *The Book of Beauty* as I am."

Grace shook her head with a serious smile. "Every one in their place, madam. I cannot help knowing that God has given me a gift, but why, I cannot tell. Certainly not for the same purpose as He gave it to you for—a simple country girl like me. If He have any use for it, He will use it, as He does all His creatures, without my help. At all events it will not last long, a few years more, perhaps a few months, and it will be food for worms, and then people will care as little about my looks as I care now. I wish, my lady, you would stop the gentleman!"

"Mr Mellot, draw the children something simpler, please, a dog or a cat." And she gave Claude a look which he obeyed.

Valentinia felt in a more solemn mood than usual as she walked home that day.

"Well," said Claude, "I have here every line and shade, and she cannot escape me. I'll go on board, and paint her right off from memory, while it is fresh. Why, here come Scoutbush and the major."

"Miss Harvey," said Scoutbush, trying, as he said to Campbell, "to look as grand as a sheep-dog among a pack of fox-hounds, and very thankful all the while he had no tail to be bitten off,"—"Miss Harvey, I—we—have heard a great deal in praise of your school, and so I thought I should like to come and see it."

"Would your lordship like to examine the children?" says Grace, curtsying to the ground.

"No—thanks—that is—I have no doubt you

teach them all that's right, and we are exceedingly gratified with the way in which you conduct the school. I say, Val,' cried Scoutbush, who could support the part of patron no longer, 'what pretty little ducks they are, I wish I had a dozen of them! Come you here!' and down he sat on a bench, and gathered a group round him.

'Now, are you all good children? I'm sure you look so!' said he, looking round into the bright pure faces, fresh from heaven, and feeling himself the nearer heaven as he did so. 'Ah! I see Mr. Mellot's been drawing you pictures. He's a clever man, a wonderful man, isn't he? I can't draw you pictures, nor tell you stories, like your schoolmistress. What shall I do?'

'Sing to them, Fred!' said Valentinia.

And he began warbling a funny song, with a child on each knee, and his arms round three or four more, while the little faces looked up into his, half awe-struck at the presence of a live lord, half longing to laugh, but not sure whether it would be right.

Valentinia and Campbell stood close together, exchanging looks.

'Dear fellow!' whispered she, 'so simple and good when he is himself! And he must go to that dreadful war!'

'Never mind. Perhaps by this very act he is earning permission to come back again, a wiser and a more useful man.'

'How then?'

'Is he not making friends with angels who always behold our Father's face? At least he is showing capabilities of good, which God gave, and which therefore God will never waste.'

'Now, shall I sing you another song?'

'Oh yes, please!' rose from a dozen little mouths.

'You must not be troublesome to his lordship,' says Grace.

'Oh no, I like it. I'll sing them one more song, and then—I want to speak to you, Miss Harvey.'

Grace curtsied, blushed, and shook all over. What could Lord Scoutbush want to say to her?

That indeed was not very easy to discover at first; for Scoutbush felt so strongly the oddity of taking a pretty young woman into his counsel on a question of sanitary reform, that he felt mightily inclined to laugh, and began beating about the bush in a sufficiently confused fashion.

'Well, Miss Harvey, I am exceedingly pleased with—with what I have seen of the school—that is, what my sister tells, and the clergyman—'

'The clergyman?' thought Grace, surprised, as she well might be, at what was entirely an impromptu invention of his lordship's.

'And—and—there is ten pounds towards the school, and—and, I will give an annual subscription the same amount.'

'Mr. Headley receives the subscriptions, my lord,' said Grace, drawing back from the proffered note.

'Of course,' quoth Scoutbush, trusting again to an impromptu; 'but this is for yourself'

small mark of our sense of your—your usefulness.'

If any one has expected that Grace is about to conduct herself, during this interview, in any wise like a prophetic, tragically queen, or other exalted personage, to stand upon her native independence, and securing the bounty of an aristocrat, to read the said aristocrat a lecture on his duties and responsibilities, as landlord of Aberlva town; then will that person be altogether disappointed. It would have looked very well, doubtless, but it would have been equally untrue to Grace's womanhood, and to her notions of Christianity. Whether all men were or were not equal in the sight of Heaven, was a notion which had never crossed her mind. She knew that they would all be equal in heaven, and that was enough for her. Meanwhile, she found lords and ladies on earth, and seeing no open sin in the fact of their being richer and more powerful than she was, she supposed that God had put them where they were, and she accepted them simply as facts of His kingdom. Of course they had their duties, as every one has, but what they were she did not know, or care to know. To their own master they stood or fell. Her business was with her own duties, and with her own class, whose good and evil she understood by practical experience. So when a live lord made his appearance in her school, she looked at him with vague wonder and admiration, as a being out of some other planet, for whom she had no gauge or measure; she only believed that he had vast powers of doing good unknown to her, and was delighted by seeing him condescend to play with her children. The truth may be degrading, but it must be told. People, of course, who know the hollowness of the world, and the vanity of human wealth and honour, and are accustomed to live with lords and ladies, see through all that, just as clearly as any American republican does, and care no more about walking down Pall Mall with the Marquis of Carabas, who can get them a place or a living, than with Mr. Two-shoes, who can only borrow ten pounds of them; but Grace was a poor simple West-country girl, and as such we must excuse her, if, curtsying to the very ground, with tears of gratitude in her eyes, she took the ten-pound note, saying to herself, 'Thank the Good Lord! This will just pay mother's account at the mill.'

Likewise we must excuse her if she trembled a little, being a young woman—though being also a lady, she lost no jot of self-possession—when his lordship went on in as important a tone as he could—

'And—and I hear, Miss Harvey, that you have a great influence over these children's parents.'

'I am afraid some one has misinformed your lordship,' said Grace, in a low voice.

'Ah!' quoth Scoutbush, in a tone meant to be reassuring; 'it is quite proper in you to say so. What eyes she has! and what hair! and what hands, too!' (This was, of course, spoken

mentally) 'But we know better, and we want you to speak to the sin, whenever you can, about keeping their homes clean, and all that, in case the cholera should come.' And Scoutbush stopped. It was a quaint errand enough, and besides, as he told Mellot frankly, 'I could think of nothing but those wonderful eyes of hers, and how like they were to La Signora's.'

Grace had been looking at the ground all the while. Now she threw upon him one of her sudden, startled looks, and answered slowly, as her eyes dropped again—

'I have, my lord, but they will not listen to me.'

'Won't listen to you? Then to whom will they listen?'

'To God, when He speaks Himself,' said she, still looking on the ground. Scoutbush winced uneasily. He was not accustomed to solemn words, spoken so solemnly.

'Do you hear this, Campbell? Miss Harvey has been talking to those people already, and they won't hear her.'

'Miss Harvey, I dare say, is not astonished at that. It is the usual fate of those who try to put a little common sense into their fellow-men.'

'Well, and I shall, at all events, go off and give them my mind on the matter, though I suppose' (with a glance at Grace) 'I can't expect to be heard where Miss Harvey has not been.'

'Oh, my lord,' cried Grace, 'if you would but speak ---' And then she stopped, for was it her place to tell him his duty? No doubt he had wiser people than her to counsel him.

But the moment the party left the school, Grace dropped into her chair, her head fell on the table, and she burst into an agony of weeping, which brought the whole school round her.

'Oh, my darlings! my darlings!' cried she at last, looking up, and clasping them to her by twos and threes, 'is there no way of saving you? No way? Then we must make the most haste to be good, and be all ready when Jesus comes to take us.' And shaking off her passion with one strong effort, she began teaching those children as she had never taught them before, with a voice, a look, as of Stephen himself when he saw the heavens opened.

For that burst of weeping was the one single overflow of long pent passion, disappointment, and shame.

She had tried, indeed. Ever since Tom's conversation and Frank's sermon had poured in a flood of new light on the meaning of epidemics, and bodily misery, and death itself, she had been working as only she could work, exhorting, explaining, coaxing, warning, entreating with tears, offering to perform with her own hands the most sickening offices, to become, if no one else would, the common scavenger of the town. There was no depth to which, in her noble enthusiasm, she would not have gone down. And behold, it had been utterly in vain! Ah! the bitter disappointment of find-

ing her influence fail her utterly, the first time that it was required for a great practical work! They would let her talk to them about their souls, then! They would even amend a few sins here and there, of which they had been all along as well aware as she. But to be convinced of a new sin, to have their laziness, pride, covetousness, touched, that, she found, was what they would not hear, and where she had expected, if not thanks, at least a fair hearing, she had been met with peevishness, ridicule, even anger and insult.

Her mother had turned against her. 'Why would she go getting a bad name from every one, and driving away customers?' The preachers, who were (as is but too common in West country villages) narrow, ignorant, and somewhat miscrepulous men, turned against her. They had considered the cholera, if it was to come, as so much spiritual capital for themselves, an occasion which they could 'improve' into a sensation, perhaps a 'revival', and to explain it upon mere physical causes was to rub them of their harvest. Coarse viages went even further still, and dared to ask her 'whether it was the climate or the doctor she was setting her cap at, for she never had anything in her mouth now but what they had said?' And those words went through her heart like a sword. Was she disinterested? Was not love for Thurnall, the wish to please him, mingling with all her earnestness? And again, was not self-love mingling with it? and mingling, too, with the disappointment, even indignation, which she felt at having failed? Ah—what hidden spots of self-conceit, vanity, pharisaic pride, that bitter trial laid bare, or seemed to lay, till she learned to thank her unseen Guide even for it!

'Perhaps she had more reason to be thankful for her humiliation than she could suspect, with her narrow knowledge of the world. Perhaps that sudden downfall of her fancied queenship was needed, to slant her out, once and for all, from that downward path of spiritual intoxication, followed by spiritual knavery, which, as has been hinted, was but too easy for her.'

But meanwhile the whole thing was but a fresh misery. To bear the burden of Cassandra day and night, seeing in fancy—which yet was truth—the black shadow of death hanging over that doomed place, to dream of whom it might sweep off—perhaps, worst of all, her mother, unconfessed and impotent!

Too dreadful! And dreadful, too, the private troubles which were thickening fast, and which seemed, instead of drawing her mother to her side, to estrange her more and more, for some mysterious reason. Her mother was heavily in debt. Thus ten pounds of Lord Scoutbush's would certainly clear off the miller's bill. Her scanty quarter's salary, which was just due, would clear off a little more. But there was a long-standing account of the wholesale grocer's for five- and twenty pounds, for which Mrs Harvey had given a two months' bill. That

bill would become due early in September, and how to meet it, neither mother nor daughter knew, it lay like a black plague-spot on the future, only surpassed in horror by the cholera itself.

It might have been three or four days after, that Claude, lounging after breakfast on deck, was hailed from a dingy, which contained Captain Willis and Gentleman Jan.

'Might we take the liberty of coming aboard to speak with your honour?'

'By all means!' and up the side they came, their faces evidently big with some great purpose, and each desirous that the other should begin.

'You speak, captain,' says Jan, 'you're oldest,' and then he began himself. 'If you please, sir, we've come on a sort of deputation—Why don't you tell the gentleman, captain?'

Willis seemed either doubtful of the success of his deputation or not over desirous thereof, for, after trying to put John Beer forward as spokesman, he began—

'I'm sorry to trouble you, sir, but these young men will have it so—and no shame to them—on a matter which I think will come to nothing. But the truth is, they have heard that you are a great painter, and they have taken it into their heads to ask you to paint a picture for them.'

'Not to ask you a favour, sir, mind!' interrupted Jan, 'we'd soon be so forward, we'll subscribe and pay for it, in course, any price in reason. There's forty and more promised already.'

'You must tell me first what the picture is to be about,' said Claude, puzzled and amused.

'Why didn't you, tell the gentleman, captain?'

'Because I think it is no use, and I told them all so from the first. The truth is, sir, they want a picture of my—of our schoolmistress, to hang up in the school or somewhere—'

'That's it, dra'ed out all natural, in paints, and her bonnet, and her shawl, and all, just like life, we was a-going to ax you to do one of they garrytypes, but she would have'n no price, besides tan't cheerful looking they sort, with your leave, too much blackamoor wise, you see, and over thick about the nozzles, most times, to my liking, so we'll pay you and welcome, all you ask.'

'Too much blackamoor wise, indeed!' said Claude, amused. 'And how much do you think I should ask?'

No answer.

'We'll settle that presently. Come down into the cabin with me.'

'Why, sir, we couldn't make so bold His lordship—'

'Oh, his lordship's on shore, and I am skipper for the time, and if not, he'd be delighted to see two good seamen here. So come along.'

And down they went.

'Bowie, bring these gentlemen some sherry!' cried Claude, turning over his portfolio. 'Now

then, my worthy friends, is that the sort of thing you want?'

And he spread on the table a water-colour sketch of Grace.

The two worthies gazed in silent delight, and then looked at each other, and then at Claude, and then at the picture.

'Why, sir,' said Willis, 'I couldn't have believed it! You've got the very smile of her, and the sadness of her too, as if you'd known her a hundred year!'

'Tis beautiful!' sighed Jan, half to himself. Poor fellow, he had cherished, perhaps, hopes of winning Grace after all.

'Well, will that suit you?'

'Why, sir, make so bold—but what we thought on was to have her drawn from head to foot, and a child standing by her like, holding to her hand, for a token as she was schoolmistress, and the pier behind, may be, to signify as she was our maid, and belonged to Abersiva.'

'A capital thought! Upon my word, you're men of taste here in the West, but what do you think I should charge for such a picture as that?'

'Name your price, sir,' said Jan, who was in high good humour at Claude's approbation.

'Two hundred guineas!'

Jan gave a long whistle.

'I told you so, Captain Beer,' said Willis, 'or ever we got into the boat.'

'Now,' said Claude, laughing, 'I've two prices, one's two hundred, and the other is just nothing, and if you won't agree to the one, you must take the other.'

'But we wants to pay, we'd take it an honour to pay, if we could afford it.'

'Then wait till next Christmas.'

'Christmas?'

'My good friend, pictures are not painted in a day. Next Christmas, if I live, I'll send you what you shall not be ashamed of, or she either, and do you club your money and put it into a handsome gold frame.'

'But, sir,' said Willis, 'this will give you a sight of trouble, and all for our fancy.'

'I like it, and I like you.' You're fine fellows, who know a noble creature when God sends her to you, and I should be ashamed to ask a farthing of your money. There, no more words!'

'Well, you are a gentleman, sir,' said Gentleman Jan.

'And so are you,' said Claude. 'Now I'll show you some mere sketches.'

'I should like to know, sir,' asked Willis, 'how you got at that likeness. She would not hear of the thing, and that's why I had no liking to come troubling you about nothing.'

Claude told them, and Jan laughed heartily, while Willis said—

'Do you know, sir, that's a relief to my mind. There is no sin in being drawn, of course, but I didn't like to think my maid had changed her mind, when once she'd made it up.'

So the deputation retired in high glee, after Willis had entrusted Claude and Beer to keep the thing a secret from Grace.

It befell that Claude, knowing no reason why he should not tell Frank Headley, told him the whole story, as a proof of the chivalry of his parishioners, in which he would take delight.

Frank smiled, but said little, his opinion of Grace was altering fast. A circumstance which occurred a few days after altered it still more.

Scoutbush had gone forth, as he threatened, and exploded in every direction, with such effect as was to be supposed. Everybody promised his lordship to do everything. But when his lordship's back was turned, everybody did just nothing. They know very well that he could not make them do anything, and what was more, in some of the very worst cases, the evil was past remedy now, and better left alone. For the drought went on pitiless. A copper sun, a sea of glass, a brown easterly blight, day after day, while Thurnall looked grimly aloft and mystified the sailors with—

'Fine weather for the *Flying Dutchman* this!'

'Coffins sail fastest in a calm.'

'You'd best all out to the quay-head, and whistle for a wind: it would be an ill one that would blow nobody good just now!'

But the wind came not, nor the rain; and the cholera crept nearer and nearer while the hearts of all in Aberlha were hardened, and out of very spite against the agitators, they did less than they would have done otherwise. Even the inhabitants of the half a dozen cottages which Scoutbush, finding that they were in his own hands, whitewashed by main force, filled the town with lamentations over his lordship's tyranny. True—their pigstyes were either under their front windows, or within two feet of the wall—but to pull down a poor man's pigstye!—they might ever so well be Rooshian slaves! and all the town was on their side, for pigs were the normal inhabitants of Aberlha back-yards.

Tardrew's wrath, of course, knew no bounds, and meeting Thurnall standing at Willis's door, with Frank and Mellot, he fell upon him open-mouthed.

'Well, sir! I've a crow to pick with you.'

'Pick away!'

'What business have you meddling between his lordship and me?'

'That is my concern,' quoth Tom, who evidently was not disinclined to quarrel. 'I'm not here to give an account to you of what I choose to do.'

'I'll tell you what, sir, ever since you've been in this parish you've been meddling, you and Mr. Headley too,—I'll say it to your faces,—I'll speak the truth to any man, gentle or simple, and that ain't enough for you, but you must come over that poor half-crazed girl, to set her plaguing honest people, with telling 'em they'll all be dead in a month, till nobody can eat their suppers in peace. and that again ain't

enough for you, but you must go to my lord with your—'

'Hold hard!' quoth Tom. 'Don't start two hares at once. Let's hear that about Miss Harvey again!'

'Miss Harvey? Why, you should know better than I.'

'Let's hear what you know.'

'Why, ever since that night Treboozie caught you and her together—'

'Stop!' said Tom, 'that's a lie!'

'Everybody says so.'

'Then everybody lies, that's all, and you may say I said so, and take care you don't say it again yourself. But what ever since that night?'

'Why, I suppose you come over the poor thing somehow, as you seem minded to do over every one as you can. But she's been running up and down the town ever since, preaching to 'em about windmills, and drains, and smells, and cholera, and it's being a judgment of the Lord against dirt, till she's frightened all the women so, that many's the man as has had to forbid her his house. But you know that as well as I.'

'I never heard a word of it before, but now I have, I'll give you my opinion on it. That she is a noble, sensible girl, and that you are all a set of fools who are not worthy of her, and that the greatest fool of the whole is you, Mr. Tardrew. And when the cholera comes, it will serve you exactly right if you are the first man carried off by it. Now, sir, you have given me your mind, and I have given you mine, and I do not wish to hear anything more of you. Good mornings!'

'You hold your head mighty high, to be sure, since you've had the run of his lordship's yacht.'

'If you are unpertinent, sir, you will repeat it. I shall take care to inform his lordship of this conversation.'

'My dear Thurnall,' said Headley, as Tardrew withdrew, muttering curses, 'the old fellow is certainly right on one point.'

'What then?'

'That you have wonderfully changed your tone. Who was to eat any amount of dirt, if he could but save his influence thereby?'

'I have altered my plans. I shan't stay here long, I shall just see this cholera over, and then vanish.'

'No!'

'Yes. I cannot sit here quietly, listening to the war-news. It makes me mad to be up and doing. I must eastward-ho, and see if trumps will not turn up for me at last. Why, I know the whole country, half a dozen of the languages—oh, if I could get some secret-service work! Go I must! At worst I can turn my hand to doctoring Bashibazouks.'

'My dear Tom, when will you settle down like other men?' cries Claude.

'I would now, if there was an opening at Whitbury, and low as life would be, I'd face it for my father's sake. But here I cannot stay.'

Both Claude and Headley saw that Tom had reasons which he did not choose to reveal. However, Claude was taken into his confidence that very afternoon.

'I shall make a fool of myself with that schoolmistress. I have been near enough to it a dozen times already, and this magnificent conduct of hers about the cholera has given the finishing stroke to my drama. If I stay on here, I shall marry her. I know I shall! and I won't! I'd go to-morrow, if it were not that I'm bound, for my own credit, to see the cholera safe into the town and out again.'

Tom did not hint a word of the lost money, or of the month's delay which Grace had asked of him. The month was drawing fast to a close now, however, but no sign of the belt. Still, Tom had honour enough in him to be silent on the point, even to Chat.

'By the bye, have you heard from the wanderers this week?'

'I heard from Salina this morning. Marie is very poorly, I fear. They have been at Kissingen, bathing, and are going to Bertrich; somebody has recommended the baths there.'

'Bertrich? Where's Bertrich?'

'The most delicious little nest of a place, half way up the Moselle, among the volcano craters.'

'Don't know it. Have they found that Yankee?'

'No.'

'Why, I thought Salina had a whole detective force of jets and *gendres*, from Boulogne to Rome.'

'Well, she has at least heard of him at Baden, and then again at Stuttgart; but he has escaped them as yet.'

'And poor Marie is breaking her heart all the while! I'll tell you what, Claude, it will be well for him if he escapes me as well as them.'

'What do you mean?'

'I certainly shan't go to the East without shaking hands once more with Marie and Salina, and if in so doing I pass that fellow, it's a pity if I don't have a snap shot at him.'

'Tom! Tom! I had hoped your duelling days were over.'

'They will be over, when one can get the law to punish such puppies, but not till then hang the fellow! What business had he with her at all, if he didn't intend to marry her?'

'I tell you, as I told you before, it is she who will not marry him.'

'And yet she's breaking her heart for him. I can see it all plain enough, Claude. She has found him out only too late. I know him—luxurious, selfish, *blues*, would give a thousand dollars to-morrow, I believe, like the old Roman, for a new pleasure and then amuse himself with her till he breaks her heart! Of course she won't marry him because she knows that if he found out her Quadroon blood—ah, that's it! I'll lay my life he has found it out already, and that is why he has bolted!'

Claude had no answer to give. That talk at the Exhibition made it only too probable

'You think so yourself, I see! Very well. You know that whatever I have been to others, that girl has nothing against me.'

'Nothing against you? Why, she owes you honour, life, everything.'

'Never mind that. Only when I take a fancy to begin, I'll carry it through. I took to that girl, for poor Wyse's sake, and I'll behave by her to the last as he would wish, and he who insults her, insults me. I won't go out of my way to find Stangrave. But if I do, I'll have it out!'

'Then you will certainly fight. My dearest Tom, do look into your own heart, and see whether you have not a grain or two of spite against him left. I assure you you judge him too harshly.'

'Hum—that must take its chance. At least, if we fight, we fight fairly and equally. He is a brave man. I will do him that justice—and a cool one, and used to be a sweet shot. So he has just as good a chance of shooting me, if I am in the wrong, as I have of shooting him, if he is.'

'But your father!'

'I know. That is very disagreeable, and all the more so because I am going to insure my life—a pretty premium they will make me pay!'

and if I am killed in a duel, it will be forfeited. However, the only answer to that is that either I shan't fight, or if I do, I shan't be killed. You know I don't believe in being killed, Claude.'

'Tom! Tom! The same as ever!' said Claude sadly.

'Well, old man, and what else would you have me? Nobody could ever alter me, you know, and why should I alter myself? Here I am, after all, alive and jolly, and there is old daddy, as comfortable as he ever can be on earth, and so it will be to the end of the chapter. There! let's talk of something else.'

CHAPTER XVI

(TIME AT LAST)

Now, as if in all things Tom Thurnall and John Briggs were fated to take opposite sides, Campbell lost ground with Elsley as fast as he gained it with Thurnall. Elsley had never forgiven himself for his passion that first morning. He had shown Campbell his weak side, and feared and disliked him accordingly. Besides, what might not Thurnall have told Campbell about him? And what use might not the major make of his secret? Besides, Elsley's dread and suspicion increased rapidly when he discovered that Campbell was one of those men who live on terms of peculiar intimacy with many women, whether for his own good or not, still for the good of the women concerned. For only by honest parity, and moral courage superior to that of the many, is that dangerous

post earned, and women will listen to the man who will tell them the truth, however sternly, and will bow, even before a guardian angel, to the strong insight of him whom they have once learned to trust. But it is a dangerous office, after all, for laymen as well as for priest, that of father-confessor. The experience of centuries has shown that they in fact rarely exist, wherever fathers neglect their daughters, husbands their wives, wherever the average of the women cannot respect the average of the men. But the experience of centuries should likewise have taught men that the said father-confessors are no objects of envy, that their temptations to become spiritual cowards (the worst species of all cowards), if not intriguers, bullies and worse, are so extreme, that the soul which is proof against them must be either very great or very small indeed. Whether Campbell was altogether proof will be seen hereafter. But one day Elsley found out that such was Campbell's influence, and did not love him the more for the discovery.

They were walking round the garden after dinner, Scoutbush was licking his foolish lips over some commonplace tale of scandal.

'I tell you, my dear fellow, she's looked, and Mellot knows it as well as I. He saw her that night at Lady A——'s.'

'We saw the third act of the comic tragedy. The fourth is playing out now. We shall see the fifth before the winter.'

'*Non sine sanguine*!' said the major.

'Serve the wretched stick right, at least,' said Scoutbush. 'What right had he to marry such a pretty woman?'

'What right had they to marry her up to him?' said Claude. 'I don't blame poor January. I suppose none of us, gentlemen, would have refused such a pretty toy, if we could have afforded it as he could.'

'Whom do you blame then?' asked Elsley.

'Fathers and mothers who prate hypocritically about keeping their daughters' minds pure, and then abuse a girl's ignorance, in order to sell her to ruin. Let them keep her mind pure, in heaven's name, but let them consider themselves all the more bound in honour to use on her behalf the experience in which she must not share.'

'Well,' drawled Scoutbush, 'I don't complain of her bolting, she's a very sweet creature, and always was, but, as Longreach says,—and a very witty fellow, he is, though you laugh at him,—"If she'd kept to us, I shouldn't have minded, but as Guardsmen we must throw her over." It's an insult to the whole Guards, my dear fellow, after refusing two of us, to marry an attorney, and after all to bolt with a plunger.'

What bolting with a plunger might signify, Elsley knew not, but ere he could ask, the major rejoined, in an abstracted voice—

'God help us all! And this is the girl I recollect, two years ago, singing there in Cavendish Square, as innocent as a nestling through!'

'Poor child!' said Mellot, 'sold at first—perhaps sold again now. The plunger has bills out, and she has ready money. I know her settlements.'

'She shan't do it,' said the major quietly, 'I'll write to her to-night.'

Elsley looked at him keenly. 'You think then, sir, that you can, by simply writing, stop this intrigue?'

The major did not answer. He was deep in thought.

'I shouldn't wonder if he did,' said Scoutbush, 'two to one on his baulking the plunger!'

'She is at Lord——'s now, at those silly private theatricals. Is he there?'

'No,' said Mellot, 'he tried hard for an invitation, stooped to work me and Selina. I believe she told him that she would sooner see him in the Morgue than help him, and he is gone to the moors now, I believe.'

'There is time, then. I will write to her to-night,' and Campbell took up his hat and went home to do it.

'Ah,' said Scoutbush, taking his cigar meditatively from his mouth, 'I wonder how he does it.' It's a gift, I always say, a wonderful gift! Before he has been a week in the house, he'll have the confidence of every woman in it—and 'gad, he does it by saying the rudest things!—and the confidence of all the youngsters the week after.'

'A somewhat dangerous gift,' said Elsley dryly.

'Ah, yes, he might play tricks if he chose. But there's the wonder, that he don't. I'd answer for him with my own sister. I do every day of my life—for I believe he knows how many pins she puts into her dress—and yet there he is. As I said once in the mess room—there was a youngster there who took on himself to be witty, and talked about the stull sow supping the milk the snail! You recollect him, Mellot? the attorney's son from Brompton, who sold out— we shaved his mustaches, put a bear in his bed, and sent him home to his ma. And he said that Major Campbell might be very pious, and all that—but he'd warrant—they were the fellow's own words—that he took his lark on the sly, like other men—the snail! so I told him, I was no better than the rest, and no more I am, but if any man dared to say that the major was not as honest as his own sister, I was his man at fifteen paces, and so I am, Claude.'

All which did not increase Elsley's love to the major, conscious as he was that Lucia's confidence was a thing which he had not wholly, and which it would be very dangerous to him for any other man to have at all.

Into the drawing-room they went. Frank Headley had been asked up to tea, and he stood at the piano, listening to Valentin's singing.

As they came in, the maid came in also. 'Mr Thurnall wished to speak to Major Campbell.'

Campbell went out, and returned in two minutes somewhat hurriedly.

'Mr Thurnall wishes Lord Scoutbush to be informed at once, and I think it is better that you should all know it—that it is a painful surprise but there is a man ill in the street, whose symptoms he does not like, he says.'

'Cholera?' said Elsley

'Call him in,' said Scoutbush

'He had rather not come in, he says.'

'What! is it infectious?'

'Certainly not, if it be cholera, but—'

'He don't wish to frighten people, quite right' (with a half glance at Elsley), 'but is it cholera, honestly?'

'I fear so'

'Oh, my children!' said poor Mrs Vavasour.

'Will five pounds help the poor fellow?' said Scoutbush.

'How far off is it?' asked Elsley.

'Unpleasantly near' I was going to advise you to move at once.'

'You hear what they are saying?' asked Valentin of Frank

'Yes, I hear it,' said Frank, in a quiet meaning tone

Valentin thought that he was half pleased with the news. Then she thought him afraid, for he did not stir.

'You will go instantly, of course?'

'Of course I shall Good-bye! Do not be afraid. It is not infectious.'

'Afraid? And a soldier's sister?' said Valentin, with a toss of her beautiful head, by way of giving force to her somewhat weak logic

Frank left the room instantly, and met Thurnall in the passage

'Well, Headley, it's here before we sent for it, as bad luck usually is'

'I know. Let me go! Where is it? Whose house?' asked Frank in an excited tone

'Humph!' said Thurnall, looking intently at him, 'that is just what I shall not tell you'

'Not tell me.'

'No, you are too pale, Headley Go back and get two or three glasses of wine, and then we will talk of it'

'What do you mean? I must go instantly! It is my duty—my parishioner!'

'Look here, Headley! Are you and I to work together in this business, or are we not?'

'Why not, in heaven's name?'

'Then I want you, not for cure, but for prevention. You can do them no good when they have once got it. You may prevent dozens from having it in the next four-and-twenty hours, if you will be guided by me'

'But my business is with their souls, Thurnall.'

'Exactly, to give them the consolations of religion, as they call it. You will give them to the people who have not taken it. You may bring them safe through it by simply keeping up their spirits, while if you waste your time on poor dying wretches—'

'Thurnall, you must not talk so! I will do all you ask: but my place is at the death-bed,

as well as elsewhere. These perishing souls are in my care'

'And how do you know, pray, that they are perishing?' answered Tom, with something very like a sneer 'And if they were, do you honestly believe that any talk of yours can change in five minutes character which has been forming for years, or prevent a man's going where he ought to go,—which, I suppose, is the place to which he deserves to go?'

'I do,' said Frank firmly

'Well It is a charitable and hopeful creed. My great dread was, lest you should kill the poor wretches before their time, by adding to the fear of cholera the fear of hell I caught the Methodist parson at that work an hour ago, took him by the shoulders and shot him out into the street. But, my dear Headley' (and Tom lowered his voice to a whisper), 'where-over poor Tom Beer deserved to go to, he is gone to it already He has been dead this twenty minutes.'

'Tom Beer dead? One of the finest fellows in the town! And I never sent for!'

'Don't speak so loud, or they will hear you I had no time to send for you, and if I had, I should not have sent, for he was past attending to you from the first. He brought it with him, I suppose, from C— Had had warnings for a week, and neglected them Now listen to me that man was but two hours ill, as sharp a case as I ever saw, even in the West Indies You must summon up all your good sense, and play the man for a fortnight, for it's coming on the poor souls like hell!' said Tom between his teeth, and stamped his foot upon the ground Frank had never seen him show so much feeling, he fancied he could see tears glistening in his eyes

'I will, so help me God!' said Frank

Tom held out his hand, and grasped Frank's

'I know you will You're all right at heart.

Only mind three things don't frighten them, don't tire yourself, don't go about on an empty stomach, and then we can face the worst like men And now go in, and say nothing to these people. If they take a panic, we shall have some of them down to-night as sure as fate. Go in, keep quiet, persuade them to bolt anywhere on earth by daylight to-morrow Then go home, eat a good supper, and come across to me, and if I'm out, I'll leave word where'

Frank went back again, he found Campbell, who had had his cue from Tom, urging immediate removal as strongly as he could, without declaring the extent of the danger. Valentin was for sending instantly for a fly to the nearest town, and going to stay at a watering-place some forty miles off Elsley was willing enough at heart, but hesitated, he knew not at the moment, poor fellow, where to find the money. His wife knew that she could borrow of Valentin; but she, too, was against the place. The cholera would be in the air for miles round. The journey in the hot sun would make the children sick and ill, and watering-place lodgings were such

horrid holes, never ventilated, and full of smells—people caught fevers at them so often. Valentia was inclined to treat this as 'mother's nonsense', but Major Campbell said gravely that Mrs. Vavasour was perfectly right as to fact, and her arguments full of sound reason, whereon Valentia said that 'of course if Lucia thought it, Major Campbell would prove it, and there was no arguing with such Solons as he—'

Which Elsley heard, and ground his teeth. Whereon little Scoutbush cried joyfully—

'I have it, why not go by sea? Take the yacht, and go! Where? Of course, I have it again. 'Pon my word, I'm growing clever, Valentia, in spite of all your prophecies. Go up the Welsh coast. Nothing so healthy and airy as a sea voyage—sea as smooth as a mill-pond, too, and likely to be. And then land, if you like, at Port Madoc, as I meant to do, and there are my rooms at Boddelegert lying empty. Engaged then a week ago, thinking I should be there by now, so you may as well keep them aired for me. Come, Valentia, pack up your millinery! Lucia, get the cradles ready, and we'll have them all on board by twelve. Capital plan, Vavasour, isn't it? and, by Jove, what stunning poetry you will write there under Snowdon!'

'But will you not want your rooms yourself, Lord Scoutbush?' said Elsley.

'My dear fellow, never mind me. I shall go across the country, I think, see an old friend, and get some otter-hunting. Don't think of me till you're there, and then send the yacht back for me. She must be doing something, you know, and the men are only getting drunk every day here. Come—no arguing about it, or I shall turn you all out of doors into the lane, eh!'

And the little fellow laughed so good-naturedly that Elsley could not help liking him, and feeling that he would be both a fool, and cruel to his family, if he refused so good an offer, he gave in to the scheme, and went out to arrange matters while Scoutbush went out into the hall with Campbell, and scrambled into his pea-jacket, to go off to the yacht that moment.

'You'll see to them, there's a good fellow,' as they lighted their cigars at the door. 'That Vavasour is greener than grass, you know, tant pis for my poor sister.'

'I am not going.'

'Not going!'

'Certainly not, so my rooms will be at their service, and you had much better escort them yourself. It will be much less disagreeable for Vavasour, who knows nothing of commanding sailors,' or himself, thought the major, 'than finding himself master of your yacht in your absence, and you will get your fishing as you intended.'

'But why are you going to stay!'

'Oh, I have not half done with the sea-beasts here. I found two new ones yesterday.'

'Quaint old beetle-hunter you are, for a man

who has fought in half a dozen battles!' and Scoutbush walked on silently for five minutes.

Suddenly he broke out—

'I cannot! By George, I cannot, and what's more, I won't!'

'What?'

'Run away. It will look so—so cowardly, and there's the truth of it, before those fine fellows down there, and just as I am come among them, too! The commander-in-chief to turn tail at the first shot! Though I can't be of any use, I know, and I should have liked a fortnight's fishing so,' said he in a dolorous voice, 'before going to be eaten up with flies at Varna—for this Crimean expedition is all moonshine.'

'Don't be too sure of that,' said Campbell. 'We shall go, and some of us who go will never come back, freely. I know those Russians better than many, and I have been talking them over lately with Thurnall, who has been in their service.'

'Has he been at Sevastopol?'

'No. Almost the only place on earth where he has not been—but from all he says, and from all I know, we are undervaluing our foes, as usual, and shall smart for it!'

'We'll lick them, never fear!'

'Yes, but not at the first round. Scoutbush, your life has been child's play as yet. You are going now to see life in earnest,—the sort of life which average people have been living, in every age and country, since Adam's fall, a life of sorrow and danger, tears and blood, mistake, confusion, and perplexity, and you will find it a very new sensation, and, at first, a very ugly one. All the more reason for doing what good deeds you can before you go, for you may have no time left to do any on the other side of the sea.'

Scoutbush was silent awhile.

'Well, I'm afraid of nothing, I hope. Only I wish one could meet this cholera face to face, as one will those Russians, with a good sword in one's hand, and a good horse between one's knees, and have a chance of giving him what he brings, instead of being kicked off by the cowardly Rocket, no one knows how, and not even from behind a turf dyke, but out of the very clouds.'

'So we all say, in every battle, Scoutbush. Who ever sees the man who sent the bullet through him? And yet we fight on. Do you not think the greatest terror, the only real terror, in any battle, is the chance shots which come from no one knows where, and hit no man can guess whom? If you go to the Crimea, as you will, you will feel what I felt at the Cape, and Cabul, and the Punjab, twenty times,—the fear of dying like a dog, one knew not how.'

'And yet I'll fight, Campbell!'

'Of course you will, and take your chance. Do so now!'

'By Jove, Campbell—I always say it—you're the most sensible man I ever met, and, by

Jove, the doctor comes the next. My sister shall have the yacht, and I'll go up to Penalva.'

'You will do two good deeds at once, then,' said the major. 'You will do what is right, and you will give heart to many a poor wretch here. Believe me, Scoutbush, you will never repent of this.'

'By Jove, it always does one good to hear you talk in that way, Campbell! One feels—I don't know—so much of a man when one is with you, not that I shan't take uncommonly good care of myself, old fellow, that is but fair—but as for running away, as I said, why—why—why, I can't, and so I won't.'

'By the bye,' said the major, 'there is one thing which I have forgotten, and which they will never recollect. In the yacht victualled—with fresh meat and green stuff, I mean!'

'Whow—w—'

'I will go back, borrow a lantern, and forage in the garden, like an old campaigner. I have cut a salad with my sword before now.'

'And made it in your helmet, with macassar sauce!' And the two went their ways.

Meanwhile, before they had left the room, a notable conversation had been going on between Valentia and Headley.

Headley had re-entered the room so much paler than he went out, that everybody noticed his altered looks. Valentia chose to attribute them to fear.

'So! Are you returned from the sick man already, Mr Headley?' asked she, in a marked tone.

'I have been forbidden by the doctor to go near him at present, Miss St Just,' said he quietly, but in a sort of under voice, which hinted that he wished her to ask no more questions. A shade passed over her forehead, and she began chatting rather noisily to the rest of the party, till Elsie, her brother, and Campbell went out.

Valentia looked up at him, expecting him to go too. Mrs Vavasour began bustling about the room, collecting little valuables, and looking over her shoulders at the now unwelcome guest. But Frank leant back in a cosy arm-chair, and did not stir. His hands were clasped on his knees, he seemed lost in thought, very pale but there was a firm set look about his lips which attracted Valentia's attention. Once he looked up in Valentia's face, and saw that she was looking at him. A flush came over his cheeks for a moment, and then he seemed as unpassive as ever. What could he want there? How very gauché and rufé of him, so unlike him, too! And she said, civilly enough, to him, 'I fear, Mr Headley, we must begin packing up now.'

'I fear you must, indeed,' answered he, as if starting from a dream. He spoke in a tone, and with a look, which made both the women start, for what they meant it was impossible to doubt.

'I fear you must. I have foreseen it a long time; and so, I fear' (and he rose from his

seat), 'must I, unless I mean to be very rude. You will at least take away with you the knowledge that you have given to one person's existence, at least for a few weeks, pleasure more intense than he thought earth could hold.'

'I trust that pretty compliment was meant for me,' said Lucia, half playful, half reproving.

'I am sure that it ought not to have been meant for me,' said Valentia, more downright than her sister. 'Both could see for whom it was meant, by the look of passionate worship which Frank fixed on a face which, after all, seemed made to be worshipped.'

'I trust that neither of you,' answered he quietly, 'think me impertinent enough to pretend to make love, as it is called, to Miss St Just. I know who she is, and who I am. Gentleman as I am, and the descendant of gentlemen' (and Frank looked a little proud, as he spoke, and very handsome), 'I see clearly enough the great gulf fixed between us, and I like it, for it enables me to say truth which I otherwise dare not have spoken, as a brother might say it to a sister, or a subject to a queen. Either analogy will do equally well, and equally ill.'

Frank, without the least intending it, had taken up the very strongest military position. Let a man once make a woman understand, or fancy, that he knows that he is nothing to her, and confess boldly that there is a great gulf fixed between them, which he has no mind to bridge over, and then there is little that he may not say or do, for good or for evil.

And therefore it was that Lucia answered gently, 'I am sure you are not well, Mr Headley. The excitement of the night has done too much for you.'

'Do I look excited, my dear madam?' he answered quietly, 'I assure you that I am as calm as a man must be who believes that he has but a few days to live, and trusts, too, that when he dies, he will be infinitely happier than he has ever been on earth, and lay down an office which he has never discharged otherwise than ill, which has been to him a constant source of shame and sorrow.'

'Do not speak so!' said Valentia, with her Irish impetuous generosity, 'you are unjust to yourself. We have watched you, felt for you, honoured you, even when we differed from you.'—What more she would have said, I know not, but at that moment Elsie's peevish voice was heard calling over the stairs, 'Lucia! Lucia!'

'Oh dear! He will wake the children!' cried Lucia, looking at her sister, as much as to say, 'how can I leave you?'

'Run, run, my dear creature!' said Valentia, with a self-confident smile, and the two were left alone.

The moment that Mrs Vavasour quitted the room there vanished from Frank's face that intense look of admiration which had made even Valentia uneasy. He dropped his eyes, and his voice faltered as he spoke again. He acknowledged the change in their position, and Valentia

saw that he did so, and liked him the better for it.

'I shall not repeat, Miss St Just, now that we are alone, what I said just now of the pleasure which I have had during the last month. I am not poetical, or given to strong metaphors together, and I could hardly go over the same dull words once more. But I could ask, if I were not asking too much, leave to prolong at least a shadow of that pleasure to the last moment. That I shall die shortly, and of this cholera, is with me a fixed idea, which nothing can remove. No, madam—it is useless to combat it! But had I anything, by which to the last moment I could bring back to my fancy what has been its sunlight for so long, even if it were a scrap of the hem of your garment, ay, a grain of dust off your feet—God forgive me! He and His mercy ought to be enough to keep me up—but one's weakness may be excused for clinging to such slight floating straws of comfort.'

Valentia paused, startled, and yet affected. How she had played with this deep pure heart! And yet, was it true? Did he wish, by exciting her pity, to trick her into giving him what he might choose to consider a token of affection?

And she answered, coldly enough—

'I should be sorry, after what you have just said, to chance hurting you by refusing. I put it to your own good feeling—have you not asked somewhat too much?'

'Certainly too much, madam, in any common case,' said he, quite unmoved. 'Certainly too much, if I asked you for it, as I do not, as the token of an affection which I know well you do not, cannot feel. But—take my words as they stand—were you to—it would be returned if I die, in a few weeks, and returned still sooner if I live. And, madam,' said he, lowering his voice, 'I vow to you, before Him who sees us both, that, as far as I am concerned, no human being shall ever know of this fact.'

Frank had at last touched the wrong chord.

'What, Mr Headley? Can you think that I am to have secrets in common with you, or with any other man? No, sir! If I granted your request, I should avow it as openly as I shall refuse it.'

And she turned sharply toward the door.

Frank Headley was naturally a shy man, but extreme need sometimes bestows on shy ones a miraculous readiness—(oh, why, in the long run, do the shy men win the best wives? which is a fact, and may be proved by statistics, at least as well as anything else can) so he quietly stepped to Valentia's side, and said in a low voice—

'You cannot avow the refusal half as proudly as I shall avow the request, if you will but wait till your sister's return. Both are unnecessary, I think: but it will only be an honour to me to confess that, poor curate as I am—'

'Hush!' and Valentia walked quietly up to the table, and began turning over the leaves of a book, to gain time for her softened heart and puzzled brain.

In five minutes Frank was beside her again. The book was Tompkins's *Princess*. She had wandered—who can tell why?—to that last exquisite scene, which all know, and as Valentia read, Frank quietly laid a finger on the book, and arrested her eyes at last.

'If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,

Stoop down, and seem to kiss me ere I die!'

Valentia shut the book up hurriedly and angrily. A moment after she had made up her mind what to do, and with the slightest gesture in the world, motioned Frank proudly and coldly to follow her back into the window. Had she been a country girl, she would have avoided the ugly matter, but she was a woman of the world enough to see that she must, for her own sake and his, talk it out reasonably.

'What do you mean, Mr Headley? I must ask! You told me just now that you had no intention of making love to me.'

'I told you the truth,' said he, in his quiet impassive voice. 'I fixed on these lines as a *pis aller*, and they have done all, and more than I wished, by bringing you back here for at least a moment.'

'And do you suppose—you speak like a rational man, therefore I must treat you as one that I can grant your request?'

'Why not? It is an uncommon one. If I have guessed your character aright, you are able to do uncommon things. Had I thought you enslaved by etiquette, and by the fear of a world which you can make bow at your feet if you will, I should not have asked you. But' and here his voice took a tone of deepest earnestness—'grant it only grant it, and you shall never repent it. Never, never, never will I cast one shadow over a light which has been so glorious, so life-giving, which I watched with delight, and yet love without regret. Go your way, and God be with you! I go mine, grant me but a fortnight's happiness, and then let what will come!'

He had conquered. The quiet earnestness of the voice, the child-like simplicity of the manner, of which every word conveyed the most delicate flattery—yet, she could see, without intending to flatter, without an afterthought—all these had won the imperious Irish nature. For all the dukes and marquises in Belgrave she would not have done it, for they would have meant more than they said, even when they spoke more charmingly; but for the plain country curate she hesitated, and asked herself, 'What shall I give him?'

The rose from her bosom? No. That was too significant at once, and too commonplace, besides, it might wither, and he find an excuse for not restoring it. It must be something valuable, stately, formal, which he must needs return. And she drew off a diamond hoop, and put it quietly into his hand.

'You promise to return it?'

'I promised long ago.'

He took it, and lifted it—she thought that he was going to press it to his lips. Instead, he put it to his forehead, bowing forward, and moved it slightly. She saw that he made with it the sign of the Cross.

'I thank you,' he said, with a look of quiet gratitude. 'I expected as much, when you came to understand my request. Again, thank you!' and he drew back humbly, and left her there alone, while her heart smote her bitterly for all the foolish encouragement which she had given to one so tender, and humble, and delicate and true.

And so did Frank Headley get what he wanted, by that plain earnest simplicity, which has more power (let worldlings pride themselves as they will on their knowledge of women) than all the cunning wiles of the most experienced rake, and only by asking which, after all, can the rake conquer. It was a strange thing for Valentin to do, no doubt, but the strange things which are done in the world (which are some millions daily) are just what keep the world alive.

CHAPTER XVII

BAALZEBUB'S BANQUET

THE next day there were three cholera cases, the day after there were thirteen.

He had come at last, Baalzebub, god of flies, and of what flies are bred from, to visit his self-blinded worshippers, and bestow on them his own Cross of the Legion of Dishonour. He had come suddenly, capriciously, sportively, as he sometimes comes, as he had come to Newcastle the summer before, while yet the rest of England was untouched. He had wandered all but harmless about the West-country that summer, as if his maw had been full glutted five years before, when he sat for many a week upon the Dartmoor hills, amid the dull brown haze, and sunburnt bents, and dried-up water-courses of white dusty granite, looking far and wide over the plague-struck land, and listening to the dead-bell booming all day long in Tavistock churchyard. But he was come at last, with appetite more fierce than ever, and had darted aside to seize on Aberlona, and not to let it go till he had sucked his fill.

And all men moved about the streets slowly, fearfully, conscious of some awful unseen presence, which might spring on them from round every corner, some dreadful inevitable spell, which lay upon them like a nightmare weight; and walked to and fro warily, looking anxiously into each other's faces, not to ask, 'How are you?' but 'How am I?' 'Do I look as if—?' and glanced up ever and anon restlessly, as if they expected to see, like the Greeks, in their tainted camp by Troy, the pitiless Sun-god shooting his keen arrows down on beast and man.

All night long the curdled cloud lay low upon

the hills, wrapping in its hot blanket the sweltering breathless town, and rolled off suddenly when the sun rose high, to let him pour down his glare, and quicker into evil life all evil things. For Baalzebub is a sunny fiend, and loves not storm and tempest, thunder, and lashing rains, but the dead bright sun, and broad blue sky, under which he can take his pastime merrily, and laugh at all the shame and agony below, and, as he did at his great banquet in New Orleans once, madden all hearts the more by the contrast between the pure heaven above and the foul hell below.

And up and down the town the foul fiend sported, now here, now there, snapping daintily at unexpected victims, as if to make confusion worse confounded, to belie Thurnall's theories and prognostics, and harden the hearts of fools by fresh excuses for believing that he had nothing to do with drains and water, that he was 'only'—such an only—the Visitation of God.

He has taken old Beer's second son, and now he clutches at the old man himself, then across the street to Gentleman Jan, his eldest; but he is driven out from both houses by chloride of lime and pat dust, and the colony of the Beers has peace awhile.

Alas! there are victims enough and to spare beside them, too ready for the sacrifice, and up the main street he goes unabashed, springing in at one door and at another, on either side of the street, but fondest of the western side, where the hill slopes steeply down to the house-backs.

He fleshes his teeth on every kind of prey. The drunken cobbler dies, of course, but spotless cleanliness and sobriety does not save the mother of seven children, who has been soaking her brick floor daily with water from a poisoned well, deſtined where she meant to clean. Youth does not save the buxom lass, who has been filling herself, as girls will do, with unripe fruit, nor innocence the two fair children who were sailing their feather-boats yesterday in the quay-pools, as they have sailed them for three years past, and found no hurt, pity does not save the bedridden old dame, bedridden in the lean-to garret, who moans, 'It is the Lord!' and dies. It is 'the Lord' to her, though Baalzebub himself be the angel of release.

And yet all the while sots and fools escape where wise men fall, weakly women, living amid all wretchedness, nurse, unharmed, strong men who have breathed fresh air all day. Of one word of Scripture at least Baalzebub is mindful, for 'one is taken and another left.'

Still, there is a method in his seeming madness. His eye falls on a blind alley, running back from the main street, backed at the upper end by a high wall of rock. There is a Godsend for him—a devil's-send, rather, to speak plain truth; and in he dashes; and never leaves that court, let brave Tom wrestle with him as he may, till he has taken one from every house.

That court belonged to Treluddra, the old

fish-jowder. He must do something. Thurnall attacks him, Major Campbell, Headley, the neighbours join in the cry, for there is no mistaking cause and effect there, and no one bears a great love to him, besides, terrified and conscience-stricken men are glad of a scape-goat, and some of those who were his stoutest backers in the vestry are now, in their terror, the londest against him, ready to impute the whole cholera to him. Indeed, old Bear is ready to declare that it was Treluddra's fish-heaps which poisoned him and his, so, all but mobbed, the old sinner goes up—to set the houses to rights! No, to curse the whole lot for a set of jugs, and order them to clean the place out themselves, or he will turn them into the street. He is one of those base natures, whose fact only lashes into greater fury—a Pharos whose heart the Lord himself can only harden, such men there are, and women, too, grown gray in lies, to reap at last the fruit of lies. But he carries back with him to his fish-heaps a little invisible somewhat which he did not bring, and ere nightfall he is dead hideously, he, his wife, his son, and now the Beers are down again, and the whole neighbourhood of Treluddra's house is wild with disgusting agony.

Now the fiend is hovering round the fish-curing houses, but turns back, disgusted with the pure scent of the bayard, where not hides, but nets are baked, skips on board of a brig in the quay-pool, and a poor collier's prentice dies, and goes to his own place. What harm has he done? Is it his sin that, ill-fed and well-beaten daily, he has been left to sleep on board, just opposite the sewer's mouth, in a berth some four feet long by two feet high and broad?

Or is it that poor girl's sin who was just now in Heale's shop, talking to Miss Heale safe and sound, that she is carried back into it, in half an hour's time, fainting, shrieking? One must draw a veil over the too hideous details.

No, not her fault, but there, at least, the curse has not come without a cause. For she is Tardrew's daughter.

But whither have we got, How long has the cholera been in Aberslva? Five days, five minutes, or five years? How many sins have risen and set since Frank Headley put into his bosom Valentia's pledge?

It would be hard for him to tell, and hard for many more, for all the days have passed as in a fever dream. To cowards the time has seemed endless, and every moment, ere their term shall come, an age of terror, of self-reproach, of superstitious prayers and cries, which are not repentance. And to some cowards, too, the days have seemed but as a moment, for they have been drunk day and night.

Strange and hideous, yet true.

It has now become a mere commonplace, the strange power which great crises, pestilences, famines, revolutions, invasions, have to call out in their highest power, for evil and for good alike, the passions and virtues of man, how,

during their stay, the most desperate recklessness, the most atrocious crime, side by side with the most heroic and unexpected virtue, are followed generally by a collapse and a moral death, alike of virtue and of vice. We should explain this nowadays, and not ill, by saying that these crises put the human mind into a state of exaltation, but the truest explanation, after all, lies in the old Bible belief, that in those times there goes abroad the unquenchable fire of God, literally kindling up all men's hearts to the highest activity, and showing, by the light of their own strange deeds, the inmost recesses of their spirits, till those spirits burn down again, self-consumed, while the chaff and stubble are left as ashes, not valueless after all, as manure for some future crop, and the pure gold, if gold there be, alone remains behind.

Even so it was in Aberslva during that fearful week. The drunkards drank more, the swearers swore more than ever, the unjust shopkeeper clutched more greedily than ever at the few last scraps of mean gain which remained for him this side the grave, the selfish wrapped themselves up more brutally than ever in selfishness, the shameless women mingled desperate debauchery with fits of frantic superstition, and all base souls cried out together, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!'

But many a brave man and many a weary woman possessed their souls in patience, and worked on, and found that as their day their strength should be. And to them the days seemed short indeed, for there was too much to be done in them for any vote of time.

Headley and Campbell, Grace and oh! Willis, and last, but not least, Tom Thurnall, these and three or four brave women organised themselves into a right gallant and well-disciplined band, and commenced at once a visitation from house to house, saving thereby, doubtless, many a life, but ere eight-and-forty hours were passed, the house visitation languished. It was as much as they could do to attend to the acute cases.

And little Scoutbush? He could not nurse, nor doctor, but what he could, he did. He bought and fetched all that money could procure. He galloped over to the justices, and obtained such summary powers as he could; and then, like a true Irishman, exceeded them recklessly, breaking into premises right and left, in an utterly burglarious fashion, he organised his fatigue-party, as he called them, of scavengers, and paid the cowardly clod five shillings a day each to work at removing all removable nuisances, he walked up and down the streets for hours, giving the sailors cigars from his own case, just to show them that he was not afraid, and therefore they need not be; and if it was somewhat his fault that the horse was stolen, he at least did his best after the event to shut the stable-door. The five real workers toiled on, meanwhile, in perfect harmony and implicit obedience to the all-knowing Tom, but with the most different inward feelings. Four

of them seemed to forget death and danger, but each remoulded them in his own fashion.

Major Campbell longed to die, and courted death. Frank believed that he should die, and was ready for death. Grace longed to die, but knew that she should not die till she had found Tom's belt, and was content to wait. Wilks was of opinion that an 'old man must die some day, and somehow,—as good one way as another', and all his concern was to run about after his maid, seeing that she did not tire herself, and obeying all his orders with sailor-like precision and cleverness.

And Tom? He just thought nothing about death and danger at all. Always smiling, always cheerful, always busy, yet never in a hurry; he went up and down, seemingly ubiquitous. Sleep he got when he could, and food as often as he could, into the sea his leap, morning and night, and came out fresher every time, the only person in the town who seemed to grow healthier, and actually happier, as the work went on.

'You really must be careful of yourself,' said Campbell at last. 'You carry no claimed life.'

'My dear sir, I am the most cautious and selfish man in the town. I am living by rule. I have got—and what greater pleasure?—a good stand-up fight with an old enemy, and be sure I shall keep myself in condition for it. I have written off for help to the Board of Health, and I shall not be shoved against the ropes till the government man comes down.'

'And then?'

'I shall go to bed and sleep for a month. Never mind me, but mind yourself—and mind that curate, he's a noble lunk—if all persons in England were like him, I'd What's here now?'

Miss Heale came shrieking down the street.

'Oh, Mr Thurnall! Miss Tardrow! Miss Tardrow!'

'Screaming will only make you ill, too, miss. Where is Miss Tardrow?'

'In the surgery,—and my mother!'

'I expected this,' said Tom. 'The old man will go next.'

He went into the surgery. The poor girl was in collapse already. Mrs. Heale was lying on the sofa, stricken. The old man hanging over her, brandy bottle in hand.

'Put away that trash!' cried Tom, 'you've had too much already.'

'Oh, Mr Thurnall, she's dying, and I shall do too!'

'You! you were all right this morning.'

'But I shall die; I know I shall, and go to hell!'

'You'll go where you ought—and if you give way to this miserable cowardice, you'll go soon enough. Walk out, sir! Make yourself of some use, and forget your fear! Leave Mrs. Heale to me.'

The wretched old man obeyed him, utterly cowed, and went out, but not to be of use—he had been hopelessly boozy from the first—half

to fortify his body against infection, half to fortify his heart against conscience. Tom had never reproached him for his share in the public folly. Indeed Tom had never reproached a single soul. Poor wretches who had insulted him had sent for him with angry shrieks. 'Oh, doctor, doctor, save me! Oh, forgive me! oh, if I'd minded what you said! Oh, don't think of what I said!' And Tom had answered cheerfully, 'Tut-tut, never mind what might have been, let's feel your pulse.'

But though Tom did not reproach Heale, Heale reproached himself. He had just conscience enough left to feel the whole weight of his abused responsibility, exaggerated and stilled by superstitious horror, and muddled tipsy, he wandered about the street, moaning that he had murdered his wife, and all the town, and asking pardon of every one he met, till seeing one of the meeting-houses open, he staggered in, in the vague hope of comfort which he knew he did not deserve.

In half an hour Tom was down the street again to Healey's. 'Where is Miss Harvey?'

'At the Beers.'

'She must go up to Heale's instantly. The mother will die. Those cases of panto seldom recover. And Miss Heale may very likely follow her. She has shrieked and sobbed herself into it, poor fool! and Grace must go to her at once, she may bring her to common sense and courage, and that is the only chance.'

Grace went, and literally talked and prayed Miss Heale into life again.

'You are an angel,' said Tom to her that very evening, when he found the girl past danger.

'Mr Thurnall!' said Grace, in a tone of sad and most meaning reproof.

'But you are! And these owls are not worthy of you.'

'This is no time for such language, sir! After all, what am I doing more than you?' And Grace went upstairs again, with a cold hard countenance which belied utterly the heart within.

That was the critical night of all. The disease seemed to have done its worst in the likeliest spots, but cases of panto increased all the afternoon, and the gross number was greater than ever.

Tom did not delay inquiring into the cause, and he discovered it. Healey, coming out the next morning, after two hours' fitful sleep, met him at the gate, his usual business-like trot was exchanged for a fierce and hurried stamp. When he saw Frank, he stopped short, and burst out into a story which was hardly intelligible, so interlarded was it with oaths.

'For Heaven's sake! Thurnall, calm yourself, and do not swear so frightfully, it is so unlike you! What can have upset you thus?'

'Why should I not curse and swear in this street,' gasped he, 'while every fellow who calls himself a preacher is allowed to do it in the pulpit with impunity? Fine him five shillings for every curse, as you might, if people had

courage and common sense, and then complain of me! I am a fool, I know, though. But I cannot stand it! To have all my work undone by a brutal ignorant fanatic! It is too much! Here, if you will believe it, are those preaching follows getting up a revival, or some such invention, just to make money out of the cholera! They have got down a great gun from the county town. Twice a day they are preaching at them, telling them that it is all God's wrath against their sins, that it is impious to interfere, and that I am fighting against God, and the end of the world is coming, and they and the devil only know what. If I meet one of them, I'll wring his neck, and be hanged for it! O you parsons! you parsons! and Tom ground his teeth with rage.

'Is it possible! How did you find this out?'

'Mrs. Heale had been in, listening to their howling, just before she was taken. Heale went in when I turned him out of doors came home raving mad, and is all but blind now. Three cases of women have I had this morning, all frightened into cholera, by their own confession, by last night's tomfoolery. Came home howling, faint, and were taken before morning. One is dead, the other two will die. You must stop it, or I shall have half a dozen more to-night! Go into the meeting, and curse the cur to his face!'

'I cannot,' cried Frank, with a gesture of despair, 'I cannot!'

'Ah, your cloth forbids you, I suppose, to enter the nonconformist opposition shop!'

'You are unjust, Thurnall! What are such rules at a moment like this! I'd break them, and the bishop would hold me guiltless. But I cannot speak to these people. I have no eloquence—no readiness—they do not trust me—would not believe me—God help me!' and Frank covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears.

'Not that, for Heaven's sake!' said Tom, 'or we shall have you blind next, my good fellow. I'd go myself, but they'd not hear me, for certain, I am no Christian, I suppose, at least, I can't talk their slang—but I know who can! We'll send Campbell!'

Frank hailed the suggestion with rapture, and away they went, but they had an hour's good march from sufferer to sufferer before they found the major.

He heard them quietly. A severe gloom settled over his face. 'I will go,' said he.

At six o'clock that evening the meeting-house was filling with terrified women and half-curious, half-sneering men, and among them the tall figure of Major Campbell, in his undress uniform (which he had put on, wisely, to give a certain dignity to his mission), stalked in, and took his seat in the back benches.

The sermon was what he expected. There is no need to transcribe it. Such discourses may be heard often enough in churches as well as chapels. The preacher's object seemed to be—for some purpose or other which we have no right

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to judge—to excite in his hearers the utmost intensity of selfish fear, by language which certainly, as Tom had said, came under the law against profane cursing and swearing. He described the next world in language which seemed a strange jumble of Virgil's *Æneid*, the Koran, the dreams of those rabbi's who crucified our Lord, and of those mediæval inquisitors who tried to convert sinners (and on their own ground, neither illogically nor over-harshly) by making this world for a few hours as like as possible to what, so they held, God was going to make the world to come for ever.

At last he stopped suddenly, when he saw that the animal excitement was at the very highest, and called on all who felt 'convinced' to come forward and confess their sins.

In another minute there would have been (as there have been ere now) four or five young girls raving and tossing upon the floor, in mad terror and excitement, or, possibly, half the congregation might have rushed out (as a congregation has rushed out ere now) headed by the preacher himself, and ran headlong down to the quay-pool, with shrieks and shouts, declaring that they had cast the devil out of Betsy Peunington, and were hunting him into the sea, but Campbell saw that the madness must be stopped at once, and rising, he thundered, in a voice which brought all to their senses in a moment—

'Stop! I, too, have a sermon to preach to you, I trust I am a Christian man, and that not of last year's making, or the year before. Follow me, outside, if you be rational beings, and let me tell you the truth—God's truth! Men!' he said, with an emphasis on the word, 'you, at least, will give me a fair hearing, and you too, modest married women! Leave that fellow with the shameless hussies who like to go into fits at his feet!'

The appeal was not in vain. The soberer majority followed him out, the insane minority soon followed, in the mere hope of fresh excitement, while the preacher was fain to come also, to guard his flock from the wolf. Campbell sprang upon a large block of stone, and taking off his cap, opened his mouth, and spoke unto them.

Readers will doubtless desire to hear what Major Campbell said, but they will be disappointed, and perhaps it is better for them that they should be. Let each of them, if they think it worth while, write for themselves a discourse fitting for a Christian man, who loved and honoured his Bible too much to find in a few scattered texts, all misinterpreted, and some mistranslated, excuses for denying fact, reason, common justice, the voice of God in his own moral sense, and the whole remainder of the Bible from beginning to end.

Whatever words he spoke, they came home to those wild hearts with power. And when he paused, and looked intently into the faces of his auditory, to see what effect he was producing,

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a murmur of assent and admiration rose from the crowd, which had now swelled to half the population of the town. And no wonder, no wonder that, as the men were enthralled by the matter, so were the women by the manner. The grand head, like a gray granite peak against the clear blue sky, the tall figure, with all its martial stateliness and ease, the gesture of his long arm, so graceful, and yet so self-restrained, the tones of his voice, which poured from beneath that proud moustache, now tender as a girl's, now ringing like a trumpet over roof and sea. There were old men there, old beyond the years of man, who said they had never seen or heard the like; but it must be like what their fathers had told them of, when John Wesley, on the cliffs of St. Ives, out-thundered the thunder of the gale. A To Grace he seemed one of the old Scotch Covenanters of whom she had read, risen from the dead to preach there from his rock beneath the great temple of God's air, a wider and a purer creed than theirs. Frank drew Thurnall's arm through his, and whispered, 'I shall thank you for this to my dying day' but Thurnall held down his head. He seemed deeply moved. At last, half to himself—

'Humph! I believe that between this man and that girl you will make a Christian even of me some day!'

But the hush was only for a moment. For Major Campbell, looking round, discerned among the crowd the preacher, whispering and howling amid a knot of women, and a sudden lit of righteous wrath came over him.

'Stand out there, sir, you preacher, and look me in the face, if you can!' thundered he. 'We are here on common ground as free men, beneath God's heaven and God's eye. Stand out, sir, and answer me if you can, or be for ever silent!'

Half in unconscious obedience to the soldier-like word of command, half in jealous rage, the preacher stepped forward, gasping for breath.

'Don't listen to him! He is a messenger of Satan sent to damn you—a lying prophet! Let the Lord judge between me and him! Stop your ears—a messenger of Satan—a Jesuit in disguise!'

'You ho, and you know that you ho!' answered Campbell, twining slowly his long moustache, as he always did when choking down indignation. 'But you have called on the Lord to judge, so do I. Listen to me, sir! Dare you, in the presence of God, answer for the words which you have spoken this day?'

A strange smile came over the preacher's face.

'I read my title clear, sir, to mansions in the skies. Well for you if you could do the same.'

Was it only the setting sun, or was it some inner light from the depths of that great spirit, which shone out in all his countenance, and filled his eyes with awful inspiration, as he spoke, in a voice calm and sweet, sad and regretful, and yet terrible from the slow distinctness of every vowel and consonant?

'Mansions in the skies? You need not wait till then, sir, for the presence of God. Now, here, you and I are before God's judgment-seat. Now, here, I call on you to answer to Him for the innocent lives which you have endangered and destroyed, for the innocent souls to whom you have slandered their heavenly Father by your devil's doctrines this day! You have said it. Let the Lord judge between you and me. He knows best how to make His judgment manifest.'

He bowed his head awhile, as if overcome by the awful words which he had uttered, almost in spite of himself, and then stepped slowly down from the stone, and passed through the crowd, which reverently made way for him, while many voices cried, 'Thank you, sir! Thank you!' and old Captain Willis, stepping forward, held out his hand to him, a quiet pride in his gray eye.

'You will not refuse an old fighting man's thanks, sir! This has been like Elijah's day with Baal's priests on Carmel.'

Campbell shook his head in silence but turned suddenly, for another and a coarser voice caught his ear. It was Jones, the lieutenant's.

'And now, my lady, take the Methodist parson, neck and heels, and leave him into the quay-pool, to think over his ammonitions!'

Campbell went back instantly. 'No, my dear sir, let me entre it you for my sake. What has passed has been too terrible to me already; if it has done any good, do not let us spoil it by breaking the law.'

'I believe you're right, sir—but my blood is up, and no wonder. Why, where is the preacher?'

He had stood quite still for several minutes after Campbell's adjuration. He had often, perhaps, himself limited forth such words in the excitement of preaching, but never before had he heard them pronounced in spirit and in truth. And as he stood, Thurnall, who had his doctor's eye on him, saw him turn paler and more pale. Suddenly he clenched his teeth and stooped slightly forwards for a moment, drawing his breath. Thurnall walked quickly and steadily up to him.

Gentleman Ian and two other rustous fellows had already laid hold of him, more with the intention of frightening than of really ducking him.

'Don't! don't!' cried he, looking round with eyes wild—but not with terror.

'Hands off, my good lady,' said Tom quietly. 'This is my business now, not yours, I can tell you.'

And passing the preacher's arm through his own, with a serious face, Tom led him off into the house at the back of the chapel.

In two hours more he was blue, in four he was a corpse. The judgment, as usual, had needed no miracle to enforce it.

Tom went to Campbell that night, and apprised him of the fact. 'Those words of yours went through him, sir, like a Minnie bullet. I was

afraid of what could happen when I heard them.'

'So was I, the moment after they were spoken. But, sir, I felt a power upon me—you may think it a fancy—that there was no resisting.'

'I dare impute no fancies, when I hear such truth and reason as you speak upon that stone, sir.'

'Then you do not blame me?' asked Campbell, with a subdued, almost deprecatory voice, such as Thimnall had never heard in him before.

'The man deserved to die, and he died, sir. It is well that there are some means left on earth of punishing offenders whom the law cannot touch.'

'It is an awful responsibility.'

'Not more awful than killing a man in battle, which we both have done, sir, and yet have felt no sting of conscience.'

'An awful responsibility still. Yet what else is life made up of, from morn to night, but of deeds which may earn heaven or hell?'

Well, as he did to others, so was it done to him. God forgive him! At least, one cause will be soon tried and judged: there is little fear of my not meeting him again soon enough. And Campbell, with a sad smile, lay back in his chair and was silent.

'My dear sir,' said Tom, 'allow me to remind you, after this excitement comes a collapse and that is not to be trifled with just now. Medicate I dare not give you. Food I must.'

Campbell shook his head.

'You must go now, my dear fellow. It is now half past ten, and I will be at Pennington's at one o'clock, to see how he goes on, so you need not go there. And, meanwhile, I must take a little medicine.'

'Major, you are not going to do for yourself?' cried Tom.

'There is a certain medicine called prayer, Mr Thimnall—an old specific for the heart-ache, as you will find one day—which I have been neglecting much of late, and which I must return to in earnest before midnight. Good-bye, God bless and keep you!'

And the major retired to his bedroom, and did not stir off his knees for two full hours. After which he went to Pennington's, and thence somewhere else, and Tom met him at four o'clock that morning nursing mind unspeakable horrors, quiet, genial, almost cheerful.

'You are a man,' said Tom to himself, 'and I fancy at times something more than a man, more than me at least.'

Tom was right in his fear that after exertment would come collapse, but wrong as to the person to whom it would come. When he arrived at the surgery door, Headley stood waiting for him.

'Anything fresh? Have you seen the Healer?'

'I have been praying with them. Don't be frightened. I am not likely to forget the lesson of this afternoon.'

'Then go to bed. It is full twelve o'clock.'

'Not yet, I hear. I want you to see old Willis. All is not right.'

'Ah! I thought the poor dear old man would kill himself. He has been working too hard, and presuming on his sailor's power of tumbling in and taking a dog's nap whenever he chose.'

'I have warned him again and again. But he was working so magnificently, that one had hardly heart to stop him. And beside, nothing would part him from his mind.'

'I don't wonder at that,' quoth Tom to himself. 'Is she with him?'

'No. He found himself ill, shipped home on some pretence, and will not hear of our tending him.'

'Noble old fellow! Caring for every one but himself to the last.' And they went in.

It was one of those rare cases, that, yet mortal, in which the person seems to seize the very centre of the life, and to preclude the chance of lingering torture, by one draining blow.

The old man lay paralysed, cold, pulseless, but quite collected and cheerful. Tom looked, inquired, shook his head, and called for a hot bath of salt and water.

'Warmth we must have somehow. Anything to keep the fire alight.'

'Why so, sir?' asked the old man. 'The fire's been flickering down this many a year. Why not let it go out quietly, at three-score years and ten? You're sure my mind don't know?'

They put him into his bath, and he revived a little.

'No, I am not going to get well, so don't you waste your time on me, sir. I'm taken while doing my duty, as I hoped to be. And I've lived to see my mind do hers, as I know she would, when the Lord called on her. I have—but don't tell her, she's well employed, and has sorrows enough already, some that you'll know of some day.'

'You must not talk,' quoth Tom, who guessed his meaning, and wished to avoid the subject.

'Yes, but I must, sir. I've no time to lose. If you'd but go and see after those poor Healers, and come again. I'd like to have one word with Mr Headley, and my time runs short.'

'A hunched, if you will,' said Frank.

'And now, sir,' when they were alone, 'only one thing, if you'll excuse an old sailor, and Willis tried vainly to make his usual salutation, but the cramped hand refused to obey, and a dying one too.'

'What is it?'

'Only don't be hard on the people, sir, the people here. They're good-hearted souls, with all their sins, if you'll only take them as you find them, and consider that they've had no chance.'

'Willis, Willis, don't talk of that! I shall be a wiser man henceforth, I trust. At least I shall not trouble Abernethy long.'

'Oh, sir, don't talk so, and you just getting a hold of them!'

'I?'

'Yes, you, sir. They've found you out at last, thank God. I always knew what you were, and said it. They've found you out in the last week and there's not a man in the town but what would die for you, I believe.'

This announcement staggered Frank. Some men it would have only hardened in their pederasty, and have emboldened them to say 'Ah! then these men see that a High Churchman can work like any one else, when there is a practical sacrifice to be made. Now I have a standing ground which no one can dispute, from which to go on and enforce my idea of what he ought to be.'

But, rightly or wrongly, no such thought crossed Frank's mind. He was just as good a churchman as ever—why not? Just as fond of his own ideal of what a parish and a church service ought to be—why not? But the only thought which did rise in his mind was one of utter self-abasement.

'Oh, how blind I have been! How I have wasted my time in laying down the law to these people, fancying myself infallible, as if God were not as near to them as He is to me certainly nearer than to any book on my shelves—offending their little prejudices, little superstitions, in my own cruel self-conceit and self-will! And now, the first time that I forget my own rules, the first time that I forget almost that I am a priest, even a Christian at all! that moment they acknowledge me as a priest, as a Christian. The moment I meet them upon the commonest human ground, helping them as one heathen would help another, simply because he was his own flesh and blood, that moment they soften to me, and show me how much I might have done with them twelve months ago, had I had but common sense!'

He knelt down and prayed by the old man, for him and for himself.

'Would it be troubling you, sir?' said the old man at last. 'But I'd like to take the sacrament before I go.'

'Of course. Whom shall I ask in?'

The old man paused awhile.

'I fear it's selfish but it seems to me I would not ask it, but that I know I'm going. I should like to take it with my maid, once more before I die.'

'I'll go for her,' said Frank, 'the moment Thurnall comes back to watch you.'

'What need to go yourself, sir? Old Sarah will go, and willing.'

Thurnall came in at that moment.

'I am going to fetch Miss Harvey. Where is she, captain?'

'At Janey Headon's, along with her two poor children.'

'Stay,' said Tom, 'that's a bad quarter, just at the fish-house back. Have some brandy before you start!'

'No! no Dutch courage!' and Frank was

gone. He had a word to say to Grace Harvey, and it must be said at once.

He turned down the silent street, and turned up over stone stairs, through quaint stone galleries and balconies such as are often huddled together on the cliff sides in fishing towns, into a stifling cottage, the door of which had been set wide open, in the vain hope of fresh air. A woman met him, and clasped both his hands, with tears of joy.

'They're mending, sir! They're mending, else I'd have sent to tell you. I never looked for you so late.'

There was a gentle voice in the next room. It was Grace's.

'Ah, she's praying by them now. She's giving them all their medicines all along! Whatever I should have done without her!—and in and out all day long, too, till one fancies at times the Lord must have changed her into five or six at once, to be everywhere to the same minute.'

Frank went in, and listened to her prayer. Her face was as pale and calm as the pale, calm faces of the two worn-out babes, whose heads lay on the pillow close to hers. But her eyes were lit up with an intense glory, which seemed to fill the room with love and light.

Frank listened but would not break the spell.

At last she rose, looked round and blushed.

'I beg your pardon, sir, for taking the liberty. If I had known that you were about I would have sent—but hearing that you were gone home, I thought you would not be offended, if I gave thanks for them myself. They are my own, sir, as it were.'

'Oh, Miss Harvey, do not talk so! While you can pray as you were praying then, he who would silence you might be silencing unawares the Lord Himself!'

She made no answer, though the change in Frank's tone moved her—and when he told her his errand, that thought also passed from her mind.

At last, 'Happy, happy man!' she said calmly, and putting on her bonnet, followed Frank out of the house.

'Miss Harvey,' said Frank, as they hurried up the street, 'I must say one word to you, before we take that sacrament together.'

'Sir?'

'It is well to confess all sins before the Eucharist, and I will confess mine. I have been unjust to you. I know that you hate to be praised, so I will not tell you what has altered my opinion. But heaven forbid that I should ever do so base a thing as to take the school away from one who is far more fit to rule in it than ever I shall be!'

Grace burst into tears.

'Thank God! And I thank you, sir! Oh, there's never a storm but what some gleam breaks through it! And now, sir, I would not have told you it before, lest you should fancy that I changed for the sake of gain—though,

perhaps, that is pride, as too much else has been. But you will never hear of me inside either of those chapels again.'

'What has altered your opinion of them, then?'

'It would take long to tell, sir, but what happened this morning filled the cup. I began to think, sir, that these God and mine are not the same. Though why should I judge them, who worshipped that other God myself till no such long time since, and never knew, poor fool, that the Lord's name was Love?'

'I have found out that, too, in these last days. More shame to me than to you that I did not know it before.'

'Well for us both that we do know it now, sir. For if we believed Him now, sir, to be aught but perfect love, how could we look round here to-night, and not go mad?'

'Amen!' said Frank.

And how had the pestilence, of all things on earth, revealed to these two noble souls that God is Love?

Let the reader, if he have supplied Campbell's sermon, answer the question for himself.

They went in, and upstairs to Willis.

Grace bent over the old man tenderly, but with no sign of sorrow. Dry-eyed, she kissed the old man's forehead, arranged his bed-clothes, woman-like, before she knelt down, and then the three received the sacrament together.

'Don't turn me out,' whispered Tom. 'It's no concern of mine, of course, but you are all good creatures, and somehow, I should like to be with you.'

So Tom stayed, and what thoughts passed through his heart are no concern of ours.

Frank put the cup to the old man's lips, the lips closed, sipped,—then opened. The jaw had fallen.

'Gone,' said Grace quietly.

Frank paused, awe-struck.

'Go on, sir,' said she, in a low voice. 'He hears it all more clearly than he ever did before.' And by the dead man's side, Frank finished the Communion Service.

Grace rose when it was over, kissed the calm forehead, and went out without a word.

'Tom,' said Frank, in a whisper, 'come into the next room with me.'

Tom hardly heard the tone in which the words were spoken, or he would perhaps have answered otherwise than he did.

'My father takes the Communion,' said he, half to himself. 'At least, it is beautiful old—'

Howsoever the sentence would have been finished, Tom stopped short—

'Hoy!—What does that mean?'

'At last!' gasped Frank, gently enough.

'Excuse me!' He was bowed almost double, crushing Thurnall's arm in the fierce grip of pain.

'Fish!—Hang it!'—Impossible!—There, you are all right now!'

'For the time. I can understand many things now. Curious sensation it is, though. Can you conceive a sword put in on one side of the waist, just above the hip-bone, and drawn through, handle and all, till it passes out at the opposite point?'

'I have felt it twice, and therefore you will be pleased to hold your tongue and go to bed. Have you had any warnings?'

'Yes—no—that is—this morning, but I forgot. Never mind! What matter a hundred years hence? There it is again! God help me!'

'Humph!' growled Thurnall to himself. 'I'd sooner have lost a dozen of these herring-hogs, whom nobody misses, and who are well out of their life-scapes, but the parson, just as he was making a man!'

There is no use in complaints. In half an hour Frank is screaming like a woman, though he has bitten his tongue half through to stop his screams.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BLACK HOUND

PAIN! Let us escape anywhere for a breath of fresh air, for even the scent of a clean turf!

We have been watching saints and martyrs—perhaps not long enough for the good of our souls, but surely too long for the comfort of our bodies. Let us away up the valley, where we shall find, if not indeed a fresh healthful breeze (for the drought lasts on), at least a cool refreshing down draught from Carcarrow Moor before the sun gets up. It is just half-past four o'clock, on a glorious August morning. We shall have three hours at least before the heavens become one great Dutch-oven again.

We shall have good company, too, in our walk, for here comes Campbell fresh from his morning's swim, swinging up the silent street toward Frank Headley's lodging.

He stops, and tosses a pebble against the window-pane. In a minute or two Thurnall opens the street door and slips out to him.

'Ah, major! Overslept myself at last, that sofa is wonderfully comfortable. No time to go down and bathe. I'll get my header somewhere up the stream.'

'How is he?'

'He? sleeping like a babe, and getting well as fast as his soul will allow his body. He has something on his mind. Nothing to be ashamed of, though, I will warrant, for a purer, nobler fellow I never met.'

'When can we move him?'

'Oh, to-morrow, if he will agree. You may all depart and leave me and the government man to make out the returns of killed and wounded. We shall have no more cholera. Eight days without a new case. We shall do now. I'm glad you are coming up with us.'

'I will just see the hounds throw off, and then go back and get Headley's breakfast.'

'No, no! you mustn't, sir, you want a day's play.'

'Not half as much as you. And I am in no hunting mood just now. Do you take your fill of the woods and the streams, and let me see our patient. I suppose you will be back by noon?'

'Certainly.' And the two swung up the street, and out of the town, along the vale toward Trebooze.

For Trebooze, of Trebooze, has invited them, and Lord Southbush, and certain others, to come out after hunting, and after-hunting they will go.

Trebooze has been sorely exercised, during the last fortnight, between fear of the cholera and desire of calling upon Lord Southbush. 'as I ought to do, of course, as one of the gentry round, he's a Whig, of course, and no more to me than anybody else, but one don't like to let politics interfere,' by which Trebooze glosses over to himself and friends the deep slunkyness with which he lusteth after a live lord's acquaintance, and one especially in whom he hopes to find even such a one as himself. 'Good fellow, I hear he is, too—good sportsman, smokes like a chimney,' and so forth.

So at last, when the cholera has all but disappeared, he comes down to Penllyn, and introduces himself, half swaggering, half civil, begins by a string of apologies for not having called before—'Mrs Trebooze so afraid of infection, you see, my lord,' which is a lie, then launches out a few fulsome compliments to Southbush's courage in staying, then takes heart at a little joke of Southbush's, and tries the free and easy style, fingers his lordship's high-priced Hudsons, and gives a broad hint that he would like to smoke one on the spot, which hint is not taken, any more than the lot of a 'pauy' which he offers five minutes afterwards, that he will jump his Irish mare in and out of Aberlva pound, is utterly thrown on his haunches (as he informs his friend Mr Creed afterwards) by Southbush's praise of Tom Thurnall, as an 'invaluable man, a treasure in such an out-of-the-way place, and really better company than ninety-nine men out of a hundred', recovers himself again when Southbush asks after his otter hounds, of which he has heard much praise from Tarrifrow, and launches out once more into sporting conversation of that graceful and lofty stamp which may be perused and perpended in the pages of *Handley Cross*, and Mr Sponge's *Sporting Tour*, books painfully true to that ugly and baser side of sporting life which their clever author has chosen so wilfully to portray.

So, at least, said Southbush to himself, when his visitor had departed.

'He's just like a page out of Sponge's *Tour*, though he's not half as good a fellow as Sponge himself, for Sponge knew he was a snob, and lived up to his calling honestly—but this fellow waits all the while to play at being a gentleman, and—Ugh! how the fellow smelt of

brandy, and worse! His hand, too, shook as if he had the palsy, and he chattered and fidgeted like a man with St. Vitus's dance.'

'Did he, my lord?' quoth Tom Thurnall, when he heard the same, in a very meaning tone.

And Trebooze, 'for his part, couldn't make out that lord—unrompingly agreeable, and easy, and all that—but shoves a fellow off, and sets him down somehow, and in such a . . . civil way, that you don't know where to have him.'

However, Trebooze departed in high spirits, for Lord Southbush has deigned to say that he will be delighted to see the otter hounds work any morning that Trebooze likes, and anyhow—no time too early for him. 'He will bring his friend Major Campbell!'

'By all means.'

'Expect two or three sporting gentlemen from the neighbourhood, too. Regular good ones, my lord, though they are county larks—very much honoured to make your lordship's acquaintance.'

Southbush expresses himself equally humbled by making their acquaintance, in a tone of bland sympathy, which utterly puzzles Trebooze, who gives a step further.

'Your lordship'll honour us by taking pot luck afterwards. Can't show you French cookery, you know, and your soufflés and glazes, and all that. Honest souldo o' mutton, and the grounds of old pot. My father laid it down, and I take it up, eh?' And Trebooze gave a wink and a nudge of his elbow, meaning to be witty.

His lordship was exceedingly sorry, it was the most unfortunate accident—but he had the most particular engagement that very afternoon, and must return early from the otter-hunt, and probably sail the next day for Wales. 'But,' says the little man, who knows all about Trebooze's household, 'I shall not fail to do myself the honour of calling on Mrs Trebooze, and expressing my regret,' etc.

So to the otter-hunt is Southbush gone, and Campbell and Thurnall after him, for Trebooze has said to himself, 'Must ask that blackguard of a doctor hang him! I wish he were an otter himself, but if he's so thick with his lordship, it won't do to quarrel.' For, indeed, Thurnall might tell tales. So Trebooze swallows his spite and shame,—as do many folk who call themselves his betters, when they have to deal with a great man's hang-on,—and sends down a note to Tom.

'Mr Trebooze requests the pleasure of Mr Thurnall's company with his hounds at . . .'

And Tom accepts—why not? and chats with Campbell, as they go, on many things, and among other things on this—

'By the bye,' said he, 'I got an hour's shore-work yesterday afternoon, and refreshing enough it was. And I got a prize, too. The sucking barnacle which you asked for—I was certain I should get one or two, if I could have a look at the pools this week. Jolly little dog! he was

padding and spanning about last night, and enjoying himself, "ere age with creeping"—what is it?—"hath clawed him in his clutch." That fellow's destiny is not a hopeful analogy for you, sir, who believe that we shall rise after we die into some higher and freer state?

'Why not?'

'Why, which is better off, the free swimming larva, or the perfect enthipod, rooted for ever motionless to the rock?'

'Which is better off, the roving young fellow who is sowing his wild oats, or the man who has settled down, and become a respectable land-owner with a good house over his head?'

'And begun to propagate his species? Well, you have me there, sir, as far as this life is concerned, but you will confess that the barnacle's history proves that all crawling grubs don't turn into butterflies.'

'I dare say the barnacle turns into what is best for him, at all events, what he deserves. That rule of yours will apply to him, to whomsoever it will not.'

'And so does penance for the sins of his youth, as some of us are to do in the next world.'

'Perhaps yes, perhaps no, perhaps neither.'

'Do you speak of us or the barnacle?'

'Of both.'

'I am glad of that. For on the popular notion of our being punished a million years hence for what we did when we were lads, I never could see anything but a misery and injustice in our having come into the world at all.'

'I can,' said the major quietly.

'Of course I meant nothing rule, but I had to buy my experience, and paid for it dearly enough in folly.'

'So had I to buy mine.'

'Then why be punished over and above? Why have to pay for the folly, which was itself only the necessary price of experience?'

'For being, perhaps, so foolish as not to use the experience after it has cost you so dear.'

'And will punishment cure me of the foolishness?'

'That depends on yourself. If it does, it must needs be so much the better for you. But perhaps you will not be punished, but forgiven.'

'Let off? That would be a very bad thing for me, unless I become a very different man from what I have been as yet. I am always right glad now to get a fall whenever I make a stumble. I should have gone to sleep in my tracks long ago else, as one used to do in the backwoods on a long elk hunt.'

'Perhaps you may become a very different man.'

'I should be sorry for that even if it were possible.'

'Why? Do you consider yourself perfect?'

'No. . . . But somehow, Thomas Thurnall is an old friend of mine, the first I ever had, and I should be sorry to lose his company.'

'I don't think you need fear doing so. You

have seen an insect go through strange metamorphoses, and yet remain the same individual, why should not you and I do so likewise?'

'Well?'

'Well, there are some points about you, I suppose, which you would not be sorry to have altered?'

'A few,' quoth Tom, laughing. 'I do not consider myself quite perfect yet.'

'What if those points were not really any part of your character, but mere excrescences of disease, or if that be too degrading a notion, mere scars of old wounds, and of the wear and tear of life, and what if, in some future life, all those disappeared, and the true Thomas Thurnall, pure and simple, were alone left?'

'It is a very hopeful notion. Only, say dear sir, one is quite self-content enough in this imperfect state. What intolerable excoombs we should all be if we were perfect, and could sit admiring ourselves for ever and ever!'

'But what if that self-content and self-dependence were the very root of all the disease, the cause of all the scars, the very thing which will have to be got rid of, before our true character and true manhood can be developed?'

'Yes, I understand faith and humility.

. . . You will forgive me, Major Campbell. I shall learn to respect those virtues when good people have defined them a little more exactly, and can show me somewhat more clearly in what faith differs from superstition, and humility from hypocrisy.'

'I do not think any man will ever define them for you. But you may go through a course of experiences, more severe, probably, than pleasant, which may enable you at last to define them for yourself.'

'Have you defined them?' asked Tom bluntly, glancing round at his companion.

'Faith?—Yes, I trust. Humility?—No, I do not.'

'I should like to hear your definition of the former, at least.'

'Did I not say that you must discover it for yourself?'

'Yes. Well. When the lesson comes, if it does come, I suppose it will come in some learnable shape, and till then, I must settle for myself. And if self-dependence be a punishable sin, I shall, at all events, have plenty of company whithersoever I go. There is Lord Southsh and Treboore.'

Why did not Campbell speak his mind more clearly to Thurnall?

Because he knew that with such men words are of little avail. The disease was entrenched too strongly in the very centre of the man's being. It seemed at moments as if all his strange adventures and hair-breadth escapes had been sent to do him harm and not good, to pamper and harden his self-confidence, not to crush it. Therefore Campbell seldom argued with him. But he prayed for him often, for he had begun, as all did who saw much of Tom Thurnall, to admire and respect him, in spite of all his faults.

And now, turning through a woodland path, they descended toward the river, till they can hear voices below them, Southbush laughing quietly, Trebooze laying down the law at the top of his voice.

'How noisy the fellow is, and how he is hopping about!' says Campbell.

'No wonder, he has been soaking, I hear, for the last fortnight, with some worthy companions, by way of keeping off cholera. I must have my eye on him to-day.'

Scrambling down through the brushwood, they found themselves in such a scene as Creswick alone knows how to paint, though one element of beauty, which Creswick uses full well, was wanting, and the whole place was seen, not by slant sun-rays gleaming through the boughs, and dappling all the pebbles with a lacework of leaf-shadows, but in the uniform and sober gray of dawn.

A broad bed of shingle, looking just now more like an ill-made turnpike road than the bed of Alva stream, above it, a long shallow pool, which showed every stone through the transparent water, on the right, a craggy bank, bedded with deep wood sedge and orange-tipped king ferns, clustering beneath sallow and maple bushes already tinged with gold, on the left, a long bar of gravel, covered with giant 'butter-lur' leaves, in and out of which the hounds are brushing—beautiful black-and-tan dogs, of which poor Trebooze may be paragonably proud, while round the burleaf-bed dances a rough white Irish terrier, seeming, by his frantic self-importance, to consider himself the master of the hounds.

Southbush is standing with Trebooze beyond the bar, upon a little lawn set thick with alders. Trebooze is fussing and fidgeting about, wiping his forehead perpetually, telling everybody to get out of the way, and not to interfere, then catching hold of Southbush's button to chatter in his face, then starting aside to put some part of his dress to rights. His usual lazy drawl is exchanged for foolish excitement. Two or three more gentlemen, tired of Trebooze's absurdities, are scrambling over the rocks above in search of spraints. Old Tardrew waddles stooping along the line where grass and shingle meet, his bull-dog visage bent to his very knees.

'Tardrew out hunting?' says Campbell. 'Why, it is but a week since his daughter was buried!'

'And why not? I like him better for it. Would he bring her back again by throwing away a good day's sport? Better turn out, as he has done, and forget his feelings, if he has any.'

'He has feelings enough, don't doubt. But you are right. There is something very characteristic in the way in which the English countryman never shows grief, never lets it interfere with business, even with pleasure.'

'Hillo! Mr Trebooze!' says the old fellow, looking up. 'Here it is!'

'Spraint! Spraint! Spraint! Where? Eh—what?' cries Trebooze.

'No, but what's as good here on this alder stump, not an hour old. I thought they beauties' starns weren't fleamishing for nowt.'

'Here! here! here! here!' Musical, Musical! Sweetlips! Get out of the way!' and Trebooze runs down.

Musical examines, throws her nose into the air, and answers 'y' the rich bell-like note of the true otter-hound, and all the woodlands ring as the pack dashes down the shingle to her call.

'Over!' shouts Tom. 'Here's the fresh spraint our side!'

Through the water splash squire, viscount, steward, and hounds, to the horror of a shoal of par, the only visible tenants of a pool which, after a shower of rain, would be alive with trout. Where those trout are in the meanwhile is a mystery yet unsolved.

Over dances the little terrier, yapping furiously, and expending his superfluous energy by snapping right and left at the par.

'Hark to Musical! hark to Sweetlips! Down the stream! No! the old girl has it, right up the bank!'

'How do, doctor! How do, Major Campbell! Forward! Forward! Forward!' shouts Trebooze, glad to escape a longer parley, as with his spear in his left hand, he clutches at the overhanging boughs with his right, and swings himself up, with Peter, the huntsman, after him. Tom follows him, and why?

Because he does not like his looks. That bull eye is red, and almost bursting, his cheeks are flushed, his lips blue, his hand shakes, and Tom's quick eye has already remarked, from a distance, over and above his new fussiness, a sudden shudder, a quick, half-frightened glance behind him, and perceived, too, that the moment Musical gave tongue, he put the spirit-flask to his mouth.

Away go the hounds at score through tangled cover, their merry peal ringing from brake and hiar, clashing against the rocks, moaning musically away through distant glens aloft.

Southbush and Tardrew 'take down' the river-bed, followed by Campbell. It is in his way home, and though the major has stuck many a pig, shot many a gaur, rhinoceros, and elephant, he disdains not, like a true sportsman, the less dangerous but more scientific excitement of an otter-hunt.

'Hark to the merry merry Christchurch bells! Sho's up by this time, that don't sound like a drag now!' cries Tom, bursting desperately, with elbow-guarded visage, through the tangled scrub. 'What's the matter, Trebooze? No, thanks! "Modest quenchers" won't improve the wind just now.'

For Trebooze has halted, panting and bathed in perspiration, has been at the brandy flask again, and now offers Tom a 'quencher,' as he calls it.

'As you like,' says Trebooze sulkily, having meant it as a token of reconciliation, and pushes on.

They are now upon a little open meadow

girdled by green walls of wood, and along the river-bank the hounds are fairly racing. Tom and Peter hold on, Trebooze slackens.

'Your master don't look right this morning, Peter.'

Peter lifts his hand to his mouth, to signify the habit of drinking, and then shakes it in a melancholy fashion, to signify that the sad habit has reached a lamentable and desperate point.

Tom looks back. Trebooze has pulled up, and is walking, wiping still at his face. The hounds have overrun the scent, and are back again, flensing about the plashed fence on the river bank.

'Over! over! over!' shouts Peter, tumbling over the fence into the stream, and staggering across.

Trebooze comes up to it, tries to scramble over, mutters something, and sits down astride of a bough.

'You are not well, squire?'

'Well as ever I was in my life. Only a little weak—have been several times lately, couldn't sleep either—haven't slept an hour this week. Don't know what it is.'

'What dunks of hounds these are!' says Tom, trying, for ulterior purposes, to ingratiate himself. 'How they are working there all by themselves, like so many human beings. Perfect!'

'Yes—don't want us—may as well sit here a minute. Awfully hot, eh? What a splendid creature that Miss St. Just is! I say, Peter!'

'Yes, sir,' shouts Peter, from the other side.

'Those hounds ain't right!' with an oath.

'Not right, sir?'

'Didn't I tell you?—five couple and a half—no, five couple—no, six. Hang it! I can't see, I think! How many hounds did I tell you to bring out?'

'Five couple, sir.'

'Then . . . why did you bring out that other?'

'Which other?' shouts Peter, while Thurnall eyes Trebooze keenly.

'Why, that! He's none o' mine! Nasty black cur, how did he get here?'

'Where? There's never no cur here!'

'You lie, you cat—no—why—doctor—How many hounds are there here?'

'I can't see,' says Tom, 'among those bushes.'

'Can't see, eh? Why don't those brutes hit it off?' says Trebooze, drawing, as if he had forgotten the matter, and lounging over the fence, drops into the stream, followed by Tom, and wades across.

The hounds are all round him, and he is encouraging them on, fussing again more than ever, but without success.

'Gone to holt somewhere here,' says Peter.

' . . . !' cries Trebooze, looking round, with a sudden shudder, and face of terror. 'There's that black brute again! there, behind me! Hang it, he'll bite me next!' and he caught up his leg, and struck behind him with his spear.

There was no dog there.

Peter was about to speak, but Tom silenced him by a look, and shouted—

'Here we are! Goue to holt in this alder root!'

'Now then, little Carlingsford! Out of the way, puppies!' cries Trebooze, righted again for the moment by the exertion, and thrusting the hounds right and left, he stoops down to put in the little terrier.

Suddenly he springs up, with something like a scream, and then bursts out on Peter with a volley of oaths.

'Didn't I tell you to drive that cur away?'

'Which cur, sir?' cries Peter, trembling, and utterly confounded.

'That cur! Can't I believe my own eyes?'

Will you tell me that the beggar didn't bolt between my legs this moment, and went into the hole before the terrier?'

Neither answered Peter from utter astonishment, Tom because he saw what was the matter.

'Don't stoop, squire. You'll make the blood fly to your head! Let me—'

But Trebooze thrust him back with curses.

'I'll have the brute out, and send the spear through him!' and flinging himself on his knees again, Trebooze began tearing madly at the roots and stones, shouting to the half-mad terrier to tear the intruder.

Peter looked at Tom, and then wiping his hands in despair.

'Dirty work—beastly work!' muttered Trebooze. 'Nothing but slugs and ovals! Toads, too,—hang the toads! What a plague brings all this vermin? Curse it!' slumped he, springing back, 'there's an adder!' and he's gone up my sleeve! Help me! doctor! Thurnall! or I'm a dead man!'

Tom caught the aim, thrust his hand up the sleeve, and seemed to snatch out the snake, and hurl it back into the river.

'All right now!—a near chance, though!'

Peter stood open-mouthed.

'I never saw no snake!' cried he.

Tom caught him a buffet which sent him reeling. 'Look after your hounds, you blind ass! How are you now, Trebooze?' And he caught the squire round the waist, for he was reeling.

'The world! The world upside down! rocking and swinging! Who's put me feet upwards, like a fly on a ceiling? I'm falling, falling off, into the clouds into hell-fire—hold me! Toads and adders! and wasps—to go to holt in a wasp's nest! Drive 'em away,—get me a green hough! I shall be stung to death!'

And tearing off a green hough, the wretched man rushed into the river, beating wildly right and left at his fancied tormentors.

'What is it?' cry Campbell and Scoutbush, who have run up breathless.

'Delirium tremens. Campbell, get home as fast as you can, and send me up a bottle of morphine. Peter, take the hounds home. I must go after him.'

'I'll go home with Campbell, and send the

bottle up by a man and horse,' cries Seentbush, and away the two trot at a gallant pace, for a cross-country run home.

'Mr Tardrew, come with me, there's a good man! I shall want help.'

Tardrew made no reply, but dashed through the river at his heels.

Trebooze had already climbed the plashed leure, and was running wildly across the meadow. Tom dragged Tardrew up to enter him.

'Thank 'ee, sir,' but nothing more. The two had not met since the cholera.

Trebooze fell, and lay rolling, trying in vain to shield his face from the phantom wasps.

They lifted him up, and spoke gently to him.

'Better get home to Miss Trebooze, sir,' said Tardrew, with as much tenderness as his gruff voice could convey.

'Yes, home! home to Molly! My Molly's always kind. She won't let me be eaten up alive. Molly, Molly!'

And shrieking for his wife, the wretched man started to run again.

'Molly, I'm in hell! Only help me! you're always right! only forgive me! and I'll never, never again.'

And then came out baleful confessions, then fresh hideous delusions.

Three weary up-hill miles lay between them and the house, but home they got at last.

Trebooze dashed at the house-door, tore it open, slammed and bolted it behind him, to shut out the pursuing fiends.

'Quick, round by the back-door!' said Tom, who had not opposed him for fear of making him furious, but dreaded some tragically if he were left alone.

But his fear was needless. Trebooze looked into the breakfast room. It was empty, she was not out of bed yet. He rushed upstairs into her bedroom, shrieking her name, she leaped up to meet him, and the poor wretch buried his head in that faithful bosom, screaming to her to save him from he knew not what.

She put her arms round him, soothed him, wept over him sacred tears. 'My William! my own William! Yes, I will take care of you! Nothing shall hurt you, - my own, own!'

Vain, drunken, brutal, untruthful. Yes, but her husband still!

There was a knock at the door.

'Who is that!' she cried, with her usual heroism, terrified for his character, not terrified for herself.

'Mr. Thurnall, madam. Have you any laudanum in the house!'

'Yes, here! Oh, come in! Thank God you are come! What is to be done!'

Tom looked for the laudanum bottle, and poured out a heavy dose.

'Make him take that, madam, and put him to bed. I will wait downstairs awhile!'

'Thurnall, Thurnall!' calls Trebooze, 'don't leave me, old fellow! You are a good fellow. I say, forgive and forget. Don't leave me!'

Only don't leave me, for the room is as full of devils as—'

An hour after, Tom and Tardrew were walking home together.

'He is quite quiet now, and fast asleep.'

'Will he mend, sir?' asks Tardrew.

'Of course he will, and perhaps in more ways than one. Best thing that could have happened—will bring him to his senses, and he'll start fresh.'

'We'll hope so,-- he's been mad, I think, ever since he heard of that cholera.'

'So have others, but not with brandy,' thought Tom, but he said nothing.

'I say, sir,' quoth Tardrew after a while, 'how's Parson Headley?'

'Getting well, I'm happy to say.'

'Glad to hear it, sir. He's a good man, after all, though we did have our differences. But he's a good man, and worked like one.'

'He did.'

Silence again.

'Never heard such beautiful prayers in all my life, as he made over my poor maid.'

'I don't doubt it,' said Tom. 'He understands his business at heart, though he may have his fancies.'

'And so do some others,' said Tardrew, in a gruff tone, as if half to himself, 'who have no fancies. . . Tell you what it is, sir, you was right this time, and that's plain truth. I'm sorry to hear talk of your going.'

'My good sir,' quoth Tom, 'I shall be very sorry to go. I have found place and people here as pleasant as man could wish, but go I must.'

'Glad you're satisfied, sir, wish you was going to stay,' says Tardrew. 'Seen Miss Harvey this last day or two, sir?'

'Yes. You know she's to keep her school?'

'I know it. Nursed my girl like an angel.'

'Like what she is,' said Tom.

'You said one true word once, that she was too good for us.'

'For this world,' said Tom, and fell into a great musing.

By those curt and surly utterances did Tardrew, in true British bulldog fashion, express a repentance too deep for words, too deep for all confessionals, penances, and emotions or acts of contrition, the repentance not of the excitement and theatre southern, unstable as water, even in his most violent remorse, but of the still, deep-hearted northern, whose pride breaks slowly and silently, but breaks once for all, who tells to God what he will never tell to man, and having told it, is a new creature from that day forth for ever.

CHAPTER XIX

BIDDINGLEET

THE pleasant summer voyage is over. The *Waterwitch* is lounging off Port Madoc, waiting

for her crew. The said crew are busy on shore drinking the ladies' healths, with a couple of sovereigns which Valentin has given them, in her sister's name and her own. The ladies, under the care of Elsley, and the far more practical care of Mr Bowie, are rattling along among children, mugs, and boxes, over the sandy flats of the Traeth Mawr, beside the long reaches of the lazy stream, with the blue surges of the hills in front, and the white sea behind. Soon they begin to pass wooded knolls, islets of rock in the alluvial plain. The higher peaks of Snowdon sink down behind the lower spurs in front, the plain narrows, closes in, walled round with woodlands clinging to the steep hill-sides, and, at last, they enter the narrow gorge of Pont-Aberglaslyn pretty enough, no doubt, but much over-praised, for there are in Devon alone a dozen passes far grander, both for form and size.

Soon they emerge again on flat meadows, mountain cradled, and the grave of the mythic greyhound, and the fair old church, shrouded in tall trees, and last, but not least, stop at the famous Leek Hotel, where inlets Mrs Lewis, great and wise, over the four months' Babylon of gauds, cars, chambermaids, tourists, artists, and reading-parties, camp-stools, telescopes, poetry books, blue ugliers, red petticoats, and parasols of every line.

There they settle down in the best rooms in the house, and all goes as merrily as it can, while the horrors which they have left behind them hang, like a black background, to all their thoughts. However, both Southwell and Campbell send as cheerful reports as they honestly can, and gradually the exceeding beauty of the scenery, and the amusing hustle of the village, make them forget, perhaps, a good deal which they ought to have remembered.

As for poor Lucia, no one will complain of her for being happy for feeling that she has got a holiday, the first for now four years, and trying to enjoy it to the utmost. She has no household cares. Mr Bowie manages everything, and does so, in order to keep up the honour of the family, on a somewhat magnificent scale. The children, in that bracing air, are better than she has ever seen them. She has Valentin all to herself, and Elsley, in spite of the dark laurels over which he has been brooding, is better behaved, on the whole, than usual.

He has escaped, so he considers escaped from Campbell, above all from Thurnall. From himself, indeed, he has not escaped, but the company of self is, on the whole, more pleasant to him than otherwise just now. For though he may turn up his nose at tourists and reading-parties, and long for contemplative solitude, yet there is a certain pleasure to some people, and often strongest in those who pretend most shyness, in the *'dignito monstrari, et dicere, hoc est'*, in taking for granted that everybody has read his poems, that everybody is saying in their hearts, 'There goes Mr Vavasour, the distinguished poet. I wonder what he is writing

now! I wonder where he has been to-day, and what he has been thinking of.'

So Elsley went up Hellog, and looked over the glorious vista of the vale, over the twin lakes, and the rich sheets of woodland, with Aran and Moel Merch guarding them right and left, and the graystone glaciers of the Glyder walling up the valley miles above. And they went up Snowdon, too, and saw little beside fifty fog-blinded tourists, five-and-twenty dripping ponies, and five hundred empty porter bottles, wherefrom they returned, as do many, disgusted, and with great colds in their heads. But most they loved to scramble up the crags of Dinas Emrys, and muse over the ruins of the old tower, 'Where Merlin taught Vortigern the courses of the stars', till the stars set and rose as they had done for Merlin and his pupil, behind the four great pillars of Aran, Siabod, Cnicht, and Hellog, which point to the four quarters of the heavens or to be by the side of the boggy spring, which once was the magic well of the magic castle, till they saw in fancy the white dragon and the red rise from its depths once more, and light high in the air the battle which foretold the fall of the Cymry before the Sassenach invader.

One thing, indeed, troubled Elsley,—that Claude was his only companion, for Valentin avoided carefully any more *tele-ut-tille* walks with him. She had found out her mistake, and devoted herself now to Lucia. She had a luncheon enough, for Lucia was not just then in a state for rambles and scrambles, and of that Elsley certainly had no right to complain, so that he was forced to leave them both at home, with as good grace as he could muster, and to wander by himself, scribbling his fancies, while they lounged and worked in the pleasant garden of the hotel, with Bowie letting and carrying for them all day long, and intimating pretty roundly to Miss Clara his 'oppression', that he 'was very proud and thankful of the office' but he did think that he had to disagree many things for Mrs Vavasour every day which would come with a much better grace from Mr Vavasour himself, and that, when he married, he should not leave his wife to be misused by other men.

Which last words were spoken with an ulterior object, well understood by the hearer, for between Clara and Bowie there was one of those patient and honorable attachments no common between worthy servants. They had both 'kept company,' though only by letter, for the most part, for now five years, and they had both saved a fair sum of money, and Clara might have married Bowie when she chose, had she not thought it her duty to take care of her mistress, while Bowie considered himself equally indispensable to the welfare of that 'poor reckless ladie,' his master.

So they waited patiently, amusing the time by little equalities of jealousy, real or pretended, and Bowie was faithful, though Clara was past thirty now, and losing her good looks.

'So ye'll see your lassie, Mr Bowie!' said

Sergeant MacArthur, his intimate, when he started for Aberlath that summer 'I'm thinking ye'd better put her out of her pain soon. Five years is ower lang courting, and she's na pullet by now, saving your pardon.'

'Hoooo—' says Bowie, 'leave the green gooseberries to the lads, and gi' me the ripe fruit, sergeant.'

However, he found love-making in his own fashion so pleasant that, not content with carrying Mrs. Vavasour's babies about all day long, he had several times to be gently turned out of the nursery, where he wanted to assist in washing and dressing them, on the ground that an old soldier could turn his hand to anything.

So slipped away a fortnight and more, during which Valentin was the cynosure of all eyes, and knew it also for Claude Molloy, half to amuse her, and half to tease Elsie, made her laugh many a time by retelling little sayings and doings in her praise and dispraise, picked up from rich Manchester gentlemen, who would fain have married her without a penny, and from strong-minded Manchester ladies, who envied her beauty a little, and set her down, of course, as an empty-minded worldling, and a proud aristocrat. The majority of the reading-parties, meanwhile, thought a great deal more about Valentin than about their books. The Oxford men, it seemed, though of the same mind as the Cambridge men in considering her the model of all perfection, were divided as to their method of testifying the same. Two or three of them, who were given to that emptying and flirting tone with young ladies to which Oxford would-be-hue gentlemen are so pitifully prone, hung about the main-door to oggle her, contrived always to be walking in the garden when she was there, dressed out as if for High Street at four o'clock on a May afternoon, tormented Claude by fruitless attempts to get from him an introduction, which he had neither the right nor the mind to give, and at last (so Bowie told Claude one night, and Claude told the whole party next morning) tried to bribe and flatter Valentin's maid into giving them a bit of ribbon, or a cast-off glove, which had belonged to the idol. Whereon that maiden, in virtuous indignation, told Mr. Bowie, and complained moreover (as maids are bound to do to valets for whom they have a *penchant*) of their having dared to compliment her on her own good looks, by which act succeeded, of course, in making Mr. Bowie understand that other people still thought her pretty, if he did not, and also in arousing in him that jealousy which is often the best helpmate of sweet love. So Mr. Bowie went forth in his mind that very evening, and finding two of the Oxford men, informed them in plain Scotch, that, 'Gin he caught them, or any ither such skellums, phlandering after his leddies, or his leddies' maids, he'd jist knook their empty paws together.' To which there was no reply but silence, for Mr. Bowie stood six feet four without his shoes,

and had but the week before performed, for the edification of the Cambridge men, who held him in high honour, a few old Guards' feats, such as cutting in two at one sword-blow a suspended shoulder of mutton, lifting a long table by his teeth, squeezing a quart pewter pot flat between his fingers, and other little recreations of those who are 'born with Rypha.'

But the Cantabs, and a couple of gallant Oxford boating men who had fraternised with them, testified their admiration in their simple honest way, by putting down their pipes whenever they saw Valentin coming, and just lifting their hats when they met her close. It was taking a liberty, no doubt. 'But I tell yon, Molloy,' said Wynd, as brave and pure-minded a fellow as ever pulled in the University eight, 'the Arabs, when they see such a creature, say, "Praise Allah for beautiful women," and quite right, they may remind some fellows of worse things, but they always remind me of heaven and the angels, and my hat goes off to her by instinct, just as it does when I go into a church.'

That was all, simple chivalrous admiration, and delight in her loveliness, as in that of a lake, or a mountain sunset, but nothing more. The good fellows had no time, indeed, to fancy themselves in love with her, or her with them, for every day was too short for them, what with reading all the morning, and starting out in the afternoon in strange garments (which became shabbier and more ragged very rapidly as the weeks slipped on) upon all manner of desperate errands, walking unheard-of distances, and losing their way upon the mountains, scrambling cliffs, and now and then falling down them, camping all night by unpronounceable lakes, in the hope of catching mythical trout, trying in all ways how hungry, thirsty, dirty, and tired a man could make himself, and how far he could go without breaking his neck, any approach to which catastrophe was hailed (as were all other mishaps) as 'all in the day's work,' and 'the finest fun in the world,' by that unconquerable English 'lebens ghekeselgheit,' which is a perpetual wonder to our sober German cousins. Ah, glorious twenty-one, with your inexhaustible powers of doing and enjoying, eating and hungering, sleeping and sitting up, reading and playing! Happy are those who still possess you, and can take their fill of your golden cup, steeled, but not saddened, by the remembrance, that for all things a good and loving God will bring them into judgment. Happier still those who (like a few) retain in body and soul the health and buoyancy of twenty-one on to the very verge of forty, and seeming to grow younger-hearted as they grow older-headed, can cast off care and work at a moment's warning, laugh and frolic now as they did twenty years ago, and say with Wordsworth—

'So was it when my life began . . .
So be it when I shall grow old,
(Or let me die)

Unfortunately, as will appear hereafter, Elsley's especial *blues noirs* were this very Wynd and his inseparable companion, Naylor, who happened to be not only the best men of the set, but Mellot's especial friends. Both were Rugby men, now reading for their degree. Wynd was a Shropshire squire's son, a husom fair-haired man, the handiest of boxers, rowers, riders, shots, fishermen, with a noisy superabundance of animal spirits, which maddened Elsley. Yet Wynd had sentiment in his way, though he took good care never to show it. Elsley, could repeat Tennyson from end to end, spouted the *Mort d'Arthur* up hill and 'down dale, and chanted rapturously, 'Come into the garden, Maud!' while he expressed his opinion of Maud's lover in terms more forcible than delicate. Naylor, fidus Achates, was a Gloucestershire parson's son, a huge heavy-looking man, with a thick curling lip and a sleepy eye, but he had brains enough to become a first-rate classic, and in that same sleepy eye and heavy lip lay an infinity of quiet humour, rare old country stories, quaint scraps of out-of-the-way learning, jovial old ballads, which he sang with the mellowest of voices, and a slang vocabulary, which made him the dread of all hargreaves from Nownham pool to Uxmore. Him also Elsley hated, because Naylor looked always as if he was laughing at him; which indeed he was.

And the worst was, that Elsley had always to face them both at once. If Wynd vaulted over a gate into his very face, with a 'How d'ye do, Mr Vavasour! Had any verses this morning?' in the same tone as if he had asked, 'Had any sport?' Naylor's round face was sure to look over the stone-wall, pipe in mouth, with a 'Don't disturb the gentleman, Toin, don't you see he's a composing of his rhymes?' in a strong provincial dialect put on for the nonce. In fact, the two young rogues, having no respect whatsoever for genius, perhaps because they had each of them a little genius of their own, made a butt of the poet, as soon as they found out that he was afraid of them.

But worse *blues noirs* than either Wynd or Naylor were on their way to fill up the cup of Elsley's discomfort. And at last, without a note of warning, appeared in Beddgelert a phenomenon which rejoiced some hearts, but perturbed also the spirits not only of the Oxford 'philanderers,' but those of Elsley Vavasour, and, what is more, of Valentia herself.

She was sitting one evening at the window with Lucia, looking out into the village and the pleasure-grounds before the hotel. They were both laughing and chatting over the groups of tourists in their pretty Irish way, just as they had done when they were girls, for Lucia's heart was expanding under the quiet beauty of the place, the freedom from household care, and what was more, from money anxieties; for Valentia had slipped into her hand a cheque for fifty pounds from Scotchbush, and assured her that he would be quite angry if she spoke of paying the rent of the rooms, Elsley

was mooning down the river by himself, Claude was entertaining his Cambridge acquaintances, as he did every night, with his endless fun and sentiment. Gradually the tourists slipped in one by one, as the last rays of the sun faded off the peaks of Aran, and the mist settled down upon the dark valley beneath, and darkness fell upon that rock-grilled paradise, when up to the door below there drove a car, at sight whereof out rushed, not waiters only and landlady, but Mr Bowie himself, who helped out a very short figure in a pea-jacket and a slurring boating hat, and then a very tall one in a wild shooting-coat and a military cap.

'My brother and man Saint Piro! Lucia! too delightful! This is why they did not write.' And Valentia sprang up, and was going to run downstairs to them, when she paused at Lucia's call.

'Who have they with them? Val,—come and look! who can it be?'

Campbell and Bowie were helping out carefully a tall man, covered up in many wrappers. It was too dark to see the face, but a fancy crossed Valentia's mind which made her look grave, in spite of her pleasure.

He was evidently weak, as from recent illness, for his two supporters led him up the steps, and Scotchbush seemed full of directions and inquiries, and fussed about with the landlady, till she was tired of mishearing to 'my lord.'

A minute afterwards Bowie threw open the door grandly. 'My lord, my ladies!' and in trotted Scotchbush, and began kissing them hereby, and then dancing about.

'Oh, my dears! Here at last—out of that horrid city of the plague! Such sights as I have seen —' and then he paused. 'Do you know, Val and Lucia, I'm glad I've seen it, I don't know, but I feel as if I should be a better man all my life, and those poor people, how well they did believe! And the major, he's an angel! And so's that bric of a doctor, and the mad schoolmistress, and the curate. Everybody, I think, but me. Hang it, Val! but your words shan't come true! I will be of some use yet before I die! But I've —' and Valentia went up to him and kissed him, while he ran on, and Lucia said:

'You have been of use already, dear Fred. You have sent me and the dear children to this sweet place, where we have been safer and happier than —' (she checked herself), 'and your generous present too. I feel quite a girl again, thanks to you. Val and I have done nothing but laugh all day long,' and she began kissing him too.

'How happy could I be with either,
Were either dear charmer away!'

broke out Scotchbush. 'What a pity it is now, that I should have two such sweet creatures making love to me, and can't marry either of them! Why did ye go and be my father's daughters, my mavourneen! I'd have made a peccass of the

one of ye, if ye'd had the sense to be anybody else's sisters."

At which they all laughed, and laughed, and chattered broad Irish together as they used to do for fun in old Kilanbhagga Castle, before Lucia was a weary wife, and Valentia a worldly fine lady and Scoutbush a rascally guardsman, breaking half of the ten commandments every week, rather from ignorance than vice.

"Well, I'm glad ye're pleased with me, as I have," said he at last to Lucia. "but I've done another little good deed, I flatter myself, for I've brought away the poor spalpeen of a priest, and have got him safe in the house."

Valentia stopped short in her fun.

"Why, what have ye to say against that, Miss Val?"

"Why, won't he be a little in the way?" said Valentia, not knowing what to say.

"Faith, he needn't trouble you, and I shall take very good care—I wonder when the supper is coming—that neither he nor any one else troubles me. But really," said he, in his natural voice, and with some feeling, "I was ashamed to go away and leave him there. He would have died if we had. He worked day and night. Talk of saints and martyrs! Campbell himself said he was an idler by the side of him."

"Oh! I hope Major Campbell has not over-exerted himself."

"He? nothing hurts him. He's as hard as his own sword. But the poor curate worked on till he got the cholera himself. He always expected it, longed for it," Campbell said—wanted to die. Some love affair, I suppose, poor fellow! and a terrible bout he had for eight and forty hours. Thurnall thought he'd gone again and again, but he pulled the poor fellow through, after all, and we got some use (that is, Campbell did) to take his duty, and brought him away after a good deal of persuasion, for he would not move as long as there was a fresh case in the town, that is why we never wrote. We did not know till the last hour when we should start, and we expected to be with you in two days, and gave you a pleasant surprise. He was half dead when we got him on board, but the week's sea air helped him through, so I must not grumble at these northwesterly breezes. "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good," they say."

Valentia heard all this as in a dream, and watched her chattering brother with a stupefied air. She comprehended all now, and bitterly she blamed herself. He had really loved her, then, set himself manfully to die at his post, that he might forget her in a better world. How shamefully she had trifled with that noble heart! How should she ever meet him with courage to look him in the face? And not love, or anything like love, but sacred pity and self-abasement filled her heart, as his fair, delicate face rose up before her, all wan and shrunken, with sad upbraiding eyes, and round it such

a hale, pure and pale, as crowns, in some old German picture, a martyr's halo!

"He has had the cholera?" he has been actually dying?" asked she at last, with that strange wish to hear over again bad news, which one knows too well already.

"Of course he has. Why, you are not going away, Valentia? You need not be afraid of infection. Campbell, and Thurnall, too, says that's all nonsense, and they must know, having seen it so often. Here comes Brown at last with supper."

"Has Mr. Headley had anything to eat?" asked Valentia, who longed to run away to her own room, but dared not.

"He is eating now like any god, ma'am, and Major Campbell's making him eat too."

"No must be very ill," thought she, "for men Saint Père never to have come near us yet," and then she thought with terror that her Saint Père might have guessed the truth, and be angry with her. And yet she trusted in Frank's secrecy. He would not betray her.

Take care, Valentia. When a woman has to trust a man not to betray her, and does trust him, she may soon find it not only easy, but necessary, to do more than trust him.

However, in five minutes Campbell came in. Valentia saw at once that there was no change in his feelings to her. But he could talk of nothing but Headley, his self-devotion, courage, angelic gentleness, and humility, and every word of his praise was a fresh arrow in Valentia's conscience, at last—

"One knows well enough what is the matter, and he almost bitterly 'what is the matter, I sometimes think, with all the noblest men in the world, and nine-tenths of the noblest women—and with many a one, too, God help them! who is none of the noblest, and then how does not know how to take the latter cup, as he knows—'

"What does the philosopher mean now?" asked Scoutbush, looking up from the cold lamb Valentia knew but too well what he meant.

"He has a history, my dear lord."

"A history? What? is he writing a book?"

Campbell laughed a quiet under laugh, half sad, half humorous.

"I am very tired," said Valentia, "I really think I shall go to bed."

She went to her room, but to bed she did not go, she sat down and cried till she could cry no more, and lay awake the greater part of the night, tossing miserably. She would have done better if she had prayed, but prayer, about such a matter, was what Valentia knew nothing of. She was regular enough at church, of course, and said her prayers and confessed her sins in a general way, and prayed about her 'soul,' as she had been taught to do, — unless she was too tired. But to pray really, about a real sorrow, a real sin like this, was a thought which never entered her mind, and if it had, she would have driven it away again just because the anxiety was so real, practical, human, it was a

matter which had nothing to do with religion, which it seemed impertinent—almost wrong—to lay before the throne of God.

So she came downstairs next morning, pale, restless, unrefreshed in body or mind, and her peace of mind was not improved by seeing, seated at the breakfast-table, Frank Headley, whom Laura and Scout and were stuffing with all manner of good things.

She blushed scarlet to do what she would she could not help it—when he rose and bowed to her. Half-choked, she came forward and offered her hand. She was 'so shocked to hear that he had been so dangerously ill, no one had even told them of it, it had come upon them so suddenly', and so forth.

She spoke kindly, but avoided the least tone of tenderness, for she felt that if she gave way, she might be only too tender, and to reawaken hope in his heart would be only cruelty. And therefore, and for other reasons also, she did not look him in the face as she spoke.

He answered so cheerfully that she was half-disappointed, in spite of her remorse, at his not being as miserable as she had expected. Still, if he had overcome the passion, it was so much better for him. But yet Valentinia hardly wished that he should have overcome it, so self-contradictory is woman's heart, and her pity had sunk to half-evil, and her self-complacency was rising with a flowing tide, as he chatted on quietly, but generally, about the voyage, and the scenery, and Snowden, which he had never seen, and which he would send that very day.

'You will do nothing of the kind, Mr. Headley,' cried Laura. 'Is he not mad, Major Campbell, quite mad?'

'I know I am mad, my dear Mrs. Vavasour, I have been so a long time—but Snowden points me in their sober senses, and I shall take one of them.'

'Enfil the old gun?' began beside yourself, and end beside your horse? I am sure he is not strong enough to sit over those rocks. No, you shall stay at home comfortably here. Valentinia and I will take care of you.'

'And mon Saint Père too. I have a thousand things to say to him.'

'And so has he to Queen Whims.'

So Southbush sent Bowte in 'John Jones Clerk,' the fisherman (may his days be as many as his salmon and as good as his lies!), and the four stayed at home, and talked over the Aberlona tragedies, till, as it befell, both Laura and Campbell left the room awhile.

Immediately Frank rose, and walking across to Valentinia, laid the fatal ring on the arm of her chair, and returned to his seat without a word.

'You are very—I hope that it—' stammered Valentinia.

'You hope that it was a comfort to me? It was, and I shall be always grateful to you for it.'

'Valentinia heard an emphasis on the 'was.' It checked the impulse (foolish enough) which rose in her, to bid him keep the ring.

So, prim and dignified, she slipped it into its place on her finger, and went on with her work, merely saying—

'I need not say that I am happy that anything which I could do should have been of use to you in such a fearful time.'

'It was a fearful time! but for myself, I cannot be too glad of it. God grant that it may have been as useful to others as to me! It cured me of a great folly. Now I look back, I am astonished at my own absurdity, impudence, presumption. You must let me say it! I do not know how to thank you enough. I cannot thank myself with the fit words, they would be so strong! but I owe this confession to you, and to your exceeding goodness and kindness, when you would have been justified in treating me as a madman. I was glad, I believe, but I am in my right mind now, I assure you,' said he gaily. 'Had I not been, I need hardly say you would not have seen me here. What a prospect this is!' And he rose and looked out of the window.

Valentinia had heard all this with downcast eyes and unmoved face. Was she pleased at it? Not in the least, the naughty child that she was, and more, she grew quite angry with herself, ashamed of herself, for having thought and felt so much about him the night before. 'How silly of me!' He is very well, and does not care for me. And who is he, pray, that I should even look at him?'

And, as it is often to put her words into practice, she looked at him there and then. He was gazing out of the window, leaning gradually and yet fleetly against the shutter with the full glory of the December sun upon his sharp-cut profile and rich chestnut locks, and after all, having looked at him once, she could not help looking at him again. He was certainly a most gentleman-like man, elegant from head to foot, there was not an ungraceful line about him, to his very boots, and the white nails of his slender fingers, even the defects of his figure—the too great length of the neck and slope of the shoulders—increased his likeness to those saintly pictures with which he had been reared up in her mind the night before. He was at one extreme pole of the different types of manhood, and that burly doctor who had saved his life at the other—but her Saint Père alone perfectly combined the two. There was nobody like him, after all. Perhaps her wisest plan, as Headley had forgotten his tape, was to confess all to the Saint Père (as she inwardly did her little ones), and get some sort of absolution from him.

However, she must say something in answer—

'Yes, it is a very lovely view, but really I must say one more word about this matter. I have to thank you, you know, for the good faith which you have kept with me.'

He looked round, seemingly amused. '*C'est une autre affaire*,' and he bowed, 'may I not say any more about the matter,' and he looked at her with such humble and thankful eyes, that

Valentia was sorry not to hear more from him than—

'Pray tell me—for of course you know—the name of this exquisite valley up which I am looking'

'Gwynnant. You must go up it when you are well enough, and see the lakes, they are the only ones in Snowdon from the banks of which the primeval forest has not disappeared'

'Indeed! I must make shift to go there this very afternoon, for—do not laugh at me—but I never saw a lake in my life'

'Never saw a lake!'

'No I am a true Lowlander born and bred among bleak Norfolk sands and fens—so much the worse for this chest of mine, and this is my first sight of mountains. It is all like a dream to me, and a dream which I never expected to be realised'

'Ah, you should see our Irish lakes and mountains—you should see Killarney!'

'I am content with these, I suppose it is as wrong to break the tenth commandment about scenery as about anything else'

'Ah, but it seems so hard that you, who I am sure would appreciate fine scenery, should have been debarred from it, while hundreds of stupid people run over the Alps and Italy every summer, and come home, as far as I can see, rather more stupid than they went, having made confusion worse confounded by filling their poor brains with hard names out of Murray'

'Not quite so hard as that thousands, every day, who would enjoy a meat dinner, should have nothing but dry bread, and not enough of that. I fancy sometimes, that in some mysterious way, that want will be made up to them in the next life, and so with all the beautiful things which travelled people talk of—I comfort myself with the fancy that I see as much as is good for me here, and that if I make good use of that, I shall see the Alps and the Andes in the world to come, or something much more worth seeing. Tell me now, how far may that range of crags be from us? I am sure that I could walk there after luncheon, this mountain air is strengthening me so'

'Walk thither? I assure you they are at least four miles off'

'Four? And I thought them near! So clear and sharp as they stand out against the sky, one fancies that one could almost stretch out a hand and touch those knolls and slabs of rock, as distinct as in a photograph, and yet so soft and rich withal, dappled with pearly-gray stone and purple heath. Ah! So it must be, I suppose. The first time that one sees a glorious thing, one's heart is lifted up towards it in love and awe, till it seems near to one—ground on which one may freely tread, because one appreciates and admires, and so one forgets the distance between its grandeur and one's own littleness'

The illusion was palpable; but did he intend it? Surely not, after what he had just said. And yet there was a sadness in the tone which made Valentia fancy that some feeling for her

might still linger, but he evidently had been speaking to himself, forgetful, for the moment, of her presence, for he turned to her with a start and a blush—'But now—I have been troubling you too long with this stupid *tit-tit* sentimentality of mine, I will make my bow, and find the major. I am afraid, if it be possible for him to forget any one, he has forgotten me in some new noose or other.'

He went out, and to Valentia's chagrin, she saw him no more that day. He spent the forenoon in the garden, and the afternoon in lying down, and at night complained of fatigue, and stayed in his own room the whole evening, while Campbell read him to sleep. Next morning, however, he made his appearance at breakfast, well and cheerful.

'I must play at sick man no more, or I shall rob you, I see, of Major Campbell's company, and I owe you all far too much already'

'Unless you are better than you were last night, you must play at sick man,' said the major. 'I cannot conceive what exhausted you so, unless you ladies are better nurses, I must let no one come near him but myself. If you had been scolding him the whole morning, instead of praising him as he deserves, he could not have been more tired last night.'

'Pray do not!' cried Frank, evidently much pained. 'I had such a delightful morning, and every one is so kind—you only make me wretched, when I feel all the trouble I am giving'

'My dear fellow,' said Scotchbush, *en grand sérieux*, 'after all that you have done for our people at Aberlva, I should be very much shocked if any of my family thought any service shown to you a trouble'

'Pray do not speak so,' said Frank, 'I am fallen among angels, when I least expected'

'Scotchbush as an angel!' shouted Lucia, clapping her hands. 'Elsley, don't you see the wings sprouting already, under his shooting jacket?'

'They are my braces, I suppose, of course,' said Scotchbush, who never understood a joke about himself, though he liked one about other people, while Elsley, who hated all jokes, made no answer—at least none worth recording. In fact, as the reader may have discovered, Elsley, save *tit-tit* with some one who took his fancy, was somewhat of a silent and morose animal, and, as little Scotchbush confided to Mellot, there was no getting a rise out of him. All which Lucia saw as keenly as any one, and tried to pass off by chatting nervously and fussy for him, as well as for herself, whereby she only made him the more cross, for he could not the least understand her argument—'Why, my dear, if you don't talk to people, I must!'

'But why should people be talked to?'

'Because they like it, and expect it!'

'The more foolish they. Much better to hold their tongues and think.'

'Or read your poetry, I suppose,' and then would begin a squabble.

Meanwhile there was one, at least, of the party, who was watching Lucia with most deep and painful interest. Lord Scoutbush was too busy with his own comforts, especially with his fishing, to think much of this moroseness of Elsley's. 'If he suited Lucia, very well. His taste and hers differed—but it was her concern, not his'—was a very easy way of freeing himself from all anxiety on the matter—but not so with Major Campbell. He saw all this, and knew enough of human nature to suspect that the self-seeking, which allowed as moroseness in company, might show as downright bad temper in private. Longing to know more of Elsley, if possible to guide and help him, he tried to be intimate with him, as he had tried at Aberlona, and him court, asked his opinion, talked to him on all subjects which he thought would interest him. His conclusion was more favourable to Elsley's head than to his heart. He saw that Elsley was vain, and liked his attentions, and that lowered him in his eyes—but he saw too that Elsley shrank from him, at first he thought it pride, but he soon found that it was fear, and that lowered him still more in his eyes.

Perhaps Campbell was too hard on the poet but his own purity itself told against Elsley. 'Who am I, that anyone should be afraid of me, unless they have done something wrong?' So, with his dark suspicious frown, he watched intently every word and every tone of Elsley's to his wife, and here he came to a more unpleasant conclusion still. He saw that they were, sometimes at least, not happy together, and from this he took for granted, too hastily, that they were never happy together, that Lucia was an utterly ill-used person, that Elsley was a bad fellow, who ill-treated her—and a black and awful indignation against the man grew up within him, all the more fierce because it seemed utterly righteous, and because, too, it had, under heavy jealousies, to be utterly concealed beneath a courteous and genial manner till many a time he felt inclined to knock Elsley down for little roughnesses to her, which were really the fruit of mere *quichera*, and then accused himself for a hypocrite, because he was keeping up the countenance of his wife with such a man. For Campbell, like most men of his temperament, was over-stern, and sometimes a little cruel and unjust, in demanding of others the same lofty code which he had laid down for himself, and in demanding it, too, of some more than of others, by a very questionable exercise of private judgment. On the whole, he was right, no doubt, in being as indulgent as he dared to the publicans and sinners like Scoutbush, and in being as severe as he dared on all Pharisees and pretentious persons whatsoever—but he was too much inclined to draw between the two classes one of those strong lines of demarcation which exist only in the fancies of the human brain, for sin, like all diseased matters, are complicated and confused matters, many a seeming Pharisee is at heart a self-condemned

publican, and ought to be comforted, and not cursed, while many a publican is, in the midst of all his foul sins, a thorough exclusive and self-complacent Pharisee, and needs not the right hand of mercy, but the strong arm of punishment.

Campbell, like other men, had his faults and his were those of a man wrapped up in a pure and stately, but an austere and lonely creed, disgusted with the world in all its forms, and looking down upon men in general nearly as much as Thimall did. So he set down Elsley for a bad man, to whom he was forced by hard circumstances to behave as if he were a good one.

The only way, therefore, in which he could vent his feeling, was by showing to Lucia that staid attention which so gently and chivalry demand of a man toward an injured woman. Not that he dared, or wished, to conduct himself with her as he did with Valentin, who had also not been a married woman, but did not know her as intimately as he did her sister—but still he had a right to behave as the most intimate friend of her family, and he asserted that right, and all the more determinedly because Elsley scorned now and then not to like it. 'I will teach him how to behave to a charming woman,' said he to himself, and perhaps he had been wiser if he had not said it—but every man has his weak point, and chivalry was Major Campbell's.

'What do you think of that poet, Elliot?' said he once, on returning from a picnic, during which Elsley had never noticed his wife, and at last, finding Valentin engaged with Headley, had actually gone off, *pour pas aller*, to watch Lord Scoutbush fishing.

'Oh, clever enough, and to spare, and as well read a man as I know. One of the Shunt-and-drag party, of course, the express locomotive school, screw and-go ahead and thinks me, with my classmate, a half-baked pagan. Still, every man has a right to his opinion. Tave and let bye.'

'I don't care about his taste,' said the major impatiently. 'What sort of man is he?—man, Claude?'

'Ahem, humph! "Inimitable genius poetarum." But one is so accustomed to that among literary men, one never expects them to be like anybody else, and so takes their whims and oddities for granted.'

'And then sink, too, eh?'

'Sink? I know of none on his part.'

'Don't you call temper a sin?'

'No, I call it a determination of blood to the head, or of animal spirits to the wrong place, or—my dear major, I am no moralist. I take people, you know, as I find them. But he is a bore, and I should not wonder if that sweet little woman had found it out ere now.'

Campbell ground something between his teeth. He fancied himself full of righteous wrath—he was really in a very unchristian temper. Be it so—perhaps there were excuses

for him (as there are for many men), of which we know nothing.

Elsley, meanwhile, watched Campbell with fast lowering brow. Losing a woman's affections? He who does so deserves his fate. Had he been in the habit of paying proper attention to Lucia, he would have liked Campbell all the more for his conduct. There are few greater pleasures to a man who is what he should be to his wife, than to see other men admiring what he admires, and trying to rival him where he knows that he can have no rival. Let them worship as much as they will. Let her make herself as charming to them as she can. What matter? He smiles at them in his heart, for has he not, over and above all the pretty things which he can say and do ten times as well as they, a talisman—a dozen talismans which are beyond their reach!—in the strength of which he will go home and laugh over with her, amid sacred caresses, all which makes mean men mad? But Elsley, alas for him, had neglected Lucia himself, and therefore dreaded comparison with any other man, and the suspicions which had taken root in him at Aboriva grew into ugly shape and strength. However, he was silent, and contented himself with coldness and all but rudeness.

There were excuses for him. In the first place, it would have been an ugly thing to take notice of any man's attentions to a wife, it could not be done but upon the strongest grounds, and done in a way which would make a complete rupture necessary, so breaking up the party in a sufficiently unpleasant way. Besides, to move in the matter at all would be to implicate Lucia, for of whatsoever kind Campbell's attentions were, she evidently liked them, and a quarrel with her on that score was more than Elsley dared face. He was not a man of strong moral courage, he hated a scene of any kind, and he was afraid of being worsted in any really serious quarrel, not merely by Campbell, but by Lucia. It may seem strange that he should be afraid of her, though not so that he should be afraid of Campbell. But the truth is, that the man who bullies his wife very often does so—as Elsley had done more than once—simply to prove to himself his own strength, and hide his fear of her. He knew well that woman's tongue, when once the 'fair beast' is brought to bay, is a weapon far too trenchant to be faced by any shield but that of a very clear conscience toward her, which was more than Elsley had.

Besides—and it is an honour to Elsley Vavasour, amid all his weakness, that he had justice and chivalry enough left to know what nine men out of ten ignore—behind all, let the worst come to the worst, lay one just and terrible rejoinder, which he, though he had been no worse than the average of men, could only answer by silent shame—

'At least, sir, I was pure when I came to you! You best know whether you were so likewise.'

And yet even that, so all-forgiving is woman, might have been faced by some means; but the

miserable complication about the false name still remained. Elsley believed that he was in his wife's power, that she could, if she chose, turn upon him, and proclaim him to the world as a scoundrel and an impostor. And, as it is of the nature of man to hate those whom he fears, Elsley began to have dark and ugly feelings toward Lucia. Instead of throwing them away, as a strong man would have done, he pampered them almost without meaning to do so. For he let them run riot through his too vivid imagination, in the form of possible speeches, possible scenes, till he had looked and looked through a hundred thoughts which no man has a right to entertain for a moment. True he had entertained them with horror, but he ought not to have entertained them at all, he ought to have kicked them contemptuously out and back to the devil, from whence they came. It may be, again, that this is impossible to man, that prayer is the only refuge against that Walpurgis-dance of the witches and the hounds, which will, at hapless moments, whirl unbidden through a mortal brain, but Elsley did not pray.

So, leaving these fancies in his head too long, he soon became accustomed to them, and accustomed, too, to the Nemesis which they bring with them, of chronic moodiness and concealed rage. Day by day he was lashing himself up into fresh fury, and yet day by day he was becoming more careful to conceal that fury. He had many reasons moral cowardice, which made him shrink from the tremendous consequences of an explosion—equally tremendous, were he right or wrong. Then the secret hope, perhaps the secret consciousness, that he was wrong, and was only saying to God, like the self-deceiving prophet, 'I do well to be angry', then the honest fear of going too far, of being surprised at last into some hideous and irreparable speech or deed, which he might find out too late was utterly unjust, then at moments (for even that would cross him) the devilish notion that, by concealment, he might lure Lucia on to give him a safe ground for attack. All these, and more, tormented him for a wretched fortnight, during which he became, at such an expense of self-control as he had not exercised for years, courteous to Campbell, more than courteous to Lucia, hiding under a smiling face wrath which increased with the pressure brought to bear upon it.

Campbell and Lucia, Melot, Valentin, and Frank, utterly deceived, went on more merrily than ever, little dreaming that they walked and talked daily with a man who was fast becoming glad to flee to the pit of hell, but for the fear that 'God would be there also.'

They meanwhile chatted on, enjoying, as human souls are allowed to do at rare and precious moments, the mere sensation of being, of which they would talk at times in a way which led them down into deep matters: for instance—

'How pleasant to sit here for ever!' said

Claude, one afternoon, in the inn garden at Beddgelert, 'and say, not with Descartes, "I think, therefore I exist," But simply, "I enjoy, therefore I exist." I almost think those Emersonians are right at times when they crave the "life of plants, and stones, and iam." Stangrave said to me once, that his ideal of perfect bliss was that of an oyster in the Indian seas, drinking the warm salt water motionless, and troubling himself about nothing, while nothing troubled itself about him.'

'Till a diver came and tore him up for the sake of his pearls!' said Valentin.

'He did not intend to contain any pearls. A pearl, you know, is a disease of the oyster, the product of some irritation. He wished to be the oyster pure and simple, a part of nature.'

'And to be of no use?' asked Frank.

'Of none whatsoever. Nature had made him what he was, and all beside was his business, and not his. I don't deny that I laughed at him, and made him wroth by telling him that his doctrine was "the apotheosis of loafing." But my heart went with him, and with the jolly oyster too. It is very beautiful after all, that careless nymph and shepherd life of the old Greeks, and that Marquesas romance of Herman Melville's to enjoy the simple fact of living, like a Neapolitan *lazzarone*, or a fly upon a wall.'

'But the old Greek heroes fought and laboured to till the land, and rid it of giants and monsters,' said Frank. 'And as for the Marquesas, Mr Melville found out, did he not—as you did once—that they were only petting and fattening him for the purpose of eating him? There is a dark side to that pretty picture, Mr Mellot.'

'*Tant pis pour eux!*' But that is an unnecessary appendage to the idea, surely. It must be possible to realise such a simple, rich, healthy life, without wickedness, if not without human sorrow. It is no dream, and no one shall rob me of it. I have seen fragments of it scattered up and down the world, and I believe they will all meet in Paradise—where and when I care not, but they will meet. I was very happy in the South Sea Islands, after that, when nobody meant to eat me, and I am very happy here, and do not intend to be eaten, unless it will be any pleasure to Miss St Just. No, let man enjoy himself when he can, and take his fill of those flaming red geraniums, and glossy rhododendrons, and feathered crown ferns, and the gold green lace of those acacias tossing and whispering overhead, and the purple mountains sleeping there aloft, and the murmur of the brook over the stones, and drink in scents with every breath—what was his nose made for, save to smell? I used to torment myself once by asking them all what they meant. Now I am content to have done with symbolisms, and say, "What you all mean, I care not, all I know is, that I can draw pleasure from the mere sight of you, as, perhaps, you do from the mere sight of me, so let us sit

together, nature and I, and stare into each other's eyes like two young lovers, careless of the morrow and its griefs." I will not even take the trouble to paint her. Why make ugly copies of perfect pictures? Let those who wish to see her take a railway ticket, and save us academicians colours and canvas. *Quant à moi*, the public must go to the mountains, as Mahomet had to do, for the mountains shall not come to the public.'

'One of your wilful paradoxes, Mr Mellot, why, you are photographing them all day long.'

'Not quite all day long, madam. And after all, *il faut vivre*. I want a few luxuries, I have no capacity for keeping a shop, photographing pays better than painting, considering the time it takes, and it is only nature reproducing herself, not caricaturing her. But if any one will ensure me a poor two thousand a year, I will promise to photograph no more, but vanish to Sicily or Calabria, and sit with Sabina in an orchard all my days, turning rose garlands for her pretty head, like Theocritus and his friends, while the "pears drop on our shoulders, and the apples by our side."

'What do you think of all this?' asked Valentin of Frank.

'That I am too like the Emersonian oyster here, very happy, and very useless, and, therefore, very anxious to be gone.'

'Surely you have earned the right to be idle awhile.'

'No one has a right to be idle.'

'Oh!' groaned Claude, 'where did you find that eleventh commandment?'

'I have done with all eleven commandments, for I find it quite hard work enough to keep the ancient ten. But I find it, Mellot, in the deepest abyss of all, in the very depth from which the commandments sprang. But we will not talk about it here.'

'Why not?' asked Valentin, looking up. 'Are we so very naughty as to be unworthy to listen?'

'And are these mountains,' asked Claude, 'so ugly and ill-made that they are an unfit pulpit for a sermon? No, tell me what you mean. After all, I am half in jest.'

'Do not courtesy, pity, chivalry, generosity, self-sacrifice—in short, being of use—do not our hearts tell us that they are the most beautiful, noble, lovely things in the world?'

'I suppose it is so,' said Valentin.

'Why does one admire a soldier? Not for his epaulettes and red coat, but because one knows that, coxcomb though he be at home here, there is the power in him of that same self-sacrifice, that, when he is called, he will go and die, that he may be of use to his country. And yet—it may seem invidious to say so just now—but there are other sorts of self-sacrifice, less showy, but even more beautiful.'

'Oh, Mr Headley, what can a man do more than die for his countrymen?'

'Live for them. It is a longer work, and therefore a more difficult and a nobler one.'

Frank spoke in a somewhat sad and abstracted tone.

'But tell me,' she said, 'what all this has to do with—with the deep matter of which you spoke?'

'Simply that it is the law of all earth, and heaven, and Him who made them. That God is perfectly powerful, because He is perfectly and infinitely of use, and perfectly good, because He delights utterly and always in being of use, and that, therefore, we can become like God as the very heathens felt that we can, and ought to become—only in proportion as we become of use. I did not see it once. I tried to be good, not knowing what good meant. I tried to be good, because I thought it would pay me in the world to come. But, at last, I saw that all life, all devotion, all piety, were only worth anything, only Divine, and God-like, and God-beloved, as they were means to that one end—to be of use.'

'It is a noble thought, Headley,' said Claude, but Valentinia was silent.

'It is a noble thought, Mollot, and all thoughts become clear in the light of it, even that most difficult thought of all, which so often torments good people, when they feel, "I ought to love God, and yet I do not love Him." Easy to love Him, if one can once think of Him as the concentration, the ideal perfection of all which is most noble, admirable, lovely in human character! And easy to work, too, when one once feels that one is working for such a thing, and with such a Being as that! The whole world round us, and the future of the world, too, seem full of light, even down to its innermost and lowest depths, when we can but remember that great idea. An infinitely useful God over all, who is trying to make each of us useful in His place. If that be not the best and wisest vision of which old mystics spoke so rapturously, one glimpse of which was perfect bliss, I at least know none nobler, dearer none more blessed. Pray forgive me, Miss St. Just! I ought not to intrude thus!'

'Go on!' said Valentinia.

'I—I really have no more to say. I have said too much. I do not know how I have been betrayed so far,' stammered Frank, who had the just dislike of his school of anything like display on such solemn matters.

'Can you tell us too much truth? Mr. Headley is right, Mr. Mollot, and you are wrong.'

'It will not be the first time, Miss St. Just. But what I spoke in jest, he has answered in earnest.'

'He was quite right. We are none of us half earnest enough. There is Lucia with the children.' And she rose and walked across the garden.

'You have moved the fair trifler somewhat,' said Claude.

'God grant it! but I cannot think what made me.'

'Why think? You spoke out nobly, and I shall not forget your sermon.'

'I was not preaching at you, most affectionate and kindly of men.'

'And laziest of men, likewise. What can I do now, at this moment, to be of use to any one? Set me my task.'

But Frank was following with his eyes Valentinia, as she went hurriedly across to Lucia. He saw her take two of the children at once on her sister's hands, and carry them away down a walk. A few minutes afterwards he could hear her laughing with them, but he could not have guessed, from the silver din of those merry voices, that Valentinia's heart was heavy within her.

For her conscience was really smitten. Of what use was she in the world? Major Campbell had talked to her often about her duties to this person and to that, of this same necessity of being useful, but she had escaped from the thought, as we have seen her, in laughing at poor little Scotchman on the very same score. But why had not Major Campbell's sermons touched her heart as this one had? Who can tell? Who is there among us to whom an oft-heard truth has not become a tiresome and superfluous commonplace, till one day it has flashed before us utterly new, indelible, not to be disobeyed, written in letters of fire across the whole vault of heaven! All one can say is, that her time was not come. Besides, she looked on Major Campbell as a being utterly superior to herself, and that very superiority, while it allowed her to be as familiar with him as she chose, excused her in her own eyes from opening to him her real heart. She could safely jest with him, let him pet her, play at being his daughter, while she felt that between him and her lay a gulf as wide as between earth and heaven—and that very notion comforted her in her naughtiness, for in that case, of course, his code of morals was not meant for her, and while she took his warnings (as many of them at least as she chose), she thought herself by no means bound to follow his examples. She all but worshipped him as her guardian angel—but she was not meant for an angel herself, so she could indulge freely in those little escapades and frivolities for which she was born, and then, whenever frightened, run for shelter under his wings. But to hear the same, and even loftier words, from the lips of the curate, whom she had made her toy, almost her butt, was to have them brought down unexpectedly and painfully to her own level. It was his ideal, why ought it not to be hers? Was she not his equal, perhaps his superior? And so her very pride humbled her, as she said to herself, 'Then I too ought to be useful. I can be. I will be.'

'Lucia,' asked she, that very afternoon, 'will you let me take the children off your hands while Clara is busy in the morning?'

'Oh, you dear good creature! but it would be such a *gêne*! They are really stupid, I am afraid, sometimes, or else I am. They make me so miserably cross at times.'

'I will take them. It would be a relief to you, would it not?'

'My dear!' said poor Lucia, with a doleful smile, which seemed to Valentin's self-accusing heart to say, 'Have you only now discovered that fact?'

From that day Valentin courted Headley's company more and more. To fall in love with him was of course absurd, and he had cured himself of his passing fancy for her. There could be no harm, then, in her making the most of conversation so different from what she heard in the world, and which in her heart of hearts she liked so much better. For it was with Valentin as with all women, in this common fault of frivolity, as in most others, the men rather than they are to blame. Valentin had cultivated in herself those qualities which she saw admired by the men whom she met, and some one of whom, of course, she meant to marry, and as their female ideal was a butterfly ideal, a butterfly she became. But beneath all lay, deep and strong, the woman's love of nobleness and wisdom, the woman's longing to learn and to be led, which has shown itself in every age in so many a fantastic and even ugly shape, and which is their real excuse for the flirting with 'geniuses,' casting themselves at the feet of directors, which had tempted her to coquetry with Elsie, and was now bringing her into 'undesirable' intimacy with the poor curate.

She had heard that day, with some sorrow, his announcement that he wished to be gone, but as he did not refer to it again, she left the thought alone, and all but forgot it. The subject, however, was renewed about a week afterwards. 'When you return to Aberlady,' she had said, in reference to some commission.

'I shall never return to Aberlady.'

'Not return?'

'No, I have already resigned the curacy. I believe your uncle has appointed to it the man whom Campbell found for me, and an excellent man, I hear, he is. At least he will do better there than I.'

'But what could have induced you? How sorry all the people will be.'

'I am not sure of that,' said he with a smile.

'I did what I could at last to win back at least their respect, and to leave at least not hatred behind me, but I am unfit for them. I did not understand them. I meant—no matter what I meant, but I failed. God forgive me! I shall now go somewhere where I shall have simpler work to do, where I shall at least have a chance of practising the lesson which I learnt there. I learnt it all, strange to say, from the two people in the parish from whom I expected to learn least.'

'Whom do you mean?'

'The doctor and the schoolmistress.'

'Why from them less than from any in the parish? She so good, and he so clever?'

'That I shall never tell to any one now. Suffice it that I was mistaken.'

Valentin could obtain no further answer, and so the days ran on, every one becoming more

and more intimate, till a certain afternoon, on which they were all to go and picnic, under Claude's pilotage, above the lake of Gwynnant. Scotchbush was to have been with them, but a heavy day's rain in the meanwhile swelled the streams into fishing order, so the little man ordered a car, and started at three in the morning for Bettws with Mr. Bowie, who, however, loth to give up the arrangement of plates and the extraction of champagne corks, considered his presence by the river side a natural necessity.

'My dear Miss Clara, ye see, there'll be nobody to see that his lordship puts on dry stockings, and he's always getting over the tops of his water boots, being young and duff, as we've all been, and no offence to you, and to tell you truth, I can stand all temptations in moderation, that is,—save an' except the chance o' drinkin' a bit.'

CHAPTER XX

BOTH SIDES OF THE MOON AT ONCE

THE spot which Claude had chosen for the picnic was on one of the lower spurs of that great mountain of The Maiden's Peak, which bounds the vale of Gwynnant to the south. Above, a wilderness of gnarled volcanic dykes and purple heather ledges, below, broken into glens, in which still linger pale green ash woods, relics of that great primeval forest in which, in less days, great Leicester used to rouse the hart with horn and horn.

Among the *Sc* Claude had found a little lawn, guarded by great rocks, out of every many of which the ashes grew as freely as on flat ground. Their feet were beddled deep in sweet fern and wild raspberries, and golden roil, and purple scabious, and tall blue campanulas. Above them, and before them, and below them, the ashes shook their green flagges in the bright sunshine, and through their glimpses were seen of the purple hills above, and, right in front, of the great cataract of Aunt Gwynnant, a long snow-white line zigzagging down cool black chills for many a hundred feet, and above it, depth beyond depth of purple shadow away into the very heart of Snowdon, up the long valley of Cwm-dyll, to the great amphitheatre of Clogwyn-y-Garnedd, while over all the cone of Snowdon rose, in perfect symmetry, between his attendant peaks of Lliwedd and Crib Coch.

There they sat, and laughed, and talked, the pleasant summer afternoon, in their pleasant summer bower, and never regretted the silence of the birds, so sweetly did Valentin's song go up in many a rich and Irish melody, while the lowing of the milk kine, and the wild cooing of the herd-boys, came softly up from the vale below, 'and all the air was filled with pleasant noise of waters.'

Then Claude must needs photograph them all, as they sat, and group them first according

to his fancy, and among his fancies was one, that Valentinia should sit as queen, with Headley and the major at her feet. And Headley lounged there, and looked into the grass, and thought it well for him could he be there for ever.

Then Claude must photograph the mountain itself, and all began to talk of it.

'See the breadth of light and shadow,' said Claude, 'how the purple depth of the great lap of the mountain is thrown back by the sheet of green light on Lhwedd, and the red glory on the cliffs of Crib Coch, till you seem to look away into the bosom of the hill, mile after mile.'

'And so you do,' said Headley. 'I have learnt to distinguish mountain distances since I have been here. That peak is four miles from us now, and yet the shadowed hills at its foot seem double that distance.'

'And look, look,' said Valentinia, 'at the long line of glory with which the western sun is gilding the edge of the left-hand slope, bringing it nearer and nearer to us every moment, against the deep blue sky.'

'But what a form! Perfect lightness, perfect symmetry!' said Claude. 'Curves sweeping over curve, peak towering over peak, to the highest point, and then sinking down again as gracefully as they rose. One can hardly help fancying that the mountain moves, that those dancing hues are not instinct with life.'

'At least,' said Headley, 'that the mountain is a leaping wave, frozen just ere it fell.'

'Perfect,' said Valentinia. 'That is the very expression! So concise, and yet so complete.'

And Headley, poor fool, felt as happy as if he had found a gold mine.

'To me,' said Elsley, 'the fancy rises of some great Eastern monarch sitting in royal state, with ample shoulders sloping right and left, he lays his purple-mantled arms upon the heads of two of those Titan guards who stand on either side his footstool.'

'While from beneath his throne,' said Headley, 'as Eastern poets would say, flow everlasting streams, life-giving, to fertile broad lands below.'

'I did not know that you, too, were a poet,' said Valentinia.

'Nor I, madam. But if such scenes as these, and in such company, cannot inspire the fancy of even a poor country curate to something of exaltation, he must be dull indeed.'

'Why not put some of these thoughts into poetry?'

'What use?' answered he in so low, said, and meaning a tone, meant only for her ear, that Valentinia looked down at him but he was gazing intently upon the glorious scene. Was he hunting at the vanity and vexation of spirit of poor Elsley's versifying? Or did he mean that he had now no purpose in life—no prize for which it was worth while to win honour?

She did not answer him: but he answered himself—perhaps to explain away his own speech—

'No, madam! God has written the poetry already, and there it is before me. My business is not to rewrite it clumsily, but to read it humbly, and give Him thanks for it.'

More and more had Valentinia been attracted by Headley during the last few weeks. Accustomed to men who tried to make the greatest possible show of what small wits they possessed, she was surprised to find one who seemed to think it a duty to keep his knowledge and taste in the background. She gave him credit for more talent than appeared, for more, perhaps, than he really had. She was piqued, too, at his very modesty and self-restraint. Why did not he, like the rest who dangled about her, spread out his peacock's train for her eyes, and try to show his worship of her by setting himself off in his brightest colours? and yet this modesty awed her into respect of him, for she could not forget that, whether he had sentiment much or little, sentiment was not the staple of his manhood, she could not forget his chimney work, and she knew that, under that delicate and bashful outside, lay virtue and heroism, enough and to spare.

'But if you put these thoughts into words, you would teach others to read that poetry.'

'My business is to teach people to do right, and if I cannot, to pray God to find some one who can.'

'Right, Headley!' said Major Campbell, laying his hand on the curate's shoulder. 'God dwells no more in books written with pens than in temples made with hands, and the sacrifice which pleases Him is not verse, but righteousness. Do you recollect, Queen Whims, what I wrote once in your album?'

"Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever,
Thou shalt be a great one then, all day long,
That is what I do, that I do, that I do,
That I do, that I do, that I do, that I do."

'But, you naughty, hypocritical Saint Père, you write poetry yourself, and beautifully.'

'Yes, as I smoke my cigar, to comfort my poor rheumatic old soul. But if I lived only to write poetry, I should think myself as wise as if I lived only to smoke tobacco.'

Valentinia's eyes could not help glancing at Elsley, who had wandered away to the neighbouring brook, and was gazing with all his eyes upon a ferny rock, having left Lucia to help Claude with his photographing.

Frank saw her look, and read its meaning, and answered her thoughts, perhaps too hastily.

'And what a really well-read and agreeable man he is, all the while! What a mine of quaint learning, and beautiful old legend! If he would but bring it into the common stock for every one's amusement, instead of hoarding it up for himself!'

'Why, what else does he do but bring it into the common stock, when he publishes a book which every one can read?' said Valentinia, half out of the spirit of contradiction.

'And few understand,' said Headley quietly.

'You are very unjust, he is a very discerning

and agreeable person, and I shall go and talk to him.' And away went Valentin to Elsley, somewhat cross. Woman-like, she allowed, for the sake of her sister's honour, no one but herself to depreciate Vavasour, and chose to think it impertinent on Headley's part.

Headley began quietly talking to Major Campbell about botany, while Valentin, a little ashamed of herself all the while, took her revenge on Elsley by socking him for his unsocial ways, in the very terms which Headley had been using.

At last Claude, having finished his photographing, departed downward to get some new view from the road below, and Lucia returned to the rest of the party. Valentin joined them at once, bringing up Elsley, who was not in the best of humours after her duties, and the whole party wandered about the woodland, and rambled down beside the torrent beds.

At last they came to a point where they could descend no farther, for the stream, falling over a cliff, had worn itself a narrow chasm in the rock, and thundered down it into a deep narrow pool.

Lucia, who was basking in the sunshine and the flowers as simply as a child, would needs peep over the brink, and made Elsley hold her while she looked down. A quiet happiness, as of old recollections, came into her eyes, as she watched the sparkling and foaming water—

'And beauty, born of murmuring sound,
Did pass into her face.

Campbell started. The Lucia of seven years ago seemed to bloom out again in that pale face and wrinkled forehead, and a smile came over his face, too, as he looked.

'Just like the dear old waterfall at Kilnabeggan. You recollect it, Major Campbell?'

Elsley always disliked recollections of Kilnabeggan, recollections of her life before he knew her, recollections of pleasures in which he had not shared, especially recollections of his old acquaintance with the major.

'I do not, I am ashamed to say,' replied the major.

'Why, you were there a whole summer. Ah! I suppose you thought about nothing but your salmon fishing. If Elsley had been there he would not have forgotten a rock or a pool. Would you, Elsley?'

'Really, in spite of all salmon, I have not forgotten a rock or a pool about the place which I ever saw, but at the waterfall I never was.'

'So he has not forgotten! What cause had he to remember so carefully?' thought Elsley.

'Oh, Elsley, look! What is that exquisite flower, like a ball of gold, hanging just over the water?'

If Elsley had not had the evil spirit haunting about him, he would have joined in Lucia's admiration of the beautiful creature, as it dropped into the foam from its narrow ledge, with its fan of palmate leaves bright green against the black mosses of the rock, and its

golden petals glowing like a tiny sun in the darkness of the chasm, as it was, he answered—

'Only a buttercup.'

'I am sure it's not a buttercup! It is three times as large, and a so much paler yellow! Is it a buttercup, now, Major Campbell?'

Campbell looked down.

'Very nearly one, after all, but its real name is the globe flower. It is common enough here in spring, you may see the leaves in every pasture. But I suppose this plant, hidden from the light, has kept its flowers till the autumn.'

'And till I come to see it, darling that it is! I should like to reward it by wearing it home.'

'I dare say it would be very proud of the honour, especially if Mr Vavasour would enbalm it in verse, after it had done service to you.'

'It is doing good enough service where it is,' said Elsley. 'Why pluck out the very eye of that perfect picture?'

'Strange,' said Lucia, 'that such a beautiful thing should be born there all alone upon these rocks, with no one to look at it.'

'It enjoys itself sufficiently without us, no doubt,' said Elsley.

'Yes, but I want to enjoy it. Oh, if you could but get it for me!'

Elsley looked down. There was fifteen feet of somewhat slippery rock, then a ragged ledge a foot broad, in a crack of which the flower grew, then the dark boiling pool. Elsley shrugged his shoulders, and said, smiling, as if it were a fine thing to say, 'Really, my dear, all men are not knight-errants enough to endanger their necks for a bit of weed, and I cannot say that such rough *tour de force* are at all to my fancy.'

Lucia turned away. But she was vexed. Campbell could see that a strange fancy for the plant had seized her. As she walked from the spot, he could hear her talking about its beauty to Valentin.

Campbell's blood boiled. To be asked by that woman—by any woman—to get her that flower and to be afraid! It was bad enough to be ill-tempered, but to be a coward, and to be proud thereof! He yielded to a temptation, which he had much better have left alone, seeing that Lucia had not asked him, swinging himself easily enough down the ledge, got the flower, and put it, quietly bowing, into Mrs Vavasour's hand.

He was frightened when he had done it, for he saw, to his surprise, that she was frightened. She took the flower, smiling thanks, and expressing a little commonplace horror and astonishment at his having gone down such a dangerous cliff, but she took it to Elsley, drew his arm through hers, and seemed determined to make as much of him as possible for the rest of the afternoon. 'The fellow was jealous, then, in addition to his other sins!' And Campbell, who felt that he had put himself unnecessarily forward between husband and wife, grew more

and more angry, and somehow, unlike his usual wont, refused to confess himself in the wrong, because he was in the wrong. Certainly it was not pleasant for poor Elsley, and so Lucia felt, and bore with him when he refused to be comforted, and rendered blessing for railing when he said to her more than one angry word, but she had become accustomed to angry words by this time.

All might have passed off, but for that careless Valentin, who had not seen the details of what had passed, and so advised himself to ask where Lucia got that beautiful plant?

'Major Campbell picked it up for her from the cliff,' said Elsley dilly.

'Ah! at the risk of his neck, I don't doubt. He is the most matchless *cavaliers servent*.'

'I shall leave Mr. Vavasour to his care, then—that is, for the present,' said Elsley, drawing his arm from Lucia's.

'I assure you,' answered she, roused in her turn by his determined bad temper, 'I am not the least afraid of being left in the charge of so old a friend.'

Elsley made no answer, but sprang down through the thickets, calling loudly to Claude Mellet.

It was very naughty of Lucia, no doubt, but even a woman will turn, and there are times when people who have not courage to hold their peace must say something or other, and do not always, in the hurry, get out what they ought, but only what they have time to think of. And she forgot what she had said the next minute, in Major Campbell's question—

'Am I, then, so old a friend, Mrs. Vavasour?'

'Of course, who else?'

Campbell was silent a moment. If he was inclined to choke, at least Lucia did not see it.

'I trust I have not offended you—Mr. Vavasour?'

'Oh!' she said, with a forced gaiety, 'only one of my poetic fancies. He wanted so much to see Mr. Mellet photograph the waterfall. I hope he will be in time to find him.'

'I am a plain soldier, Mrs. Vavasour, and I only ask because I do not understand. What are poetic fancies?'

Lucia looked up in his face puzzled, and saw there an expression so grave, pitying, tender, that her heart leaped up toward him, and then sank back again.

'Why do you ask? Why need you know? You are no poet.'

'And for that very cause I ask you.'

'Oh, but,' said she, guessing at what was in his mind, and trying, woman-like, to play purposely at cross purposes, and to defend her husband at all risks, 'he has an extraordinary poetic faculty, all the world agrees to that, Major Campbell.'

'What matter?' said he. Lucia would have been very angry, and perhaps ought to have been so, for what business of Campbell's was it whether her husband were kind to her or not?

but there was a deep sadness, almost despair, in the tone, which disarmed her.

'Oh, Major Campbell, is it not a glorious thing to be a poet? And is it not a glorious thing to be a poet's wife? Oh, for the sake of that—I could but see him honoured, appreciated, famous, as he will be some day.' Though I think (and she spoke with all a woman's pride), 'he is somewhat famous now, is he not?'

'Famous? Yes,' answered Campbell, with an abstracted voice, and then rejoined quickly, 'If you could but see that, what then?'

'Why then,' said she, with a half smile (for she had nearly entrapped herself into an admission of what she was determined to conceal), 'why then, I should be still more what I am now, his devoted little wife, who cares for nobody and nothing but putting his study to rights, and bringing up his children.'

'Happy children,' said he, after a pause and half to himself 'who have such a mother to bring them up.'

'Do you really think so? But flattery need not to be one of your sins. Ah, I wish you could give me some advice about how I am to train them.'

'So it is she who has the work of education, not he?' thought Campbell to himself, and then answered gaily—

'My dear madam, what can a confirmed old bachelor like me know about children?'

'Oh, don't you know?' (and she gave one of her pretty Irish laughs) 'that it is the old maids who always write the children's books for the benefit of us poor ignorant married women? But' (and she spoke earnestly again) 'we all know how wise and good you are. I did not know it in old times. I am afraid I used to torment you when I was young and foolish.'

'Where on earth can Mellet and Mr. Vavasour be?' asked Campbell.

'Oh, never mind. Mr. Mellet has gone wandering down the loch with his apparatus, and my Elsley has gone wandering after him, and will find him in due time, with his head in a black bag, and a great tail just going to change him from behind, like that hapless man in *Punch*. I always tell Mr. Mellet that will be his end.'

Campbell was deeply shocked to hear the light tone in which she talked of the passionate temper of a man whom she so surely loved. How many outbreaks of it there must have been, how many paroxysms of astonishment, shame, grief—perhaps, alas! counterbursts of anger ere that heart could have become thus proof against the ever-lowering thunderstorm!

'Well,' he said, 'all we can do is to walk down to the car, and let them follow, and, meanwhile, I will give you my wise opinion about this education question, whereof I know nothing.'

'It will be all oracular to me, for I know nothing either,' and she put her arm through his, and walked on.

'Did you hurt yourself then? I am sure you are in pain.'

'I! Never less free from it, with many thanks to you. What made you think so?'

'I heard you breathe so hard, and quite stamp your feet, I thought I suppose it was fancy.'

It was not fancy, nevertheless. Major Campbell was stamping down everything, and succeeded, too, in crushing it.

They walked on toward the car, Valentia and Headley following them, ere they arrived at the place where they were to meet it, it was quite dark, but what was more important, the car was not there.

'The stupid man must have mistaken his orders, and gone home.'

'Or let the horse go home of itself, while he was asleep inside. He was more than half tipsy when we started.'

So spoke the major, divining the exact truth. There was nothing to be done but to walk the long miles home, and let the two tenants follow as they could.

'We shall have plenty of time for our educational lecture,' said Lucia.

'Plenty of time to waste, then, my dear lady.'

'Oh, I never talk with you five minutes—I do not know why—without feeling wiser and happier. I envy Valentia for having seen so much of you of late.'

Little thought poor Lucia, as she spoke these innocent words, that within ten yards of her, crouched behind the wall, his face and every limb writhing with mangled enmity and rage, was none other but her husband.

He had given place to the devil and the devil (for the 'superstitious' and 'old world' notion which attributes such frenzies to the devil has not yet been superseded by a better one) had entered into him, and concentrated all the evil habits and passions which he had indulged for years into one flaming hell within him.

Miserable man! His torments were sevenfold and if he had sinned, he was at least punished. Not merely by all which a husband has a right to feel in such a case, or fancies that he has a right, not merely by tortured vanity and self-conviction, by the agony of seeing any man preferred to him, which to a man of Elsie's character was of itself unbearable—not merely by the loss of trust in one whom he had once trusted utterly—but, over and above all, and worst of all, by the feeling of shame, self-reproach, self-hatred, which burns a jealous man, and which ought to haunt him, for few men lose the love of women who have once loved them, save by their own folly or baseness—by the recollection that he had traded on her trust, that he had drugged his own conscience with the fancy that she must love him always, let him do what he would, and had neglected and insulted her affection, because he fancied, in his conceit, that it was inalienable. And with the loss of self-respect came recklessness of it, and drove him on, as it has jealous men

in all ages, to meannesses unspeakable, which have made them for centuries, poor wretches, the butt of worthless playwrights, and the scorn of their fellow-men.

Elsey had wandered, he hardly knew how or whither, for his calling to Melist was the merest blind,—stumbling over rocks, bracing himself against tree-trunks, to this wall. He knew they must pass it. He waited for them, and had his reward. Blind with rage, he hardly waited for the sound of their footsteps to die away before he had sprung into the road, and hurried up it in the opposite direction, anywhere, everywhere, — to escape from them, and from self. Whipt by the furies, he fled along the road and up the vale, he cared not whither.

And what were Headley and Valentia, who of necessity had paired off together, doing all the while?

They walked on silently side by side for ten minutes, then Frank said:

'I have been impertinent, Miss St. Just, and I beg your pardon.'

'No, you have not,' said she, quite hastily. 'You were right, too right, has it not been proved within the last five minutes? My poor sister! What can be done to mend Mr. Vavasour's temper? I wish you could talk to him, Mr. Headley.'

'He is beyond my art. His age, and his talents, and his consciousness of them,' said Frank, using the mildest term he could find, 'would prevent so insignificant a person as me having any influence. But what I cannot do, God's grace may.'

'Can it change a man's character, Mr. Headley? It may make good men better—but can it cure temper?'

'Major Campbell must have told you that it can do anything.'

'Ah, yes—with men as wise, and strong, and mild as he is, but with such a weak, vain man—'

'Miss St. Just, I know one who is neither wise, nor strong, nor noble, but as weak and vain as any man, in whom God has conquered— as He may conquer yet in Mr. Vavasour—all which makes man cling to life.'

'What, all?' asked she, suspecting, and not wrongly, that he spoke of himself.

'All, I suppose, which it is good for them to have crushed. There are feelings which last on, in spite of all struggles to quench them. I suppose, because they ought to last, because, while they torture, they still ennoble. Death will quench them—or if not, satisfy them—or if not, set them at rest somehow.'

'Death?' answered she, in a startled tone.

'Yes. Our friend, Major Campbell's friend, death. We have been seeing a good deal of him together lately, and have come to the conclusion that he is the most useful, pleasant, and instructive of all friends.'

'Oh, Mr. Headley, do not speak so! Are you in earnest?'

'So much in earnest, that I have resolved to

go out as an army chaplain, to see in the war somewhat more of my new friend.' "

'Impossible! Mr Headley, it will kill you! All that horrible fever and cholera!'

'And what possible harm can it do me, if it does kill me, Miss St. Just?'

'Mr Headley, this is madness! I—we can not allow you to throw away your life thus—so young, and—and such prospects before you! And there is nothing that my brother would not do for you, were it only for your heroism at Aleralva. There is not one of the family who does not love and respect you, and long to see all the world appreciating you as we do, and your poor mother—'

'I have told my mother all, Miss St. Just, and she has said, Go, it is your only hope. She has other sons to comfort her. Let us say no more of it. Had I thought that you would have disapproved of it, I would never have mentioned the thing.'

'Disapprove of—your going to die? You shall not! And for me, too, for I guess all—all is my fault!'

'All is mine,' said he quietly, 'who was fool enough to fancy that I could forget you—conquer my love for you,' and at these words his whole voice and manner changed in an instant into wildest passion. 'I must speak—now and never more—I love you still, fool that I am! Would God I had never seen you! No, not that. Thank God for that to the last, but would God I had died of that cholera! that I had never come here, conceited fool that I was, fancying that it was possible, after having once — No! Let me go, go anywhere, where I may burden you no more with my absurd dreams! You, who have had the same thing said to you, and in finer words, a hundred times, by men who would not deign to speak to me!' and covering his face in his hands, he strode on, as if to escape.

'I never had the same thing said to me!'

'Never! How often have my gentlemen, noblemen, sworn that they were dying for you?'

'They never have said to me what you have done.'

'No—I am clumsy, I suppose—'

'Mr Headley, indeed you are unjust to yourself—unjust to me!'

'I—to you? Never! I know you better than you know yourself—see in you what no one else sees. Oh, what fools they are who say that love is blind! Blind? He sees souls with God's own light, not as they have become but as they ought to become—can become—are already in the sight of Him who made them!'

'And what might I become?' asked she, half-frightened by the new earnestness of his utterance.

'How can I tell! Something infinitely too high for me, at least, who even now am not worthy to kiss the dust off your feet.'

'Oh, do not speak so. little do you know —! No, Mr. Headley, it is you who are too good for me, too noble, single-eyed, self-

sacrificing, to endure my vanity and meanness for a day.'

'Madam, do not speak thus! Give me no word which my folly can distort into a ray of hope, unless you wish to drive me mad. No! it is impossible, and, were it possible, what but ruin to my soul! I should live for you, and not for my work. I should become a schemer, ambitious, intriguing, in the vain hope of proving myself to the world worthy of you. No, let it be "Let the dead bury their dead, and follow thou me".'

She made no answer—what answer was there to make? And he strode on by her side in silence for full ten minutes. At last she was forced to speak.

'Mr Headley, recollect that this conversation has gone too far for us to avoid coming to some definite understanding—'

'Then it shall, Miss St. Just. Then it shall, once and for all formally and deliberately, it shall end now. Suppose—I only say suppose—that I could, without failing in my own honour, my duty to my calling, make myself such a name among good men, that, poor parson though I be, your family need be ashamed of nothing about me, save my poverty. Tell me, now and for ever, could it be possible—'

He stopped. She walked on, silent, in her turn.

'Say no, as a matter of course, and end it!'

said he bitterly.

She drew a long breath, as if leaving off a weight.

'I cannot—dare not say it.'

'It? Which of the two? yes, or no?'

She was silent.

He stopped, and spoke calmly and slowly. 'Say that again, and tell me that I am not dreaming. You! the adored! the worshipped! the luxurious!—and no blame to you that you are what you were born—could you endure a little parsonage, the teaching village school-children, tending dirty old women, and petty cares the whole year round?'

'Mr Headley,' answered she, slowly and calmly, in her turn, 'I could endure a cottage—a prison, I fancy, at moments to escape from this world, of which I am tired, which will soon be tired of me, from women who envy me, unites to me ambitious as base as their own, from men who admire—not me, for they do not know me, and never will—but what in me—I hate them!—will give them pleasure. I hate it all, despise it all, despise myself for it all every morning when I wake! What does it do for me, but rouse in me the very parts of my own character which are most despicable, most tormenting? If it goes on, I feel I could become as frivolous, as mean, ay, as wicked as the worst. You do not know—you do not know —. I have envied the nuns their convents. I have envied Selkirk his desert island. I envy now the milkmaids there below: anything to escape and be in earnest, anything for some one to teach me to be of use! Yes, this cholera—'

and this war—though only, only its coming shadow has passed over me—and your words too—cried she, and stopped and hesitated, as if afraid to tell too much—‘they have wakened me—to a new life—at least to the dream of a new life!’

‘Have you not Major Campbell?’ said Headley, with a terrible effort of will.

‘Yes—but has he taught me? He is dear, and good, and wise—but he is too wise, too great for me. He plays with me as a lion might with a mouse, he is like a grand angel far above in another planet, who can pity and advise, but who cannot—What am I saying?’ and she covered her face with her hand.

She dropped her glove as she did so. Headley picked it up and gave it to her—as he did so their hands met, and their hands did not part again.

‘You know that I love you, Valentia St Just’

‘Too well! too well!’

‘But you know, too, that you do not love me’

‘Who told you so? What do you know? What do I know? Only that I long for some one to make me—to make me as good as you are!’ And she burst into tears.

‘Valentia, will you trust me?’

‘Yes!’ cried she, looking up at him suddenly ‘if you will not go to the war’

‘No—no—no! Would you have me turn traitor and coward to God, and now, of all moments in my life?’

‘Noble creature!’ said she, ‘you will make me love you whether I wish or not’

What was it, after all, by which Frank Headley won Valentia’s love? I cannot tell. Can you tell, sir, how you won the love of your wife? As little as you can tell of that still greater miracle—how you have kept her love since she found out what manner of man you were.

So they paced homeward, hand in hand, beside the shining ripples, along the Dunes shore. The birches breathed fragrance on them, the night-hawk whurred softly round their path, the stately mountains smiled above them in the moonlight, and seemed to keep watch and ward over their love, and to shut out the noisy world, and the harsh babble and vain fashions of the town. The summer lightning flickered to the westward; but round them the rich soft night seemed full of love,—as full of love as their own hearts were, and, like them, brooding silently upon its joy. At last the walk was over, the kind moon sank low behind the hills, and the darkness hid their blushes as they paced into the sleeping village, and their hands parted unwillingly at last.

When they came into the hall through the group of lounging gownsmen and tourists, they found Bowre arguing with Mrs. Lewis, in his dogmatic Scotch way—

‘So you see, madam, there’s no use defending the drunken loon any more at all, and here will my leddies have just walked their bonny legs off, all through that carnal sin of drunken-

ness, which is the curse of your Welsh population’

‘And not quite unknown north of Tweed either, Bowre,’ said Valentia, laughing. ‘There now, say no more about it. We have had a delightful walk, and nobody is the least tired. Don’t say any more, Mrs. Lewis—but tell them to get us some supper. Bowre, so my lord has come in?’

‘This half-hour good!’

‘Has he had any sport?’

‘Sport! ay, troth! Five fish in the day. That’s a river indeed at Bettws! Not a pawky wee lun, like this Aberglaslyn thing!’

‘Only five fish!’ said Valentia in a frightened tone.

‘Fish, my leddy, not trouts, I said. I thought ye knew better than that by this time’

‘Oh, salmon!’ cried Valentia, relieved.

‘Delightful! I’ll go to him this moment!’

And upstairs to Scoutbush’s room she went.

He was sitting in dressing-gown and slippers, sipping his claret, and frowning his fly-book (the only one he ever studied *en amuse*) with a most complacent face. She came in and stood demurely before him, holding her broad hat in both hands before her knees, like a schoolgirl, her face half-hidden in the black curls. Scoutbush looked up and smiled affectionately, as he caught the light of her eyes and the arch play of her lips.

‘Ah! there you are, at a pretty time of night! How beautiful you look, Val! I wish my wife may be half as pretty!’

Valentia made him a prim courtesy.

‘I am delighted to hear of my lord’s good sport. He will choose to be in a good humour, I suppose’

‘Good humour! *ça va sans dire*! Three stone of fish in three hours!’

‘Then his little sister is going to do a very foolish thing, and wants his leave to do it, which if he will grant, she will let him do as many foolish things as he likes without scolding him, as long as they both shall live’

‘Do it then, I beg. What is it? Do you want to go up Snowdon with Headley to-morrow, to see the sun rise? You’ll kill yourself!’

‘No,’ said Valentia very quietly, ‘I only want to marry him’

‘Marry him!’ cried Scoutbush, starting up.

‘Don’t try to look majestic, my dear little brother, for you are really not tall enough, as it is, you have only looked all your flies into your dressing-gown’

Scoutbush dashed himself down into his chair again.

‘I’ll be shot if you shall!’

‘You may be shot just as surely, whether I do or not,’ said she softly, and she knelt down before him, and put her arms round him, and laid her head upon his lap. ‘There, you can’t run away now, so you must hear me quietly. And you know it may not be often that we shall be together again thus, and oh, Scoutbush!

brother! if anything was to happen to you—I only say if—in this horrid war, you would not like to think that you had refused the last thing your little Val asked for, and that she was miserable and lonely at home?

'I'll be shot if you shall!' was all the poor viscount could get out.

'Yes, miserable and lonely, you gone away, and mon Saint Père too, and Lucia, she has her children—and I am so wild and weak—I must have some one to guide me and protect me indeed I must!'

'Why, that was what I always said! That was why I wanted you so to marry this season! Why did not you take Chalkclere, or half a dozen good matches who were dying for you, and not this confounded black parson, of all lords in the air?'

'I did not take Lord Chalkclere for the very reason that I do take Mr Headley. I want a husband who will guide me, not one whom I must guide.'

'Guide!' said Scouthush bitterly, with one of those little sparks of practical shrewdness which sometimes fell from him. 'Ay, I see how it is! These intriguing rascals of parsons—they begin as titler confessors, like so many popish priests, and one fine morning they blossom out into lovers, and so they get all the pretty women, and all the good fortunes—the sneaking, ambitious, low-lived—'

'He is neither! You are unjust, Scouthush!' cried Valeria, looking up. 'He is the very soul of honour! He might be rich now, and have had a fine living, if he had not been too conscientious to let his uncle buy him one, and that offended his uncle, and he would allow him nothing. And as for being low-lived, he is a gentleman, as you know, and if his uncle born business, his mother is a lady, and he will be well enough off one day.'

'You seem to know a great deal about his affairs.'

'He told me all, months ago—before there was any dream of this. And, my dear,' she went on, relapsing into her usual arch tone, 'there is no fear but his uncle will be glad enough to patronise him again, when he finds that he has married a viscount's sister.'

Scouthush laughed. 'You scheming little Irish rogue! But I won't. I've said it, and I won't. It's enough to have one sister married to a poor poet, without having another married to a poor parson. Oh! what have I done that I should be bothered in this way! Isn't it bad enough to be a landlady, and to have an estate, and be responsible for a lot of people that will die of the cholera, and have to vote in the house about a lot of things I don't understand, nor anybody else, I believe, but that, over and above, I must be the head of the family, and answerable to all the world for whom my mad sisters marry? I won't, I say!'

'Then I shall just go and marry without your leave! I'm of age, you know, and my fortune's my own, and then we shall come in as the run-

away couples do in a play, while you sit there in your dressing-gown as the stern father—won't you borrow a white wig for the occasion, my lord?—and we shall fall down on our knees so, —and she put herself in the prettiest attitude in the world,—and beg your blessing—please forgive us this time, and we'll never do so any more! And then you will turn your face away, like the barman the ballad—'

"And brushed away the springing tear
He proudly strove to hide,

etcetera, etcetera. Finish the scene for yourself, with a "Bless ye, my children, live as ye list."

'Go along, and marry the cat if you like! You are mad, and I am mad, and all the world's mad, I think.'

'There,' she said, 'I knew that he would be a good boy at last!' And she sprang up, threw her arms round his neck, and, to his great astonishment, burst into the most violent fit of crying.

'Good gracious, Valeria! do be reasonable! You'll go into a fit, or somebody will hear you! You know how I hate a scene! Do be good, there's a darling! Why didn't you tell me at first how much you wished for it, and I would have said yes in a moment.'

'Because I didn't know myself,' cried she passionately. 'There, I will be good and love you better than all the world, except one. And if you let those horrid Russians hurt you, I will hate you as long as I live, and be miserable all my life afterwards.'

'Why, Valeria, do you know, that sounds very like a bull!'

'Am I not a wild Irish girl?' said she, and laughed out, leaving Scouthush to return to his flies.

She bounded into Lucia's room, there to pour out a bursting heart—and stopped short.

Lucia was sitting on the bed, her shawl and bonnet tossed upon the floor, her head sunk on her bosom, her arms sunk by her side.

'Lucia, what is it? Speak to me, Lucia!'

She pointed faintly to a letter on the floor. Valeria caught it up. Lucia made a gesture as if to stop her.

'No, you must not read it. Too dreadful!'

But Valeria read it, while Lucia covered her face in her hands, and uttered a long, low, shuddering moan of bitter agony.

Valeria read, with flashing eyes and bursting brow. It was a hideous letter. The words of a man trying to supply the place of strength by violence. A hideous letter, unfit to be written here.

'Valeria! Valeria! It is false—a mistake, he is dreaming. You know it is false! You will not leave me too!'

Valeria dashed it on the ground, clasped her sister in her arms, and covered her head with kisses.

'My Lucia! My own sweet good sister! Base, cowardly,' sobbed she in her rage, while

Lucia's agony began to find a vent in words, and she moaned out—

'What have I done! All that flower, that horrid flower, but who would have dreamed—and Major Campbell, too, of all men upon earth! Valentia, it is some horrid delusion of the devil! Why, he was there all the while, and you too! Could he think that I should before his very face? What must he fancy me? Oh, it is a delusion of the devil, and nothing else!'

'He is a wretch! I will take the letter to my brother, he shall right you!'

'Ah no! no! never! Let me tear it to atoms! Hide it! It is all a mistake! He did not mean it! He will recollect himself to-morrow and come back!'

'Let him come back if he dare!' cried Valentia, in a tone which said, 'I could kill him with my own hands!'

'Oh, he will come back! He cannot have the heart to leave his poor little Lucia. Oh, cruel, cowardly, not to have said one word—not one word to explain all, but it was all my fault, my wicked, odious temper, and after I had seen how vexed he was, too! Oh, Elsie, Elsie, come back, only come back, and I will beg your pardon on my knees! anything! Scold me, beat me, if you will! I deserve it all! Only come back, and let me see you free, and hear your voice, instead of having me here all alone, and the poor children too! Oh, what shall I say to them to-morrow, when they wake and find no father!'

Valentia's indignation had no words. She could only sit on the bed, with Lucia in her arms, looking down at all the world above that fair head which one moment dropped on her bosom, and the next gazed up into her face in pitiful childlike pleading.

'Oh, if I but knew where he was gone! If I could find him! One word—one word would set all right! It always did, Valentia, always! He was so kind, so dear in a moment, when I quit away my naughty, naughty temper, and smiled in his face like a good wife. Wicked creature that I was! and this is my punishment. Oh, Elsie, one word, one word! I must find him if I went barefoot over the mountains. I must go, I must—'

And she tried to rise, but Valentia held her down, while she entreated piteously—

'I will go, and see about finding him! I should at last, as my only resource. Promise me to be quiet here, and I will!'

'Quiet! Yes, quiet here!' and she threw herself upon her face on the floor.

She looked up eagerly. 'You will not tell Seenthush?'

'Why not?'

'He is so—so hasty. He will kill him! Valentia, he will kill him! Promise me not to tell him, or I shall go mad!' And she sat up again, pressing her hands upon her head, and rocking from side to side.

'Oh, Valentia, if I dared only scream! but keeping it in kills me. It is like a sword through my brain now!'

'Let me call Clara.'

'No, no! not Clara. Do not tell her. I will be quiet, indeed I will, only come back soon, soon, for I am all alone, alone!' And she threw herself down again upon her face.

Valentia went out. Certain as she was of her sister's innocence, there was one terrible question in her heart which must be answered, or her belief in all truth, goodness, religion, would reel and rock to its very foundations. And till she had an answer to that, she could not sit still by Lucia.

She walked hurriedly, with compressed lips, but quivering limbs, downstairs, and into the sitting-room. Seenthush was gone to bed. Campbell and Mellet sat chatting still.

'Where is my brother?'

'Gone to bed, as someone else ought to be, for it is past twelve. Is it wason come in yet?'

'No.'

'Very odd,' said Claude, 'I never saw him after I left you.'

'He said certainly that he was going to find you,' said Campbell.

'There is no need for speculating,' said Valentia quietly, 'my sister has a note from Mr. Vansour at Pen-y-gwyd.'

'Pen-y-gwyd!' cried both men at once.

'Yes. Major Campbell, I wish to show it to you.'

Valentia's tone and manner were significant enough to make Claude Mellet lead them both good night.

When he had shut the door behind him, Valentia put the letter into the major's hand.

He was too much absorbed in it to look up at her, but if he had done so, he would have been startled by the awful capacity of passion which changed, for the moment, that gay Queen Whims into a terrible Ravanna, as she stood, leaning against the mantelpiece, but drawn up to her full height, her lips tight shut, eyes which gazed through and through him in awful scrutiny, bidding her very breath, while a nervous clanking of the little hand said, 'If you have tampered with my sister's heart, better for you that you were dead!'

He read it through, once, twice, with livid face, then dashed it on the floor.

'Fool—fool—fool! she is as pure as God's sunlight!'

'You need not tell me that,' said Valentia, through her closed teeth.

'Fool—fool!' And then, in a moment, his voice changed from indignation to the bitterest self-reproach. 'And fool I, thrice fool! Who am I, to rail on him? O God! what have I done?' And he covered his face with his hands.

'What have you done?' literally shrieked Valentia.

'Nothing that you or man can blame, Miss St. Just! Can you dream that, sinful as I am, I could ever harbour a thought toward her of which I should be ashamed before the angels of God?'

He looked up as he spoke, with an utter

humility and an intense honesty which unnerved her at once.

'Oh, my Saint Père !'—and she held out both her hands. 'Forgive me, if—only for a moment—'

'I am not your Saint Père, nor any one's ! I am a poor, weak, converted, miserable man, who by his accursed unpertinence has broken the heart of the being whom he loves best on earth.'

Valentia started but ere she could ask for an explanation, he rejoined wildly—

'How is she ! Tell me only that, this once ! Has it killed her ! Does she hate him !'

'Adores him more than ever ! Oh, Major Campbell ! it is too pitious, too pitious !'

He covered his face with his hands, shuddering. 'Thank God ! yes, thank God ! So it should be. Let her love him to the last, and win her martyr's crown ! Now, Valentia St. Just, sit down, if but for five minutes, and listen, once for all, to the last words, perhaps, you will ever hear me speak, unless she wants you !—'

'No, no ! Tell me all, Saint Père !' said Valentia, 'for I am walking in a dream—a double dream !' as the new thought of Hewlley, and that walk, came over her. 'Tell me all at once, while I have wits left to comprehend !'

'Miss St. Just,' said he, in a clear calm voice, 'it is fit, for her honour and for mine, that you should know all. The first day that I ever saw your sister, I loved her, as a man loves who can never cease to love, or love a second time I was a raw, awkward Scotchman then, and she used to laugh at me. Why not ! I kept my secret, and determined to become a man at whom no one would wish to laugh. I was in the Company's service, then. You recollect her jesting once about the Indian army, and my commanding black people, and saying that the Lane only was fit for—some girl's jest !'

'No, I recollect nothing of it.'

'I never forgot it. I threw up all my prospects, and went into the Lane. Whether I won honour there or not, I need not tell you. I came back to England years after, not unworthy, as I fancied, to look your sister in the face as an equal. I found her married.'

He paused a little, and then went on, in a quiet business-like tone.

'Good. Her choice was sure to be a worthy one, and that was enough for me. You need not doubt that I kept my secret then more sacredly than ever. I returned to India, and tried to die. I dared not kill myself, for I was a soldier and a Christian, and belonged to God and my Queen. The Sikhs would not kill me, do what I would to help them. Then I threw myself into senecence, that I might stifle passion, and I stifled it. I fancied myself cured and I was cured ; and I returned to England again. I loved your brother for her sake, I loved you at first for her sake, then for your own. But I presumed upon my cure, I accepted your brother's invitation ; I caught at the opportunity

of seeing her again,—happy—as I fancied, and of proving to myself my own soundness. I considered myself a sort of Melancthedek, neither young nor old, without passions, without purpose on earth—a fakeer who had licence to do and to dare what others might not. But I kept my secret, ~~personally~~ inviolate. I do not believe at this moment she dreams that—do you !'

'She does not.'

'Thank God ! I was a most conceited fool, puffed up with spiritual pride, tempting God needlessly. I want, I saw her. Heaven is my witness that, as far as passion goes, my heart is as pure as yours. But I found that I still cared more for her than for any being on earth. And I found too the sort of man upon whom—God forgive me ! I must not talk of that—I despised him, hated him, pretended to teach him his duty, by behaving better to her than he did—the spiritual coxcomb that I was ! What business had I with it ! Why not have left all to God and her good sense ! The devil tempted me to-day, in the shape of an angel of courtesy and civility, and here the end is come. I must find that man, Miss St. Just, if I travel the world in search of him. I must ask his pardon frankly, humbly, for my unpertinence. Perhaps so I may bring him back to her, and not die with a curse on my head for having parted those whom God has joined. And then to the old fighting-trade once more—the only one, I believe, I really understand, and see whether a Russian bullet will not fly straighter than a clumsy Sikh's.'

Valentia listened, awestricken, and all the more so because this was spoken in a calm, half-abstracted voice, without a note of feeling, save where he alluded to his own mistakes. When it was over, she rose without a word, and took both his hands in her own, sobbing bitterly.

'You forgive me, then, all the misery which I have caused !'

'Do not talk so ! Only forgive me for having fancied for one moment that you were anything but what you are, an angel out of heaven.'

Campbell hung down his head.

'Angel, truly ! Azrael, the angel of death, then. Go to her now—go, and leave a humble penitent man alone with God !'

'Oh, my Saint Père !' cried she, bursting into tears. 'This is too wretched—all a horrid dream—and when, too—when I had been counting on telling you something so different !—I cannot now, I have not the heart.'

'What, more misery !'

'Oh no ! no ! no ! You will know all to-morrow. Ask Scoutbush.'

'I shall be gone in search of that man long before Scoutbush is awake.'

'Impossible ! You do not know whether he is gone.'

'If I employ every detective in Bow Street, I will find him.'

'Wait, only wait, till the post comes in to-

morrow. He will surely write, if not to her,—wrote that he is!—at least to some of us.'

'If he be alive. No I must go up to Pen-y-gwryd, where he was last seen, and find out what I can.'

'They will all be in bed at this hour of the night, and if—if anything has happened, it will be over by now,' added she with a shudder.

'God forgive me! It will indeed, but he may write—perhaps to me. He is no coward, I believe, and he may send me a challenge. Yes, I will wait for the post.'

'Shall you accept it if he does?'

Major Campbell smiled sadly.

'No, Miss St. Just, you may set your mind at rest upon that point. I have done quite enough harm already to your family. Now, good-bye! I will wait for the post to-morrow do you go to your sister.'

Valentia went, utterly bewildered. She had forgotten Frank, but Frank had not forgotten her. He had hurried to his room, lay till morning, sleepless with delight, and pouring out his pure spirit in thanks for this great and unexpected blessing. A new life had begun for him, even in the jaws of death. He would still go to the East. It seemed easy to him to go there in search of a grave, how much more now, when he felt so full of magic life, that fever, cholera, the clamours of war, could not harm him! After this proof of God's love, how could he doubt, how fear?

Little he thought that, three doors off from him, Valentia was sitting up the whole night through, vainly trying to quiet Lucia, who refused to undress, and paced up and down her room, hour after hour, in wild misery, which I leave no skill to detail.

CHAPTER XXI

NATURE'S MELODRAMA

WHAT, then, had become of Elsley? And whence had he written the fatal letter? He had hurried up the high road for half an hour and more, till the valley on the left sloped upward more rapidly, in dark dreary boxes, the moonlight shining on their runnels, while the mountain on his right sloped downwards more rapidly in dark dreary down, strewn with rocks which stood out black against the sky. He was nearing the head of the watershed, soon he saw slate roofs glittering in the moonlight, and found himself at the little inn of Pen-y-gwryd, at the meeting of the three great valleys, the central heart of the mountains.

And a genial, jovial little heart it is, and an honest, kindly little heart too, with warm blood within. So it looked that night, with every window red with comfortable light, and a long stream of glare pouring across the road from the open door, gilding the fir-tree tops in front but its geniality only made him shudder. He

had been there more than once, and knew the place and the people, and knew, too, that of all people in the world, they were the least like him. He hurried past the doorway, and caught one glimpse of the bright kitchen. A sudden thought struck him. He would go in and write his letter there. But not yet—he could not go in yet, for through the open door came some sweet Welsh air, so sweet, that even he paused to listen. Men were singing in three parts, in that rich metallic temper of voice, and that perfect time and tune, which is the one gift still left to that strange Cynary race, worn out with the long burden of so many thousand years. He knew the air, it was 'The rising of the Lark.' Heavens! what a lathyr contrast to his own thoughts! But his blood roared, as if spell-bound, to hear it to the end. The lark's upward flight was over, and Elsley heard him come quivering down from heaven's gate, fluttering, sinking, trilling self-complacently, springing aloft in one bar, only to sink lower in the next, and call more softly to his brooding mate below, till worn out with his ecstasy, he murmured one last sigh of joy, and sank into the nest. The picture flashed through Elsley's brain as swiftly as the notes did through his ears. He breathed more freely when it vanished with the sounds. He strode hastily in, and down the little passage to the kitchen.

It was a low room, ceiled with dark beams, from which hung gun and fishing rods, harness and drying stockings, and all the miscellanea of a fishing inn kept by a farmer, and beneath it the usual happy, hearty, honest group. There was Harry Owen, bland and stalwart, his baby in his arms, smiling upon the world in general, old Mrs. Pritchard, bewailing over the fire, putting the last touch to one of those miraculous souillies, compact of clouds and nectar, which transport alike palate and fancy, at the first mouthful, from Snowdon to Belgrave Square. A sturdy four-limbed Saxon Gourbanneg sat with his back to the door, and two of the beautiful children on his knee, their long locks flowing over the elbows of his shooting-jacket, as, with both arms round them, he made Punch for them with his handkerchief and his fingers, and chattered to them in English, while they chattered in Welsh. By him sat another Englishman, to whom the three tuneful Snowdon guides, their music score upon their knees, sat listening approvingly, as he rolled out, with voice as of a jolly blackbird, or jollier monk of old, the good old Welsh song—

'My dog he has his master's nose,
To smell a knave through silken hose,
If friends or honest men go by,
Welcome, quoth my dog and I!

'Of foreign tongues let scholars brag,
With fifteen names for a pudding-bag.
Two tongues I know as er told a lie,
And their wearers be, my dog and I!

'That ought to be Harry's song, and the colly's too, eh?' said he, pointing to the dear old dog, who sat with his head on Owen's

knee—'oh, my men! Here's a health to the honest man and his dog!'

And all laughed and drank, while Elsley's dark face looked in at the doorway, and half turned to escape. Handsome ladylike Mrs Owen, bustling out of the kitchen with a suppetry, ran full against him, and uttered a Welsh scream.

'Show me a room, and bring me a pen and paper,' said he, and then started in his turn, as all had started at him, for the two Englishmen looked round, and behold, to his disgust, the singer was none other than Naylor, the actor of Punch was Wynd!

To have found his *l'les noirs* even here, and at such a moment! And what was worse, to hear Mrs. Owen say, 'We have no room, sir, unless these gentlemen—'

'Of course,' said Wynd, jumping up, a child under each arm. 'Mr. Vavasor! we shall be most happy to have your company,—for a week if you will!'

'Ten minutes' solitude is all I ask, sir, if I am not intruding too far.'

'Two hours, if you like.' 'We'll stay here Mrs. Owen, the thicker the merrier.' But Elsley had vanished into a chamber bedstrewn with plaids, pipes, tobacco, and fishing-tackle, mathematical books, scraps of cut, and the wild confusion of a gowanusman's den.

'The party is taken ill with a poem,' said Wynd.

Naylor stuck out his heavy under-lip, and glanced sidelong at his friend.

'With something worse, Ned. That man's eye and voice had something uncanny in them. McIllet said he would go to bed to-night, and he hanged if I don't think he is so now.'

Another five minutes, and Elsley rang the bell violently for hot brandy and water.

Mrs. Owen came back looking a little startled, a letter in her hand.

'The gentleman had drunk the liquor off at one draught, and ran out of the house like a wild man. Harry Owen must go down to Bachelors' instantly with the letter, and there was five shillings to pay for all.'

Harry Owen rises, like a strong and patient beast of burden, ready for any amount of walking, at any hour in the twenty-four. He has been up Snowdon once to-day already. He is going up again at twelve to-night, with a German who wants to see the sun rise, he departs that office to John Roberts, and strikes out.

'Which way did the gentleman go, Mrs. Owen?' asks Naylor.

'Capel Curig road.'

Naylor whispers to Wynd, who sets the two little girls on the table, and hurries out with him. They look up the road, and see no one, run a couple of hundred yards, where they catch a sight of the next turn, clear in the moonlight. There is no one on the road.

'Run to the bridge, Wynd,' whispers Naylor. 'He may have thrown himself over.'

'Tally ho!' whispers Wynd in return, laying

his hand on Naylor's arm, and pointing to the left of the road.

A hundred yards from them, over the boggy upland, among scattered boulders, a dark figure is moving. Now he stops short, gesticulating; turns right and left resolutely. At last he hurries on and up again, he is running, springing from stone to stone.

'There is but one thing, Wynd. After him, or he'll drown himself in Llyn Cwm Fynnon.'

'No, he's striking to the right. Can he be going up the Glyder?'

'We'll see that in five minutes. All in the day's work, my boy! I could go up Mount Blane with such a dinner in me.'

The two gallant men run in, struggle into their wet boots again, and provisioned with meat and bread, whisky, tobacco, and planks, are away upon Elsley's tracks, having left Mrs. Owen desolate by their announcement, that a sudden fancy to sleep on the Glyder has seized them. Nothing more will they tell her, or any one, being gentlemen, however much slang they may talk in private.

Elsley left the door of Pen y gwyl, careless whether he went, if he went only far enough.

In front of him rose the Glyder Vawr, its head shrouded in soft mist, through which the moonlight gleamed upon the chequered quivers of that enormous desolation, the dark lines of the eldest born of time. A wild lunging seized him, he would escape up that, up onto those clouds, up anywhere to be alone—alone with his miserable self. That was dreadful enough, but less dreadful than having a companion, ay, even a stone by him, which could remind him of the same which he had left, even remind him that there was another human being on earth beside himself. Yes, to part that cliff between him and all the world! Away he plunged from the high road, splashing over boggy uplands, scrambling among scattered boulders, across a stormy torrent bed, and then across another and another—when would he reach that dark, untroubled wall which rose into the infinite blank, looking within a stone throw of him, and yet no nearer after he had walked a mile?

He reached it at last, and rushed up the talus of boulders, springing from stone to stone, till his breath failed him, and he was forced to settle into a less frantic pace. But upward he would go, and upward he went, with a strength which he never had felt before. Strong? How should he not be strong, while every vein felt filled with molten lead, while some unseen power seemed not so much to attract him upwards, as to drive him by magical repulsion from all that he had left below?

So upward and upward ever, driven on by the terrible gale-fly, like he of old he went, stumbling upwards along torrent beds of slippery slate, writhing himself upward through crannies where the waterfall plashed cold upon his chest and face, yet could not cool the inward fire, clanking, hand and knee, up cliffs of sharp-edged rock striding over downs where huge

rocks lay crouched in the grass, like fossil monsters of some ancient world, and seemed to stare at him with still and angry brows. Upward still, to black terraces of lava, standing out hard and black against the gray cloud, gleaming like iron in the moonlight, stair above stair, like those over which Vathek and the princess climbed up to the halls of Eblis. Over their crumbling steps, up through their cracks and crannies, out upon a dreary slope of broken stones, and then—before he dives upward into the cloud ten yards above his head—one breathless look back upon the world.

The horizontal curtain of mist, gauzy below, fringed with white tufts and streamers, deepening above into the blackness of utter night. Below it a long gulf of soft yellow haze, in which, as in a bath of gold, lie delicate bars of far-off western cloud, and the faint glimmer of the western sea, above long knotted spurs of hill, in deepest shade, like a bunch of purple grapes flecked here and there from behind with gleams of golden light, and beneath them again, the dark woods sleeping over Gwynnant, and their dark double sleeping in the bright lake below.

On the right hand Snowdon rises. Vast sheets of utter blackness—vast sheets of shining light. He can see every crag which juts from the green walls of Galt-y-Wennant, and far past it into the Great Valley of Cwm Dylh, and then the red peak, now as black as night, slants out to the world with its huge mist-topped cone. But on the left hand all is deepest shade. From the highest saw-edges where Moel Merth cuts the golden sky, down to the very depths of the abyss, all is lustrous darkness, sooty, and yet golden still. Let the darkness lie upon it for ever! Hidden be those woods where she stood an hour ago! Hidden that road down which, even now, they may be pacing home together! Curse the thought! He covers his face in his hands and shudders in every limb.

He lifts his hands from his eyes at last—what has befallen?

Before the golden haze a white veil is falling fast. Sea, mountain, lake, are vanishing, fading as in a dream. Soon he can see nothing but the twinkle of a light in Pen-y-gwryd, a thousand feet below, happy children are nestling there in innocent sleep. Joyous voices are chatting round the fire. What has he to do with youth, and health, and joy? Lower, lower, ye clouds! Shut out that insolent and intruding spark, till nothing be seen but the silver sheet of Cwm Fynnon, and the silver zig-zag lines which wander into it among black morasses, while down the mountain side go, softly sliding, troops of white mist-angels. Softly they slide, swift and yet motionless, as if by some inner will, which needs no force of limbs, gliding gently round the crags, diving gently off into the abyss, their long white robes trailing about their feet in upward-floating folds. 'Let us go hence,' they seem to whisper to the God-forsaken, as legends say they whispered when

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they left their doomed shrine in old Jerusalem. Let the white fringe fall between him and the last of that fair troop, let the gray curtain follow, the black pall above descend, till he is alone in darkness that may be felt, and in the shadow of death.

Now he is safe at last, hidden from all living things—hidden, it may be, from God, for at least God is hidden from him. He has desired to be alone, and he is alone, the centre of the universe, if universe there be. All created things, suns and planets, seem to revolve round him, and he a point of darkness, not of light. He seems to float self-poised in the centre of the boundless nothing, upon an ell-broad slab of stone—and yet not even on that for the very ground on which he stands he does not feel. He does not feel the mist which wets his cheek, the blood which throbs within his veins. He only is, and there is none besides.

Horrible thought! Permitted but to few, and to them—thank God!—but rarely. For two minutes of that absolute self-isolation would bring madness, if, indeed, it be not the very essence of madness itself.

There he stood, he knew not how long, without motion, without thought, without even rage or hate, now—in one blank paralysis of his whole nature, conscious only of self, and of a dull, inward fire, as if his soul were a dark vault, lighted with lurid smoke.

What was that? He started, shuddered—as well he might. Had he seen heaven opened? or another place? So momentary was the vision, that he scarce knew what he saw—

There it was again! Lasting but for a moment, but long enough to let him see the whole western heaven transfigured into one sheet of pale blue gauze, and before it Snowdon towering black as ink, with every saw and crest cut out, hard and terrible against the lightning-glare, and then the blank of darkness.

Again! The awful black giant, towering high in air, before the gates of that blue abyss of flame—but a black crown of cloud settled upon his head, and out of it the lightning sparks leap to and fro, ringing his brows with a coronet of fire.

Another moment, and the roar of that great battle between earth and heaven crashed full on Ebley's ears.

He heard it leap from Snowdon, sharp and rattling, across the gulf toward him, till it crashed full upon the Glyder overhead, and rolled and flapped from crag to crag, and died away along the dreary downs. No! There it boomed out again, thundering full against Siahod on the left, and Siahod tossed it on to Moel Merth, who answered from all her clefts and peaks with a long confused battle-growl, and then tossed it across to Aran, and Aran, with one dull, bluff report from her flat cliff, to nearer Lhwedd. till, worn out with the long buffetings of that giant ring, it sank and died on Gwynnant far below—but ere it died, another

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and another thunder-crash burst, sharper and nearer every time, to hurry round the hills after the one which roared before it.

Another minute, and the blue glare filled the sky once more, but no black Titan towered before it now. The storm had leapt Llanberis pass, and all around Elsley was one howling chaos of cloud, and rain, and blinding snow. He turned and fled again.

By the sensation of his feet, he knew that he was going up-hill, and if he but went upward, he cared not whether he went. The rain gushed through, where the lightning pierced the cloud, in drops like musket balls. He was drenched to the skin in a moment, dazzled and giddy from the flashes, stunned by the everlasting roar, peal over-rushing peal, echo out-shooting echo, till rocks and air quivered alike beneath the continuous battle-cannonade. 'What matter? What fitter guide for such a path as mine than the blue lightning flashes?'.

Poor wretch! He had gone out of his way for many a year, to give himself up, a willing captive, to the melodramatic view of nature, and had let sighs and sounds, not principles and duties, mould his feelings for him: and now, in his utter need and utter weakness, he had met her in a mood which was too awful for such as he was to resist. The Nemesis had come, and, swept away helplessly, without faith and hope, by those outward impressions of things on which he had lested his soul so long, he was the puppet of his own eyes and ears, the slave of glare and noise.

Breathless, but still untired, he toiled up a steep incline, where he could feel beneath him neither moss nor herb. Now and then his feet brushed through a soft tuft of parsley fern, but soon even that sign of vegetation ceased, his feet only rasped over rough lava rock, and he was alone in a desert of stone.

What was that sudden apparition above him, seen for a moment dim and gigantic through the mist, hid the next in darkness? The next flash showed him a line of obelisks, like guards crouching side by side, staring down on him from the clouds. Another five minutes, and he was at their feet, and past them, to see above them again another line of awful watchers through the storms and rains of many a thousand years, waiting, grim and silent, like those doomed senators in the Capitol of Rome, till their own turn should come, and the last lightning stroke hurl them too down, to lie for ever by their fallen brothers, whose mighty bones bedrew the scree below.

He groped his way between them, saw some fifty yards beyond a higher peak, gained it by fierce struggles and many falls, saw another beyond that, and, rushing down and up two slopes of moss, reached a region where the upright lava-ledges had been split asunder into chasms, crushed together again into caves, toppled over each other, hurled up into spires, in such chaotic confusion that progress seemed impossible.

A flash of lightning revealed a lofty cairn above his head. There was yet, then, a higher point! He would reach it, if he broke every limb in the attempt! and madly he hurried on, feeling his way from ledge to ledge, squeezing himself through crannies, crawling on hands and knees along the sharp chimes of the rocks, till he reached the foot of the cairn, climbed it, and threw himself at full length on the summit of the Glyder Fawr.

An awful place it always was, and Elsley saw it at an awful time, as the glare unveiled below him a sea of rock-waves, all sharp on edge, pointing toward him on every side, or rather one wave crest of a sea, for twenty yards beyond, all sloped away into the abysmal dark.

Terrible were those rocks below, and ten times more terrible as seen through the lurid glow of his distempered brain. All the weird peaks and slabs seemed pointing up at him, sharp-toothed jaws gaped upward, tongues hissed upward, and pointed upward—hundreds leaped upward—monstrous snake heads perched upward out of cracks and caves. Did he not see them move, writher? or was it the ever shifting light of the flashes? Did he not hear them howl, yell at him? or was it but the wind, tortured in their labyrinthine caverns?

The next moment, and all was dark again, but the images which had been called up remained, and fastened on his brain, and grew there, and when, in the light of the next flash, the scene returned, he could see the red lips of the phantom howls, the bright eyes of the phantom snakes, the tongues wagged in mockery, the hands brandish great stones to hurl at him, the mountain-top was rustled with hideous life, a very Blockberg of all hideous shapes and sons.

And yet he did not shrink. Horrible it was, he was going mad before it. And yet he took a strange and fierce delight in making it more horrible, in making himself more and more, in clothing those fantastic stones with every fancy which could inspire another man with dread. But he had no dread. Perfect rage, like perfect love, casts out fear. He rejoiced in his own misery, in his own danger. His life hung on a thread, any instant might hurl him from that cairn, a blackened corpse.

What better end? Let it come! He was Prometheus on the peak of Caucasus, hurling defiance at the unjust Jove! His hopes, his love, his very honour—curse it!—ruined! Let the lightning stroke come! He were a coward to shrink from it. Let him face the worst, unprotected, hair-headed, naked, and do battle, himself, and nothing but himself, against the universe! And, as men at such moments will do, in the mad desire to free the self-tortured spirit from some unseen and choking bond, he began wildly tearing off his clothes.

But merciful nature brought relief, and stopped him in his mad efforts, or he had been a frozen corpse long ere the dawn. His hands, stiff with cold, refused to obey him; as he

delayed he was saved. After the paroxysm came the collapse, he sank upon the top of the cairn half senseless. He felt himself falling over its edge, and the animal instinct of self-preservation, unconsciously to him, made him slide down gently, till he sank into a crack between two rocks, where he lay somewhat, as it befell happily, from the falling of the rain.

Another minute, and he slept a dreamless sleep.

But there are two men upon that mountain, whom neither rock nor rain, storm nor thunder, have conquered, because they are simply brave honest men, and who are, perhaps, far more 'poetic' characters at this moment than Elsie Vavasour, or any dozen of mere verse-writers, because they are hazarding their lives on an errand of mercy, and all the while having little notion that they are hazarding their lives or doing anything dangerous or heroic, that, instead of being touched for a moment by nature's melodrama, they are jesting at each other's troubles, greeting each interval of darkness with muck slunts of misery and despair, likening the crags to various logics of their acquaintance, male and female, and only jolling the catty pupes out of their mouths to chant snatches of jovial songs. They are Wynd and Naylor, the two Cambridge boating men, in their double flannel trunks, and shooting-pockets pocketful of water, who are both fully aware that hunting a mud-pot over the mountains in a thunder-storm is, on the whole, 'the jolliest lark they ever had in their lives'.

'He must have gone up here somewhere. I saw the poor beggar against the sky as plain as I see you - which I don't -' for darkness cut the speech short.

'Where he you, William? says the keeper.'

'Here I be, sir, says the beater, with my cells above my 'ed.'

'Very well, William, when you get your 'ed above your 'eds, go on.'

'But I'm stuck fast between two shops! Hung the stones!' And Naylor bursts into an old seventeenth-century ditch, at the day of 'three-man glee.'

'They stouns, they stouns, they stouns they stouns -
They stouns that built George Robbler a oven,
O they was fished from Blackney quarr,
And George he was a jolly old man
And his head did grow above his bar'

'One thing in George Robbler I must commend,
And I hold it for a valiant thing,
With any three ladders in Gloucestershire
He swore that his three sons should sing.'

'There was Daik the table, and Tom the corn,
Let every man sing in his own place,
And William he was the eldest brother,
And therefore he should sing the base -'

'I'm down again! This is my thirteenth fall.'

'So am I! I shall just be and light a pipe.'

'Come on, now, and look round the hill side of this crag. We shall find him bundled up under the lee of one of them.'

'He don't know lee from windward, I dare say.'

'He'll soon find out the difference by his skin, if it's half as wet, at least, as mine is.'

'I'll tell you what, Naylor, if the poor fellow has crossed the ridge, and tried to go down on the 'Twill duff he's a dead man by this time.'

'He'll have sunk it, when he comes to the edge, and sees nothing but mist below. But if he has wandered on to the cliffs above Trisfen, he's a dead man, then, at all events. Get out of the way of that flash! A close shave, that! I believe my whiskers are singed.'

'Tom my honour, Wynd, we ought to be saying our prayers rather than joking in this way.'

'We may do both, and be none the worse. As for coming to grief, old boy, we're on a good ground, I suppose, and the devil himself can't harm us. Still, shame to him who's ashamed of saying his prayers, as Arnold used to say.'

And all the while, these two brave lads have been thrusting their lantern into every crack and cranny, and beating round every crag carefully and cunningly, till long past two in the morning.

'Here's the ordinance came at last, and - here am I astute of evening-knife, I think! Come and help me out, or I shall be split to the chin!'

'I'm coming! What's this soft under my feet? Who-o-oop! Run him to earth at last!'

And diving down into a crack, Wynd drags out by the collar the unconscious Flash.

'What a wale! Take a peep of wet blotting-paper. Lucky he's not made of salt.'

'He's dead!' says Naylor.

'Not a bit! I can feel his heart. There's life in the old dog yet.'

And they began, under the lee of a rock, cladding him, wrapping him in their plants, and pouring whisky down his throat.

It was some time before Vavasour recovered his consciousness. The first use which he made of it was to bid his preservers leave him, querulously at first, and then fiercely, when he found out who they were.

'Leave me, I say! Cannot I be alone if I choose? What right have you to dog me in this way?'

'My dear sir, we have as much right here as any one else, and if we find a man dying here of cold and fatigue -'

'What business of yours, if I choose to die?'

'There is no harm in your dying, sir,' says Naylor. 'The harm is in our letting you die, I assure you it is entirely to satisfy our own consciences we are troubling you thus,' and he begins pressing him to take food.

'No, sir, nothing from you! You have shown me impertinence enough in the last few weeks, without pressing on me benefits for which I do not wish. Let me go! If you will not leave me, I shall leave you!'

And he tried to rise, but, stiffened with cold, sank back again upon the rock.

In vain they tried to reason with him, begged his pardon for all past jests, he made effort

after effort to get up, and at last, his limbs, regaining strength by the fierceness of his passion, supported him, and he struggled onward toward the northern slope of the mountain.

'You must not go down till it is light, it is as much as your life is worth.'

'I am going to Bangor, sir, and go I will.'

'I tell you, there are fifteen hundred feet of slippery scree below you.'

'As steep as a house roof, and with every tile on it loose. You will roll from top to bottom before you have gone a hundred yards.'

'What care I! Let me go, I say! Curse you, sir! Do you mean to use force?'

'I do,' said Wynd quietly, as he took him round arms and body, and set him down on the rock like a child.

'You have assaulted me, sir! The law shall avenge this insult, if there be law in England!'

'I know nothing about law. But I suppose it will justify me in saving any man's life who is rushing to certain death.'

'Look here, sir!' said Naylor. 'Go down, if you will, when it grows light. But from this place you do not stir yet. Whatever you may think of our conduct to-night, you will thank us for it to-morrow morning, when you see where you are.'

The unhappy man stamped with rage. The red glare of the lantern showed him his two powerful warders, standing right and left. He felt that there was no escape from them but in darkness, and suddenly he dashed at the lantern, and tried to tear it out of Wynd's hands.

'Steady, sir!' said Wynd, springing back, and parrying his outstretched hand. 'If you wish us to consider you in your senses, you will be quiet.'

'And if you don't choose to appear sane,' said Naylor, 'you must not be surprised if we treat you as men are treated who you understand me.'

Elsley was silent a while, his rage, finding itself impotent, subsided into dark cunning. 'Really, gentlemen,' he said at length, 'I believe you are right, I have been very foolish, and you very kind, but you would excuse my absurdities if you know their provocation.'

'My dear sir,' said Naylor, 'we are bound to believe that you have good cause enough for what you are doing. We have no wish to interfere impertinently. Only wait till daylight, and wrap yourself in one of our plaids, as the only possible method of carrying out your own intentions, for dead men can't go to Bangor, whithersoever else they may go.'

'You really are too kind! but I believe I must accept your offer, under penalty of being called mad,' and Elsley laughed a hollow laugh, for he was by no means sure that he was not mad. He took the proffered wrapper, lay down, and seemed to sleep.

Wynd and Naylor, congratulating themselves on his better mind, lay down also beneath the other plaid, intending to watch him. But, worn

out with fatigue, they were both fast asleep ere ten minutes had passed.

Elsley had determined to keep himself awake at all risks, and he paid a bitter penalty for so doing, for now that the fury had passed away, his brain began to work freely again, and inflicted torture so exquisite, that he looked back with regret on the unreasoning madness of last night, as a less fearful hell than that of thought, of deliberate, accurate recollections, suspicious, trains of argument, which he tried to thrust from him, and yet could not. Who has not known in the still, sleepless hours of night, how dark thoughts will possess the mind with terrors, which seem logical, irrefragable, inevitable?

So it was then with the wretched Elsley, within his mind a whole train of devil's advocates seemed arguing, with triumphant subtlety, the certainty of Lucas's treason, and justifying to him his rage, his hatred, his flight, his desertion of his own children—if indeed (so far had the devil led him astray) they were his own. At last he could bear it no longer. He would escape to Bangor, and then to London, cross to France, to Italy, and there bury himself amid the forests of the Apennines, or the sunny glens of Calabria. And for a moment the vision of a poet's life in that glorious land brightened his dark imagination. Yes! He would escape thither, and be at peace, and if the world heard of him again, it should be in such a thunder-voice as those with which Shelly and Byron, from their southern seclusion, had shaken the ungrateful motherland which cast them out. He would escape, and now was the time to do it! For the rain had long since ceased, the dawn was approaching fast, the cloud was thinning from black to pearly gray. Now was his time—were it not for those two men! To be kept, guarded, stopped by them, or by any man! Shameful! intolerable! He had fled hither to be free, and even here he found himself a prisoner. True, they had promised to let him go if he waited till daylight, but perhaps they were deceiving him, as he was deceiving them—why not? They thought him mad. It was a ruse, a stratagem to keep him quiet awhile, and then bring him back to restore him to his afflicted friends! His friends, truly! He would be too cunning for them yet. And even if they meant to let him go, would he accept liberty from them, or any man? No, he was free. He had a right to go, and go he would, that moment!

He roused himself cautiously. The lantern had burned to the socket, and he could not see the men, though they were not four yards off, but by their regular and heavy breathing he could tell that they both slept soundly. He slipped from under the plaid, drew off his shoes for fear of noise among the rocks, and rose. What if he did make a noise? What if they woke, chased him, brought him back by force? Curse the thought! And gliding close to them, he listened again to their heavy breathing.

How could he prevent their following him?

A horrible, nameless temptation came over

him. Every vein in his body throbb'd fire, his brain seem'd to swell to bursting, and ere he was aware, he found himself feeling about in the darkness for a loose stone.

He could not find one. Thank God that he could not find one! But after that dreadful thought had once cross'd his mind, he must flee from that place ere the sound of Cam be on his brow.

With a cunning and activity utterly new to him, he glided away like a snake, downward over crags and boulders, he knew not how long or how far, all he knew was, that he was going down, down, down, into a dim abyss. There was just light enough to discern the upper surface of a rock within arm's length, beyond that all was blank. He seem'd to be hours descending, to be going down miles after miles, and still he reach'd no level spot. The mountain-side was too steep for him to stand upright, except at moments. It seem'd one uniform quarry of smooth broken slate, slipping down for ever beneath his feet. Whither? He grew giddy, and more giddy, and a horrible fantastic notion seized him, that he had lost his way, that somehow the precipice had no bottom, no end at all, that he was going down some infinite abyss, into the very depths of the earth, and the molten roots of the mountains, never to ascend. He stopp'd, trembling, only to slide down again, terrified, he tried to struggle upward, but the shale gave way beneath his feet, and go he must.

What was that noise above his head? A falling stone? Were his enemies in pursuit? Down to the depth of hell rather than that they should take him! He drov his heels into the slippery shale, and rush'd forward blindly, springing, slipping, falling, rolling, till he stopp'd breathless on a jutting slab.

And lo! below him, through the thin pearly veil of cloud, a dim world of dark cliffs, blue lakes, gray mountains with their dark heads wrapped in cloud, and the straight vale of Nant Francon, magnified in mist, till it seem'd to stretch for hundreds of leagues toward the rosy north-east dawning and the shining sea.

With a wild shout he hurried onward. In five minutes he was clear of the cloud. He reach'd the foot of that enormous slope, and hurried over rocky ways, till he stopp'd at the top of a precipice, full six hundred feet above the lonely tarn of Idwal.

Never mind. He knew where he was now, he knew that there was a passage somewhere, for he had once seen one from below. He found it, and almost ran along the boggy shore of Idwal, looking back every now and then at the black wall of the Tŵllŵn, in dread lest he should see two moving specks in hot pursuit.

And now he had gain'd the shore of Ogwen, and the broad coach-road, and down it he strode, running at times, past the roaring cataract, past the enormous cliffs of the Carnedd, past Tŵl-y-maes, where nothing was stirring but a barking dog, on through the sleeping streets of Beth-

esda, past the black stairs of the Penrhyn quarry. The huge creaking ant-heap was silent now, save for the roar of Ogwen, as he swirl'd and bubbled down, rich coffee-brown from last night's rain.

On, past rich woods, past trim cottages, gardens gay with flowers, past rhododendron shrubberies, broad fields of golden stubble, sweet clover, and gray swedes, with Ogwen making music far below. The sun is up at last, and Colonel Pennant's grim slate castle, towering above black woods, glitters metallic in its rays, like Chaucer's house of fame. He stops to look back once. Far up the vale, eight miles away, beneath a roof of cloud, the pass of Nant Francon gapes high in air between the great jaws of the Carnedd and the Glyder, its cliffs marked with the upright white line of the waterfall. He is clear of the mountains, clear of that cursed place, and all its cursed thoughts. On, past Llandegai and all its rose-clad cottages, past yellow quarrymen walking out to their work, who stare as they pass at his haggard face, drenched clothes, and streaming hair. He does not see them. One fixed thought is in his mind, and that is, the railway station at Bangor.

He is striding through Bangor streets now, beside the summer sea, from which fresh scents of shore weed greet him. He had rather smell the smoke and gas of the Strand.

The station is shut. He looks at the bill outside. There is no train for full two hours, and he throws himself, worn out with fatigue, upon the doorstep.

Now a new terror seizes him. Has he money enough to reach London? Has he his purse at all? Too dreadful to hug himself stopp'd short, on the very brink of deliverance! A cold perspiration breaks from his forehead, as he feels in every pocket. Yes, his purse is there, but he turns sick as he opens it, and dare hardly look. Hurrah! Five pounds, six—eight! That will take him as far as Paris. He can walk, beg the rest of the way, if need be.

What will he do now? Wander over the town, and gaze vacantly on one little object and another about the house fronts. One thing he will not look at, and that is the bright summer sea, all golden in the sun rays, fleck'd with gay white sails. From all which is bright and calm, and cheerful, his soul shrinks as from an impertinence, he longs for the lurid gas-light of London, and the roar of the Strand, and the everlasting stream of faces, among whom he may wander free, sure that no one will recognise him, the disgraced, the desperate.

The weary hours roll on. Too tired to stand longer, he sits down on the shafts of a cart, and tries not to think. It is not difficult. Body and mind are alike worn out, and his brain seems fill'd with uniform dull mist.

A shop-door opens in front of him, a boy comes out. He sees bottles inside, and shelves, the look of which he knows too well.

The bottle-boy, whistling, begins to take the

shutters down. How often, in Wintbury of old, had Elsley done the same! Half amused, he watched the lad, and wondered how he spent his evenings, and what works he read, and whether he ever thought of writing poetry.

And as he watched, all his past life rose up before him, ever since he served out malheimes fifteen years ago—his wild aspirations, heavy labours, struggles, plans, brief triumphs, long disappointments, and here was what it had all come to—a future—a miserable, shameful future! Not that he thought of it with repentance, with a single wish that he had done otherwise, but only with disappointed rage. 'Yes!' he said bitterly to himself—

"We poets in our youth begin in gladness,
But after come despondency and madness."

This is the way of the world with all who have nobler feelings in them than will fit into its cold rules. Curse the world! what on earth had I to do with mixing myself up in it, and marrying a fine lady? Fool that I was! I might have known from the first that she could not understand me, that she would go back to her own! Let her go! I will forget her, and the world, and everything, and I know how!

And, springing up, he walked across to the druggist's shop.

Years before, Elsley had tried opium, and found, unhappily for him, that it fed his fancy without mitigating those tortures of indigestion which keep many, happily for them, from its magic snare. He had tried it more than once of late, but Lucia had had a hint of the fact from Thimall, and in just terror had exacted from him a solemn promise never to touch opium again. Elsley was a man of honour, and the promise had been kept. But now—"I promised her, and therefore I will break my promise! She has broken hers, and I am free!"

And he went in and bought his opium. He took a little on the spot, to allay the cravings of hunger. He reserved a full dose for the railway-carriage. It would bridge over the weary gulf of time which lay between him and town.

He took his second-class place at last, not without stares and whispers from those round at the wild figure which was starting for London without bag or baggage. But as the clerks agreed, 'If he was running away from his creditors, it was a shame to stop him. If he was running from the police, they would have the more sport the longer the run. At least it was no business of theirs.'

There was one thing more to do, and he did it. He wrote to Campbell a short note.

"If, as I suppose, you expect from me 'the satisfaction of a gentleman,' you will find me at . . . Adelphi. I am not escaping from you, but from the whole world. If, by shooting me, you can quicken my escape, you will do me the first and last favour which I am likely to ask for from you."

He posted his letter, settled himself in a

corner of the carriage, and took his second dose of opium. From that moment he recollected little more. A confused whirl of hedges and woods, rattling stations, screaming and flashing trains, great red towns, white chalk cuttings, while the everlasting roar and rattle of the carriages shaped themselves in his brain into a hundred snatches of old tunes, all full of a strange morbidness, as if mocking at his misery, striving to keep him awake and conscious of who and what he was. He closed his eyes and shut out the hateful, garish world, but that sound he could not shut out. Too tired to sleep, too tired even to think, he could do nothing but submit to the ridiculous torment, watching in spite of himself every note, as one pig-tune after another was hidled by all the imps close to his ear, mile after mile, and county after county, for all that weary day, which seemed full seven years long.

At Euston Square the porter called him several times ere he could rouse him. He could hear nothing for a while but that same imps' melody, even though it had stopped. At last he got out, staring round him, shook himself awake by one strong effort, and hurried away, not knowing whether he went.

Wrapt up in self, he wandered on till dark, slept on a doorstep, and awoke, not knowing at first where he was. Gradually all the horror came back to him, and with the horror the craving for opium which with it he forgot.

He looked round to see his whereabouts. Surely this must be Golden Square! A sudden thought struck him. He went to a chemist's shop, bought a fresh supply of his poison, and, taking only enough to allay the cravings of his stomach, hurried tottering in the direction of Drury Lane.

CHAPTER XXII

TUESDAY, 11TH NOVEMBER 1881

Next morning, only Claude and Campbell made their appearance at breakfast.

Frank came in, found that Valentinia was not down, and, too excited to sit, went out to walk till she should appear. Neither did Lord Scoutlash come. Where was he?

Ignorant of the whole matter, he had started at four o'clock to fish in the Trach Mawr, half 'on fishing' saki, half (as he confessed) to gun time for his puzzled brains before those explanations with Frank Headley, of which he stood in mortal awe.

Mellot and Campbell sat down together to breakfast, but in silence. Claude saw that something had gone very wrong, Campbell ate nothing, and looked nervously out of the window every now and then.

At last Bowie entered with the letters and a message. There were two gentlemen from Pen-y-gwryd must speak with Mr Mellot immediately.

He went out and found Wynd and Naylor.

What they told him we know already. He returned instantly, and met Campbell leaving the room.

'I have news of Vavasour,' whispered he. 'I have a letter from him. Bowie, order me a car instantly for Bangor. I am off to London, Claude. You and Bowie will take care of my things, and send them after me.'

'Major Cawmull has duly to command,' said Bowie, and vanished down the stairs.

'Now, Claude, quick, read that and counsel me. I ought to ask Scoutbush's opinion, but the poor dear fellow is out, you see.'

Claude read the note written at Bangor.

'Fight him I will not! I detest the notion a soldier should never fight a duel. His life is the Queen's, and not his own. And yet, if the honour of the family has been compromised by my folly, I must pay the penalty, if Scoutbush thinks it proper.'

So said Campbell, who, in the over-sensitiveness of his conscience, had actually worked himself round during the past night into this new fancy, as a chivalrous act of utter self-abasement. The proud self-possession of the man was gone, and nothing but self-distrust and shame remained.

'In the name of all wit and wisdom, what is the meaning of all this?'

'You do not know, then, what passed last night?'

'I—I can only guess that Vavasour has had one of his rages.'

'Then you must know,' said Campbell with an effort 'for you must explain all to Scoutbush when he returns, and I know no one more fit for the office.' And he briefly told him the story.

Mellot was much affected. 'The wretched ape!' Campbell, your first thought was the true one: you must not fight that man. After all, it's a farce: you won't fire at him, and he can't hit you—so leave it alone. Beside, for Scoutbush's sake, her sake, every one's sake, the thing must be hushed up. If the fellow chooses to duck under into the London mire, let him be there, and forget him!'

'No, Claude, his pardon I must beg, ere I go out to the war—or I shall die with a sin upon my soul.'

'My dear, noble creature! if you must go, I go with you. I must see fair play between you and that madman, and give him a piece of my mind, too, while I am about it. He is in my power, or if not quite that, I know one in whose power he is! and to reason he shall be brought.'

'No, you must stay here. I cannot trust Scoutbush's head, and these poor dear souls will have no one to look to but you. I can trust you with them, I know. Me you will perhaps never see again.'

'You can trust me!' said the affectionate little painter, the tears starting to his eyes, as he wrung Campbell's hand.

'Mind one thing! If that Vavasour shows

his teeth, there is a spell will turn him to stone. Use it!'

'Heaven forbid! Let him show his teeth. It is I who am in the wrong. Why should I make him more my enemy than he is?'

'Be it so. Only, if the worst comes to the worst, call him not Elsley Vavasour, but plain John Briggs—and see what follows.'

Valentia entered.

'The post has come in.' Oh, dear Major Campbell, is there a letter?'

He put the note into her hand in silence. She read it, and darted back to Lucia's room.

'Thank God that she did not see that I was going! One more pang on earth spared!' said Campbell to himself.

Valentia hurried to Lucia's door. She was holding it ajar and looking out with pale face, and wild hungry eyes. 'A letter? Don't be silent, or I shall go mad! Tell me the worst! Is he alive?'

'Yes.'

She gasped, and staggered against the door-post.

'Where? Why does he not come back to me?' asked she, in a confused, abstracted way.

It was best to tell the truth, and have it over.

'He has gone to London, Lucia. He will think over it all there, and be sorry for it, and then all will be well again.'

But Lucia did not hear the end of that sentence. Muttering to herself, 'To London! to London!' she hurried back into the room.

'Clara! Clara! have the children had their breakfast?'

'Yes, mamma,' says Clara, appearing from the inner room.

'Then help me to pack up, quick! Your master is gone to London on business, and we are to follow him immediately.'

And she began bustling about the room.

'My dearest Lucia, you are not fit to travel now!'

'I shall die if I stay here, she if I do not! I must find him!' whispered she. 'Don't speak loud, or Clara will hear. I can find him, and nobody can lose me! Why don't you help me to pack, Valentia?'

'My dearest! but what will Scoutbush say when he comes home, and finds you gone?'

'What right has he to interfere? I am Elsley's wife, am I not? and may I follow my husband if I like,' and she went on desperately collecting not her own things, but Elsley's.

Valentia watched her with tear-brimming eyes, collecting all his papers, counting over his clothes, muttering to herself that he would want this and that in London. Her sanity seemed failing her, under the fixed idea that she had only to see him, and set all right with a word.

'I will go and get you some breakfast,' said she at last.

'I want none. I am too lousy to eat. Why don't you help me?'

Valentia had not the heart to help, believing,

as she did, that Lucia's journey would be as bootless as it would be dangerous to her health.

'I will bring you some breakfast, and you must try, then I will help you to pack' and utterly bewildered she went out, and the thought uppermost in her mind was, 'Oh, that I could find Frank Headley!'

Happy was it for Frank's love, paradoxical as it may seem, that it had conquered just at that moment of terrible distress. Valentia's acceptance of him had been hasty, founded rather on sentiment and admiration than on deep affection, and her feeling might have faltered, waned, died away in self-distrust of its own reality, if giddy amusement, if mere easy happiness, had followed it. But now the fire of affliction was branding in the thought of him upon her softened heart.

Living at the utmost strain of her character, Campbell gone, her brother useless, and Lucia and the children depending utterly on her, there was but one to whom she could look for comfort while she needed it most utterly, and happy for her and for her lover that she could go to him.

'Poor Lucia! thank God that I have some one who will never treat me so' who will lift me up and shield me, instead of crushing me' dear creature! Oh that I may find him! And her heart went out after Frank with a gush of tenderness which she had never felt before.

'Is this, then, love?' she asked herself, and she found time to slip into her own room for a moment and arrange her dishevelled hair, ere she entered the breakfast-room.

Frank was there, luckily alone, pacing nervously up and down. He hurried up to her, caught both her hands in his, and gazed into her wan and haggard face with the intensest tenderness and anxiety.

Valentia's eyes looked into the depths of his, passive and confiding, till they failed before the keenness of his gaze, and swam in glittering mist.

'Ah!' thought she, 'sorrow is a light price to pay for the feeling of being so loved by such a man.'

'You are tired—all! What a night you must have had! Mollot has told me all.'

'Oh, my poor sister!' and wildly she poured out to Frank her wrath against Elsie, her inability to comfort Lucia, and all the misery and confusion of the past night.

'This is a sad dawning for the day of my triumph!' thought Frank, who longed to pour out his heart to her on a thousand very different matters, but he was content, it was enough for him that she could tell him all, and confide in him, a truer sign of affection than any selfish love-making, and he asked, and answered, with such tenderness and thoughtfulness for poor Lucia, with such a deep comprehension of Elsie's character, pitying while he blamed, that he won his reward at last.

'Oh! it would be intolerable, if I had not through it all the thought—and blushing

crimson, her head drooped on her bosom. She seemed ready to drop with exhaustion.

'Sit down, sit down, or you will fall!' said Frank, leading her to a chair, and as he led her, he whispered with flinching heart, new to its own happiness, and longing to make assurance sure—'What though?'

She was silent still, but he felt her hand tremble in his.

'The thought of me?'

She looked up in his face, how beautiful! And in another moment, neither knew how, she was clasped to his bosom.

He covered her face, her hair, with kisses, she did not move, from that moment she felt that he was her husband.

'Oh, guide me! counsel me! pray for me!' sobbed she. 'I am all alone, and my poor sister, she is going mad, I think, and I have no one to trust but you, and you—you will leave me to go to those dreadful wars, and then, what will become of me? Oh, stay! only a few days!' and holding him convulsively, she answered his kisses with her own.

Frank stood as in a dream, while the room reeled round and vanished, and he was alone for a moment upon earth with him and his great love.

'Tell me,' said he at last, trying to awaken himself to action. 'Tell me! Is she really going to seek him?'

'Yes, selfish and forgetful that I am! You must help me! she will go to London, nothing can stop her, and it will kill her!'

'It may drive her mad to keep her here.'

'It will! and that drives me mad also. What can I choose?'

'Follow where God leads. It is she, after all, who must reclaim him. Leave her in God's hands, and go with her to London.'

'But my brother?'

'Mollot or I will see him. Let it be me, Mollot shall go with you to London.'

'Oh that you were going!'

'Oh that I were! I will follow, though. Do you think that I can be long away from you? . . . But I must tell your brother. I had a very different matter on which to speak to him this morning,' said he with a sad smile. 'But better as it is. He shall find me, I hope, reasonable and trustworthy in this matter, perhaps enough so to have my Valentia committed to me. Precious jewel! I must learn to be a man now, at least, now that I have you to care for.'

'And yet you go and leave me?'

'Valentia! Because God has given us to each other, shall our thank-offering be to shrink cowardly from His work?'

He spoke more sternly than he intended, to awe into obedience rather himself than her, for he felt, poor fellow, his courage failing fast, while he held that treasure in his arms.

She shuddered in silence.

'Forgive me!' he cried, 'I was too harsh, Valentia!'

'No!' she cried, looking up at him with a glorious smile. 'Sould me! Be harsh to me! It is so delicious now to be reproved by you.' And as she spoke she felt as if she would rather endure torture from that man's hand than bliss from any other. How many strange words of Lucia's that new feeling explained to her, words at which she had once grown angry, as doting weaknesses, unjust and degrading to self-respect. Poor Lucia! She might be able to comfort her now, for she had learnt to sympathise with her by experience the very opposite to hers. Yet there must have been a time when Lucia clung to Elsie as she to Frank. How horrible to have her eyes opened thus! To be torn and flung away from the bosom where she longed to rest! It could never happen to her. Of course her Frank was true, though all the world were false—but poor Lucia! She must go to her. This was mere selfishness at such a moment.

'You will find Scotland, then?'

'This moment. I will order the car now, if you will only eat. You must!'

And he rang the bell, and then made her sit down and eat, almost feeding her with his own hand. That, too, was a new experience, and one so strangely pleasant, that when Bowie entered, and stared solemnly at the pair, she only looked up smiling, though blushing a little.

'Get a car instantly,' said she.

'For Mrs Vavasour, my lady? She has ordered hers already.'

'No, for Mr Headley. He is going to find my lord. Frank, pour me out a cup of tea for Lucia.'

Bowie vanished, mystified. 'It's no concern of mine, but better tak' up wi' a godly meenister than a godless pawet,' said the worthy warrior to himself as he marched downstairs.

'You see that I am asserting our rights already before all the world,' said she, looking up.

'I see you are not ashamed of me.'

'Ashamed of you?'

'And now I must go to Lucia.'

'And to London.'

Valentia began to cry like any baby, but rose and carried away the tea in her hand.

'Must I go? and before you come back, too?'

'Is she determined to start instantly?'

'I cannot stop her. You see she has ordered the car.'

'Then go, my darling! My own! my Valentia! Oh, a thousand things to ask you, and no time to ask them in! I can write!' said Frank, with an inquiring smile.

'Write! Yes, every day—twice a day. I shall live upon those letters. Good-bye! And out she went, while Frank sat himself down at the table, and laid his head upon his hands, stupefied with delight, till Bowie entered.

'The car, sir.'

'Which? Who? asked Frank, looking up as if from a dream.

'The car, sir.'

Frank rose, and walked downstairs abstractedly. Bowie kept close to his side.

'Ye'll pardon me, sir,' said he in a low voice, 'but I see how it is—the more blessing for you. Ye'll be pleased, I trust, to take more care of this jewel than others have of that one or—'

'Or you'll shoot me yourself, Bowie!' said Frank, half-amused, half-awed, too, by the stern tone of the Guardsman. 'I'll give you leave to do it if I deserve it.'

'It's no my duty, either as a soldier or as a valet. And, naked, I've that opinion of you, sir, that I don't think it'll need to be any one else's duty either.'

And so did Mr Bowie signify his approbation of the new family romance, and went off to assist Mrs Clara in getting the trunks downstairs.

Clara was in high dudgeon. She had not yet completed her flirtation with Mr Bowie, and felt it hard to have her one amusement in life snatched out of her hard-worked hands.

'I'm sure I don't know why we're moving. I don't believe it's business. Some of his tantrums, I dare say. I heard her walking up and down the room all last night, I'll swear. Neither she nor Miss Valentia has been to bed. He'll kill her at last, the brute!'

'It's no concern of either of us, that. Have ye got another trunk to bring down?'

'No concern! Just like your hard-heartedness, Mr Bowie. And as soon as I'm gone, of course you will be flirting with these impudent Welshwomen, in their hoard hats.'

'May be, yes, may be, no. But flirting's no marrying, Mrs Clara.'

'True for you, sir! Men were deceivers ever,' quoth Clara, and flounced upstairs, while Bowie looked after her with a grim smile, and caught her, when she came down again, long enough to give her a great kiss—the only language which he used in wooing, and that but rarely.

'Dinna fash, lassie. Mind your lady and the poor bannet, like a godly handmaiden, and I'll buy the ring when the sawmon fishing's over, and we'll just be married ere I start for the Crimea.'

'The sawmon!' cried Clara. 'I'll see you turned into a mermaid first, and married to a sawmon!'

'And ye won't do anything o' the kind,' said Bowie to himself, and shouldered a valise.

In ten minutes the ladies were packed into the carriage, and away, under Mellot's care. Frank watched Valentia looking back, and smiling through her tears, as they rolled through the village, and then got into his car, and rattled down the southern road to Port Aberglaslyn, his hand still tingling with the last pressure of Valentia's.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE BROAD STONE OF HONOUR

BUT where has Stangrave been all this while?

Where any given bachelor has been, for any given month, is difficult to say, and no man's business but his own. But where he happened to be on a certain afternoon in the first week of October, on which he had just heard the news of Alma, was—upon the hills between Ems and Coblenz. Walking over a high tableland of stubbles, which would be grass in England, and yet with all its tillage is perhaps not worth more than English grass would be, thanks to that small-farm system much he-praised by some who know not wheat from turnips. Then along a road, which might be a Devon one, cut in the hillside, through authentic 'Devonian' slate, where the deep chocolate soil is lodged on the top of the upright strata, and a thick coat of moss and wood sedge clusters about the oak-scrub roots, round which the delicate and rare oak-fern mingles its fronds with great blue campanulas, while the 'white admurals' and silver-washed 'intallines' flit round every bramble bed, and the great 'purple emperors' come down to drink in the road puddles, and sit fearless, flashing off their velvet wings a line as of that cupycean which is 'dark by excess of light.'

Down again through cultivated lands, corn and clover, flax and beet, and all the various crops with which the industrious German yeoman ekes out his little patch of soil. Past the thrifty husbandman himself, as he guides the two milch-kine in his tiny plough, and stops at the furrow's end, to greet you with the hearty German smile and bow, while the little fair-haired maiden, walking beneath the shade of standard cherries, walnuts, and pears, all gray with fruit, fills the cow's months with daisy, and wild carnations, and pink santolin, and many a fragrant weed which richer England wastes.

Down once more into a glen, but such a glen as neither England nor America has ever seen, or, please God, ever will see, glorious as it is Stangrave, who knew all Europe well, had walked the path before, but he stopped then, as he had done the first time, on a eve. On the right, slope up the bare slate downs, up to the foot of cliffs, but only half of those cliffs God has made. Above the gray slate ledges rise cliffs of man's handiwork, pored with a hundred square black embrasures, and above them the long barrack-ranges of a soldiers' town, which a foeman stormed once, when it was young; but what foeman will ever storm it again! What conqueror's foot will ever tread again upon the 'broad stone of honour,' and call Ehrenbreitstein his!

On the left the clover and the corn range on, beneath the orchard boughs, up to yon knoll of chestnut and acacia, tall poplar, feathered larch:

but what is that stonework which gleams gray between their stems? A summer-house for some great duke, looking out over the glorious Rhine vale, and up the long vineyards of the bright Moselle, from whence he may bid his people eat, drink, and take then ease, for they have much goods laid up for many years!

Bank over bank of earth and stone, cleft by deep embrasures, from which the great guns grin across the rich gardens, studded with standard fruit-trees, which clothe the glaciers to its topmost edge. And there, below him, lie the vineyards, every rock-ledge and narrow path of soil tossing its golden tendrils to the sun, gray with ripening clusters, rich with noble wine, but what is that wall which winds among them, up and down, creeping and sneaking over every ledge and kind of vantage ground, jarred with cyclet-loops, backed by strange stairs and galleries of stone, till it rises close before him, to meet the low round tower full in his path, from whose deep casemates, as from dark scowling eye-holes, the ugly cannon-eyes stare up the glen?

Stangrave knows them all—as far as any man can know. The warls of the key which locks apart the nations, the yet mahlen Troy of Europe, the greatest fortress of the world.

He walks down, turns up to the vineyards, and lies down beneath the mellow shade of vines. He has no sketch book—article forgotten, his passport is in his pocket, and he speaks all tongues of German men, soldiers, and sailors, he has down in a 'note-book' the names of the men, upon the shaly soil, and watches the bright-eyed hawks hunt flies along the roosting walls, and the great locusts buzz and patch and leap, green locusts with red wings, and gray locusts with blue wings, he notes the species, for he is tired and lazy, and has so in my thoughts within his head that he is glad to toss them all away, and give up his soul, if possible, to locusts and hawks, vines and slate.

And far below him fleets the mighty Rhine, rich with the memories of two thousand stormy years, and on its further bank the gray-walled Coblenz town, and the long arches of the Moselle bridge, and the rich flats of Kaiser Franz, and the long poplar-crested uplands, which look so gay, and are so stern, for everywhere between the poplar-stems the saw-toothed outline of the western forts cuts the blue sky.

And far beyond it all sleeps, high in air, the Taifel with its hundred crater peaks, blue mound behind blue mound, melting into white haze. Stangrave has walked upon those hills, and stood upon the crater-lip of the great Moselkopf, and dreamed beside the Laacher See, beneath the ancient abley walls, and his thoughts flit across the Moselle flats towards his ancient haunts, as he asks himself—How long has that old Eifel lain in such soft sleep? How long ere it awake again?

It may awake, geologists confess—why not? and blacken all the skies with smoke of Tophet, pouring its streams of boiling mud once more to

dam the Rhine, whelming the works of men in flood, and ash, and fire. Why not? The old earth seems so solid at first sight but look a little nearer, and this is the stuff of which she is made! The wreck of past earthquakes, the leavings of old floods, the washings of cold cinder heaps—which are smothering still below.

Stangrave knew that well enough. He had climbed Vesuvius, Etna, Popocatepetl. He had felt many an earthquake shock, and knew how far to trust the everlasting hills. And was old David right, he thought that day, when he held the earthquake and the volcano as the truest symbols of the history of human kind, and of the dealings of their Maker with them? All the magnificent Palestine imagery of the Hebrew poets, had it no meaning for men now? Did the Lord still uncover the foundations of the world, spiritual as well as physical, with the breath of His displeasure? Was the self-tara of Tophet still ordained for tyrants? And did the Lord still arise out of His place to shake terribly the earth? Or had the moral world grown as sleepy as the physical one had seemed to have done? Would anything awful, unexpected, tragical, ever burst forth again from the heart of earth, or from the heart of man?

Surprising question! What can ever happen henceforth, save mighty railroads and crystal palaces, peace and plenty, cosmogony and dilettantism, to the end of time? Is it not full sixty whole years since the first French revolution, and six whole years since the revolution of all Europe? But change is a thing of the past, and tragedy a myth of our forefathers, was a bad habit of old barbarians, eradicated by the spread of an enlightened philanthropy. Men know now how to govern the world far too well to need any divine visitations, much less divine punishments, and Stangrave was a Utopian dreamer, only to be excused by the fact that he had in his pocket the news that three great nations were gone forth to tear each other as of yore.

Nevertheless, looking round upon those grim earth-mounds and embasements he could not but give the men who put them there credit for supposing that they might be wanted. Ah! but that might be only one of the diabolical necessities of the decaying civilisation of the old world. What a contrast to the unarmed and peaceful prosperity of his own country! Thank heaven, New England needed no fortresses, military roads, or standing armies! True, but why that flash of contemptuous pity for the poor old world, which could only hold its own by such expensive and ugly methods?

He asked himself that very question, a moment after, angrily, for he was out of humour with himself, with his country, and indeed with the universe in general. And across his mind flashed a memorable conversation at Constantinople long since, during which he had made some such unwise remark to Thurnall, and received from him a sharp answer, which parted them for years.

It was natural enough that that conversation

should come back to him just then, for, in his jealousy, he was thinking of Tom Thurnall often enough every day, and in spite of his civility, he could not help suspecting more and more that Thurnall had had some right on his side in the quarrel.

He had been twitting Thurnall with the miserable condition of the laborers in the south of England, and extolling his own country at the expense of ours. Tom, unable to deny the fact, had waxed all the more wroth at having it pressed on him, and at last had burst forth—

‘Well, and what right have you to crow over us on that score? I suppose, if you could hire a man in America for eightpence a day, instead of a dollar and a half, you would do it? You Americans are not accustomed to give more for a thing than its worth in the market, are you?’

‘But,’ Stangrave had answered, ‘the glory of America is, that you cannot get the man for less than the dollar and a half, that he is too well fed, too prosperous, too well educated, to be made a slave of.’

‘And therefore makes slaves of the niggers instead? I’ll tell you what, I’m sick of that shallow fallacy the glory of America! Do you mean, by America, the country or the people? You boast, all of you, of your country, as if you had made it yourselves, and quite forget that God made America, and America has made you.’

‘Made us, sa?’ quoth Stangrave fiercely enough.

‘Made you!’ replied Thurnall, exaggerating his half-truth from anger. ‘To what is your comfort, your high feeding, your very education, owing, but to your having a thin population, a virgin soil, and unlimited means of emigration? What credit to you if you need no poor laws, when you pack off your children, as fast as they grow up, to clear more ground westward? What credit to your yeomen that they have read more books than our clods have, while they can earn more in four hours than our poor fellows in twelve? It all depends on the mere physical fact of your being in a new country, and we in an old one—and as for moral superiority, I shan’t believe in that while I see the whole of the northern states so utterly given up to the “almighty dollar,” that they leave the honour of their country to be made ducks and drakes of by a few southern slave holders. Moral superiority? We hold in England that an honest man is a match for three rogues. If the same law holds good in the United States, I leave you to settle whether Northerners or Southerners are the honestest men.’

Whereupon (and no blame to Stangrave) there was a heavy quarrel, and the two men had not met since.

But now, those words of Thurnall’s, hacked by far bitterer ones of Marie’s, were fretting Stangrave’s heart. What if they were true? They were not the whole truth. There was beside, and above them all, a nobleness in the

American heart, which could, if it chose and when it chose, give the lie to that bitter taunt but had it done so already?

At least, he himself had not. . . If Thurnall and Marie were unjust to his nation, they had not been unjust to him. He, at least, had been making, all his life, mere outward blessings causes of self-congratulation, and not of humility. He had been priding himself on wealth, ease, luxury, cultivation, without a thought that these were God's gifts, and that God would require an account of them. If Thurnall were right, was he himself too truly the typical American? And bitterly enough he accused at once himself and his people.

'Noble! Marie is right! We boast of our nobleness better to take the only opportunity of showing it which we have had since we have become a nation! Heaped with every blessing which God could give, beyond the reach of sorrow, a clock, even an interference, shut out from all the world in God's new Eden, that we might freely eat of all the trees of the garden, and grow, and spread, and enjoy ourselves like the birds of heaven—God only laid on us one duty, one command, to right one simple, confessed, conscious wrong.

'And what have we done?—what have even I done? We have steadily, deliberately, cringed at the foot of the wrong doer, even while we boasted our superiority to him at every point, and at last, for the sake of our own selfish ease, helped him to forge new chains for his victims, and received as our only reward fresh insults. White slaves! We, perhaps, and not the English peasant, are the white slaves! At least, if the Irishman emigrates to England, or the Englishman to Canada, he is not hunted out with bloodhounds, and delivered back to his landlord to be scourged and chained. He is not practically out of the pale of law, misrepresented, forbidden even the use of books, and even if he were, there is an excuse for the old country for she was founded on no political principles, but discovered what she knows step by step—a sort of political Topsy, as Claude Mellet calls her, who has "kinder growed," doing from hand to mouth what seemed best. But that we, who profess to start as an ideal nation, on fixed ideas of justice, freedom, and equality—that we should have been stultifying ever since every great principle of which we so loudly boast!—'

'The old Jew used to say of his nation, "It is God that hath made us, and not we ourselves." We say, "It is we that have made ourselves, while God—". Ah, yes, I recollect. God's work is to save a soul here and a soul there, and to leave America to be saved by the Americans who made it. We must have a broader and deeper creed than that if we are to work out our destiny. The battle against Middle Age slavery was fought by the old Catholic Church, which held the Jewish notion, and looked upon the Deity as the actual king of Christen-

dom, and every man in it as God's own child I see now! No wonder that the battle in America has as yet been fought by the Quakers, who believe that there is a divine light and voice in every man, while the Calvinist preachers, with their isolating and individualising creed, have looked on with folded hands, content to save a negro's soul here and there, whatsoever might become of the bodies and the national future of the whole negro race. No wonder, while such men have the teaching of the people, that it is necessary still in the nineteenth century, in a Protestant country, amid sane human beings, for such a man as Mr Sumner to rebut, in sober earnest, the argument that the negro was the descendant of Canaan, doomed to eternal slavery by Noah's curse!'

He would rouse himself. He would act, speak, write, as many a noble fellow-countryman was doing. He had avoided them of old as bores and fanatics who would needs wake him from his luxurious dreams. He had even hated them, simply because they were more righteous than he. He would be a new man henceforth.

He strode down the hill through the cannon-guarded vineyards, among the busy groups of peasants.

'Yes, Marie was right. Life is meant for work, and not for ease, to labour in danger and in dread, to do a little good ere the night comes, when no man can work, instead of trying to realize for oneself a Paradise, not even Bunyan's shepherd-paradise, much less Fourier's casino-paradise, and perhaps least of all, because most selfish and isolated of all, my own heart-paradise—the apothecary of loathing, as Claude calls it. Ah, Tennyson's Palace of Art is a true word—too true, too true!'

'Art? What if the most necessary human art, next to the art of agriculture, be, after all, the art of war? It has been so in all ages. What if I have been befooled—what if all the Anglo-Saxon world has been befooled by forty years of peace? We have forgotten that the history of the world has been as yet written in blood, that the history of the human race is the story of its heroes and its martyrs—the slayers and the slain. Is it not becoming such once more in Europe now? And what divine exemption can we claim from the law? What right have we to suppose that it will be aught else, as long as there are wrongs unredressed on earth, as long as anger and ambition, cupidity and wounded pride, canker the hearts of men? What if the wise man's attitude, and the wise nation's attitude, is that of the Jews rebuilding their ruined walls—the tool in one hand, and the sword in the other, for the wild Arabs are close outside, and the time is short, and the storm has only lulled awhile in mercy, that wise men may prepare for the next thunder-burst? It is an ugly fact but I have thrust it away too long, and I must accept it now and henceforth. This, and not luxurious Broadway, this, and not the comfortable New England

village, is the normal type of human life and this is the model city! Armed industry, which tills the corn and vino among the cannons' mouths, which never forgets their need, though it may mask and beautify their terror, but knows that as long as cruelty and wrong exist on earth, man's destiny is to dare and suffer, and, if it must be so, to die.

'Yes, I will face my work, my danger, it need be. I will find Marie. I will tell her that I accept her quest, not for her sake, but for its own. Only I will demand the right to work at it as I think best, patiently, moderately, wisely if I can, for a fanatic I cannot be, even for her sake. She may hate those slaveholders—she may have her reasons—but I cannot. I cannot deal with them as *ferus natura*. I cannot deny that they are no worse men than I, that I should have done what they are doing, have said what they are saying, had I been bred up, as they have been, with irresponsible power over the souls and bodies of human beings. God! I shudder at the fancy! The brute that I might have been—that I should have been!

'Yes, one thing at least I have learnt, in all my experiments on poor humanity—never to have seen a man do a wrong thing, without feeling that I could do the same in his place. I used to undo myself on that once, fool that I was, and call it comprehensiveness. I used to make it an excuse for sitting by, and seeing the devil have it all his own way, and call that toleration. I will see now whether I cannot turn the said knowledge to a better account, as common sense, patience, and charity, and yet do work of which neither I nor my country need be ashamed.'

He walked down, and on to the bridge of boats. They opened in the centre, as he reached it a steamer was passing. He lounged on the rail as the boat passed through, looking carelessly at the groups of tourists.

Two ladies were standing on the steamer, close to him, looking up at Ehrenbreitstein. Was it! Yes, it was Sabina, and Maria by her!

But ah, how changed! The cheeks were pale and hollow, dark rings—he could see them but too plainly as the face was lifted up toward the light—were round those great eyes, bright no longer. Her face was listless, careworn, looking all the more sad and impassive by the side of Sabina's, as she pointed, smiling and sparkling, up to the fortress, and seemed trying to interest Marie in it, but in vain.

He called out. He waved his hand wildly, to the amusement of the officers and peasants who waited by his side, and who, looking first at his excited face, and then at the two beautiful women, were not long in making up their minds about him, and had their private jests accordingly.

They did not see him, but turned away to look at Coblenz, and the steamer swept by.

Stangrave stamped with rage—upon a Prussian officer's thin boot.

'Ten thousand pardons!'

'You are excused, dear sir, you are excused,' says the good-natured German, with a wicked smile, which raises a blush on Stangrave's cheek. 'Your eyes were dazzled, why not? it is not often that one sees two such suns together in the same sky. But calm yourself, the boat stops at Coblenz.'

Stangrave could not well call the man of war to account for his impertinence, he had had his toes half crushed, and had a right to indemnify himself as he thought fit. And with a hundred more apologies, Stangrave prepared to dart across the bridge as soon as it was closed.

Alas! after the steamer, as the fates would have it, came lumbering down one of those monster timber rafts, and it was a full half hour before Stangrave could get across, having suffered all the while the torments of Tantalus, as he watched the boat sweep round to the pier and discharge its freight, to be scattered whither he knew not. At last he got across, and went in chase to the nearest hotel, but they were not there, thence to the next, and the next, till he had hunted half the hotels in the town, but hunted all in vain.

He is rushing wildly back again, to try if he can obtain any clue at the steamboat pier, through the narrow, dirty street at the back of the Rhine Cavalier, when he is stopped short by a mighty German embrace, and a German kiss on either cheek, as the kiss of a housemaid's broom, while a jolly voice shouts in English—

'Ah, my dear, dear friend! and you would pass me! Whither the hangman so fast are you running in the mud!'

'My dear Salomon! But let me go, I beseech you, I am in search—'

'In search?' cries the jolly Jew banker, 'for the philosopher's stone? You had all that man could want a week since, except that. Search no more, but come home with me, and we will have a night as of the gods on Olympus!'

'My dearest fellow, I am looking for two ladies!'

'Two? ah, rugie! shall not one suffice!'

'Don't, my dearest fellow! I am looking for two English ladies.'

'Pot!' You shall find two hundred in the hotels, ugly and fat, but the two fairest are gone this two hours!'

'When? which?' cries Stangrave, suspecting at once.

'Sabina Mellot, and a Sultana. I thought her of The Nation, and would have offered my hand on the spot, but Madame Mellot says she is a Gentle.'

'Gone? And you have seen them? Where?'

'To Bertrich. They had luncheon with my mother, and then started by private post.'

'I must follow.'

'Ach lieber! But it will be dark in an hour.'

'What matter?'

'But you shall find them to-morrow, just as well as to-day. They stay at Bertrich for a fortnight more. They have been there now a

month, and only left it last week for a pleasure tour, across to the Ahrthal, and so back by Andernach.

'Why did they leave Coblenz, then, in such hot haste?'

'Ah, the ladies never give reasons. There were letters waiting for them at our house, and no sooner read, but they leaped up and would forth. Come home now, and go by the steamer to-morrow morning.'

'Impossible? most hospitable of Israelites.'

'To go to-night—for see the clouds! Not a postilion will dare to leave Coblenz, under that quick coming *allgemein und ungeheuer hecker-lund-und-teufel's-quitter*.'

Stangrave looked up, growling, and gave in. A Rhine storm was rolling up rapidly.

'They will be caught in it.'

'No. They are far beyond its path by now, while you shall endure the whole visitation, and if you try to proceed, pass the night in a flea-pestered post-house, or in a ditch of water.'

So Stangrave went home with Herr Salomon, and heard from him, amid clouds of Latakia, of wars and rumours of wars, distress of nations, and perplexity, seen by the light, not of the Gospel, but of the stock-exchange, while the storm fell without in lightning, hail, rain, of right Rheinish potency.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE THIRTEEN OF SEPTEMBER

We must go back a week or so, to England, and to the last day of September. The world is shooting partridges, and asking nervously, when it comes home, what news from the Crimea? The flesh who serves it is bustling at Margate. The devil is keeping up his usual correspondence with both. Eaton Square is a desolate wilderness, where dusty sparrows alone disturb the dreams of frowzy charwomen, who, like Anchorites amid the tombs of the Thelwiel, fulfil the contemplative life each in her subterranean cell. Beneath St. Peter's spire the calman sleeps within his cab, the horse without, the waterman, seated on his empty bucket, contemplates the untrodden pavement between his feet, and is at rest. The blind butcher's boy trots by, with empty cart, five miles an hour, instead of full fifteen, and stops to chat with the red postman, who, his occupation done, smokes with the green gatekeeper, and reviews the *Gazette*. Along the whole north pavement of the square only one figure moves, and that is Major Campbell.

His face is haggard and anxious, he walks with a quick, excited step, earnest enough, whoever else is not. For in front of Lord Scutbush's house the road is laid with straw. There is sickness there, anxiety, bitter tears. Lucia has not found her husband, but she has lost her child.

Trembling, Campbell raises the muffled knocker and Bowie appears. 'What news to-day?' he whispers.

'As well as can be expected, sir, and as quiet as a lamb now, they say. But it has been a bad time, and a bad man is he that caused it.'

'A bad time, and a bad man. How is Miss St. Just?'

'Just gone to lie down, sir. Mrs. Clara is on the stairs, if you'd like to see her.'

'No, tell Miss St. Just that I have no news yet. And the major turns wearily away.'

Clara, who has seen him from above, hurries down after him into the street, and coaxes him to come in. 'I am sure you have had no breakfast, sir, and you look so ill and worn. And Miss St. Just will be so vexed not to see you. She will get up the moment she hears you are here.'

'No, my good Miss Clara,' says Campbell, looking down with a weary smile. 'I should only make gloom more gloomy. Bowie, tell his lordship that I shall be at the afternoon train to-morrow, let what will happen.'

'Ay, ay, sir. We're 'r ready to march. The major looks very ill, Miss Clara. I wish he'd have taken your counsel. And I wish you'd take mine, and marry me ere I march, just to try what it's like.'

'I must mind my mistress, Mr. Bowie,' says Clara.

'And how should I interfere with that, as I've said twenty times, when I'm safe in the Crimea? I'll get the licence this day, say what ye will: and then ye would not have the heart to let me spend two pounds twelve and sixpence for nothing.'

Whether the last most Caledonian argument conquered or not, Mr. Bowie got the licence, was married before breakfast the next morning, and started for the Crimea at ten o'clock in the afternoon, most astonished, as he confided in the train to Sergeant M. Arthur, 'to see a lassie that never gave him a kind word in her life, and had not been married but barely six hours, greet and greet at his going, till she vanished away into hysterics. They're a very unattractive species, servant, are they women, and if they were taken out o' man, they took the best part o' Adam wi' them, and left us to shift with the worst.'

But to return to Campbell. The last week has altered him frightfully. He is no longer the stern, self-possessed warrior which he was, he no longer even walks upright, his cheek is pale, his eye dull, his whole countenance sunken together. And now that the excitement of anxiety is past, he draws his feet along the pavement slowly, his hands clasped behind him, his eyes fixed on the ground, as if the life was gone from out of him, and existence was a heavy weight.

'She is safe, at least, then! One burden off my mind. And yet had it not been better if that pure spirit had returned to him who gave it, instead of waking again to fresh misery! I must

find that man! Why, I have been saying so to myself for seven days past, and yet no ray of light. Can the coward have given me a wrong address? Yet why give me an address at all if he meant to hide from me? Why, I have been saying that, too, to myself every day for the last week! Over and over again the same dreary round of possibilities and suspicions. However, I must be quiet now, if I am a man. I can hear nothing before the detective comes at two. How to pass the weary, weary time? For I am past thinking—almost past praying—though not quite, thank God!

He paces up still noisily, and then up silent Bond Street, pauses to look at some strange fish on Groves's counter, anything to while away the time, then he plops on toward the top of the street, and turns into Mr. Piltscher's shop, and upstays to the microscope club room. There, at least, he can forget himself for an hour.

He looks round the neat pleasant little place, with its cases of curiosities, and its exquisite photographs, and bright brass instruments, its glass vases stocked with delicate water-plants and animalcules, with the sunlight gleaming through the green and purple seaweed fronds, while the air is fresh and fragrant with the seaweed scent, a quiet, cool little hermitage of science amid that great, noisy, luxurious west-end world. At least, it brings back to him the thought of the summer sea, and Aberlvy, and his shut studies. But he cannot think of that any more. It is past, and may God forgive him!

At one of the microscopes on the slab opposite him stands a sturdy bearded man, his back toward the major, while the wise little Cornau, hopeless of customers, is leaning over him in his shut sleeves.

'But I never have seen its like, it had just like a painter's easel in its stomach yesterday.'

'Why, it's an Echinus lava, a sucking sea urchin.' Hang it, if I had known you hadn't seen one, I'd have brought up half a dozen of them.'

'My I look, sir? asked the major, 'I, too, never have seen an Echinus lava.'

The bearded man looks up.

'Major Campbell?'

'Mr. Thurnall? I thought I could not be mistaken in the voice.'

'This is too pleasant, sir, to renew our water-lives together here,' said Tom. But a second look at the major's face showed him that he was in no jesting mood. 'How is the party at Beddgelert? I hurried you with them still.'

'They are all in London, at Lord Southbush's house, in Eaton Square.'

'In London, at this dull time? I trust nothing unpleasant has brought them here.'

'Mrs. Vavasour is very ill. We had thoughts of sending for you, as the family physician was out of town, but she was out of danger, thank God, in a few hours. Now let me ask in turn after you. I hope no unpleasant business

brings you up three hundred miles from your practice?'

'Nothing, I assure you. Only I have given up my Aberlvy practice. I am going to the East.'

'Like the rest of the world?'

'Not exactly. You gave a disguised soldier of Her Majesty's, I am an undignified Abel Dragger, to dose Basil-Bazanka.'

'Impossible! and with such an opening as you had there? You must excuse me, but my opinion of your prudence must not be so rudely shaken.'

'Why do you not ask the question which Balie's old Tommigeons judge asks, whenever a culprit is brought before him,—"Who is she?"'

'Taking for granted that there was a woman at the bottom of every mishap? I understand you,' said the major, with a sad smile. 'Now let you and I walk a little together, and look it the Echimus another day, or when I return from Sevastopol—'

Tom went out with him. A new ray of hope had crossed the major's mind. His meeting with Thurnall might be providential, for he recollected now, for the first time, Mellot's parting hint.

'You knew Flisby Vavasour well?'

'No man better.'

'Did you think that there was any tendency to madness in him?'

'No more than in any other selfish, vain, irritable man, with a strong imagination left to run riot.'

'Humph! you seem to have divined his character. May I ask if you knew him before you met him at Aberlvy?'

Tom looked up sharply at the major's face.

'You would ask what cause I have for inquiring? I will tell you presently. Meanwhile I may say, that Mellot told me frankly that you had some power over him, and mentioned, mysteriously, a name. John Bugges, I think—which it appears that he once assumed.'

'If Mellot thought fit to tell you anything, I may frankly tell you all. John Bugges is his real name. I have known him from childhood. And then Tom poured into the ears of the surprised and somewhat disgusted major all he had to tell.

'You have kept your secret mercifully, and used it wisely, sir, and I and others shall be always your debtors for it. Now I dare tell you in turn, in strictest confidence of course—'

'I am far too poor to afford the luxury of babbling.'

And the major told him what we all know.

'I expected as much,' said he dryly. 'Now, I suppose that you wish me to exert myself in tending the man?'

'I do.'

'Were Mrs. Vavasour only concerned, I should say—Not I! Better that she should never set eyes on him again.'

'Better, indeed!' said he bitterly: 'but it is

I who must see him, if but for five minutes. I must!'

'Major Campbell's wish is a command. Where have you searched for him?'

'At his address, at his publisher's, at the houses of various literary friends of his, and yet no trace.'

'Has he gone to the Continent?'

'Heaven knows! I have inquired at every passport office for news of any one answering his description, indeed, I have two detectives, I may tell you, at this moment, watching every possible place. There is but one hope, if he be alive. Can he have gone home to his native town?'

'Never! Anywhere but there.'

'Is there any old friend of the lower class with whom he may have taken lodgings?'

Tom pondered.

'There was a fellow, a noisy blackguard, whom Briggs was asking after this very summer—a fellow who went off from Whitbury with some players. I know Briggs used to go to the theatre with him as a boy—what was his name? He tried acting, but did not succeed, and then became a scene-shifter, or something of the kind, at the Adelphi. He has some complaint, I forget what, which made him an out-patient at St. Munipamus's some months every year. I know that he was there this summer, for I wrote to ask, at Briggs's request, and Briggs sent him a sovereign through me.'

'But what makes you fancy that he can have taken shelter with such a man, and one who knows his secret?'

'It is but a chance. But he may have done it from the mere feeling of loneliness—just to hold by some one whom he knows in this great wilderness, especially a man in whose eyes he will be a great man, and to whom he has done a kindness, still, it is the nearest chance.'

'We will take it, nevertheless, for a hope though it be.'

They took a cab to the hospital, and, with some trouble, got the man's name and address, and drove in search of him. They had some difficulty in finding his abode, for it was up an alley at the back of Drury Lane, in the top of one of those foul old houses which hold a family in every room, but, by dint of knocking at one door and the other, and bearing meekly with reviling consequent thereon, they arrived, *per modum tollendi*, at a door which must be the right one, as all the rest were wrong.

'Does John Barker live here?' asks Thurnall, putting his head in cautiously for fear of drunken Irishmen, who might be seized with the national impulse to 'slate' him.

'What's that to you?' answers a shrill voice from among soapends and steaming rags.

'Here is a gentleman wants to speak to him.'

'So do a many as won't have that pleasure, and would be little the better for it if they had. Get along with you, I knows your lay.'

'We really want to speak to him, and to pay him, if he will—'

'Go along! I'm up to the something-to-your

advantage dodge, and to the mustachio dodge too. Do you fancy I don't know a bailiff, because he's dressed like a swell?'

'But, my good woman!' said Tom, laughing.

'You put your crocodile foot in here, and I'll hit the hot water over the both of you!' and she caught up the pan of soapends.

'My dear soul! I am a doctor belonging to the hospital which your husband goes to, and have known him since he was a boy, down in Berkshire.'

'You?' and she looked keenly at him.

'My name is Thurnall. I was a medical man once in Whitbury, where your husband was born.'

'You?' said she again, in a softened tone.

'I knows that name well enough.'

'You do? What was your name, then?' said Tom, who recognised the woman's Berkshire accent beneath its coat of cockneyism.

'Never you mind. I'm no credit to it, so I'll let it be. But come in, for the old county's sake. Can't offer you a chair, he's pawned 'em all. Pleasant old place it was down there, when I was a young girl, they say it's growed a grand place now, wi' a railroad. I think many times I'd like to go down and die there.' She spoke in a rough, sullen, careless tone, as if life-weary.

'My good woman,' said Major Campbell, a little impatiently, 'can you find your husband for us?'

'Why, then?' asked she sharply, her suspicion seeming to return.

'If he will answer a few questions, I will give him five shillings. If he can find out for me what I want, I will give him five pounds.'

'Shouldn't I do as well? If you go to him, it's little out of it I shall see, but he coming home tapsy when it's spent. Ah, dear! it was a sad day for me when I first fell in with they play-goers.'

'Why should she not do it as well?' said Thurnall. 'Mrs. Barker, do you know anything of a person named Briggs—John Briggs, the apothecary's son, at Whitbury?'

She laughed a harsh bitter laugh.

'Know he? yes, and too much reason. That was where it all begun, along of that play-going of he's and my master's.'

'Have you seen him lately?' asked Campbell eagerly.

'I seen 'im? I'd hit this water over the fellow, and all his play-acting merryandrews, if ever he set a foot here!'

'But have you heard of him?'

'Ees—' said she carelessly, 'he's round here now, I heard my master say, about the Delphy, with my master a-drinking, I suppose. No good, I'll warrant.'

'My good woman,' said Campbell, panting for breath, 'bring me face to face with that man, and I'll put a five-pound note in your hand there and then.'

'Five pounds is a sight to me, but it's a sight more than the sight of he's worth,' said she suspiciously again.

'That's the gentleman's concern,' said Tom, 'The money's yours. I suppose you know the worth of it by now?'

'Ees, none better. But I don't want he to get hold of it, he's made away with enough already,' and she began to think.

'Chiously impassive people, wo Wessex worthies, when we are a little ground down with trouble. You must give her time, and she will do our work. She wants the money, but she is long past being excited at the prospect of it.'

'What's that you're whispering?' asked she sharply.

Campbell stamped with impatience.

'You don't trust us yet, eh?—then, there!' and he took five sovereigns from his pocket, and tossed them on the table. 'There's your money! I trust you to do the work, as you've been paid beforehand.'

She caught up the gold, rang every piece on the table to see if it was sound, and then—

'Sally, you go down with these gentlemen to the Juniper's Head, and if he isn't there, go to the Fighting Cocks, and if he isn't there, go to the Duke of Wellington, and tell he there's two gentlemen has heard of his poetry, and wants to hear 'im excite. And then you give he a glass of humor, and praise up his nonsense, and he'll tell you all he knows, and a sight more 'th' 'un plenty to drink. It'll be a saving and a charity, for if he don't get it out of you, he will out of me.'

And she returned doggedly to her washing.

'Can't I do anything for you?' asked Tom, whose heart always yearned over a Berkshire soul. 'I have plenty of friends down at Whitebury still.'

'More than I have. No, sir,' said she sally, and with the first touch of sweetness they had yet heard in her voice. 'I've cured my own bacon, and I must eat it. There's none down there minds me, but then that would be ashamed of me. And I couldn't go without he, and they wouldn't take him in, so I must just bide.' And she went on wishing.

'God help her!' said Campbell, as he went downstairs.

'Misery breeds that temper, and only misery, in our people. I can show you as thorough gentlemen and ladies, people round Whitebury, living on ten shillings a week, as you will show me in Belgravia living on five thousand a year.'

'I don't doubt it,' said Campbell. So 'she couldn't go without he,' drunken dog as he is! Thus it is with them all the world over.

'So much the worse for them,' said Tom cynically, 'and for the men too. They make fools of us first with our over-faithfulness of them, and then they let us make fools of ourselves with their over-faithfulness of us.'

'I fancy sometimes that they were all meant to be the mates of angels, and stooped to men as a *pis aller*; reversing the old story of the sons of heaven and the daughters of men.'

'And accounting for the present degeneracy.

T Y A

When the sons of heaven married the daughters of men, then offspring were giants and men of renown. Now the sons of men marry the daughters of heaven, and the offspring is Wiggle, Waggle, Windbag, and Redtape.'

They visited one public-house after another, till the girl found for them the man they wanted, a shabby, sudden-visaged fellow, with a world he jannity all of conscious shrewdness and vanity, who stood before the bar, his thumbs in his minholes, and laying down the law to a group of coster boys, for want of a better audience.

The girl, after smugly plucks at his coat-tail, stopped him in the midst of his oration, and explained her errand somewhat harshly.

Mr. Barker bent down his head on one side, to signify that he was absorbed in attention to her news, and then drawing himself up once more, lifted his greasy hat high in air, bowed to the very floor, and broke forth—

'Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors
A man of war, and like a man of peace,
Therein, if you come jangleful and if not,
Have we not thrived here?'

And the fellow put himself into a fresh attitude.

'We come in peace, my good sir,' said Tom, 'first to listen to your talented effusions, and next for a little private conversation on a subject on which—' but Mr. Barker interrupted—

'To listen, and to drink? The nose is dry,
And Pegasus doth thirst for Hippocrene,
And fun would paint imbrals the vulgar call—
Or hot or cold, or long or short. Alfordant.'

The bar girl, who knew his humour, came forward.

'Glasses all round!—these noble knighthits will pay—
Of hottest hot, and stuffiest stuff. Then mark'st me?
Now to your quest!'

And he bowed round with a third attitude.

'Do you know Mr. Briggs?' asked the straight forward major.

He rolled his eyes to every quarter of the seventh sphere, clapped his hand upon his heart, and assumed an expression of angelic gratitude.

'My benefactor! Were the world a waste,
A thistle-waste, ass-milch'd, goldfinch-pecked,
And all the men and women merely asses,
I still could lay this hand upon this heart
And cry, "Not yet alone!" I know a man—
A man low troated, and his person curled—
A gushing, flushing, blushing human heart.'

'As sure as you live, sir,' said Tom, 'if you won't talk honest prose, I won't pay for the brimby and-wine.'

'Here is the slave who pays, and baser prose—
Hing unimpaired pattern. 'Tis in verse
That this is prose, and tends in Jimbo curae.'

'And asses buy, I think,' said Tom, in deepspan. 'Do you know where Mr. Briggs is now?'

'And why the devil do you want to know?
For that's a verse, sir, although somewhat slow.'

The two men laughed in spite of themselves.

'Better tell the fellow the plain truth,' said Campbell to Thurnall.

N

'Come out with us, and I will tell you' And Campbell threw down the money, and led him off, after he had gulped down his own brandy, and half Tom's beside.

'What? leave the nepenthe untasted?'

They took him out, and he tucked his arms through theirs, and strutted down Drury Lane.

'The fact is, sir—I speak to you, of course, in confidence, as one gentleman to another—'

Mr Barker replied by a lofty and gracious bow.

'That his family are exceedingly distressed at his absence, and his wife, who, as you may know, is a lady of high family, dangerously ill, and he cannot be aware of the fact. This gentleman is the medical man of her family, and I—I am an intimate friend. We should esteem it, therefore, the very greatest service if you would give us any information which—'

'Weep no more, gentle shepherdess, weep no more,
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
Sunk though he be upon a purgatory shore,
With fumes of Morphoeus crown about his head.'

'Fumes of Morphoeus' crown?' asked Thurnall.

'That crimson flower which crowns the sleepy god,
And sweeps the soul aloft, though flesh may nod.'

'He has taken to opium,' said Thurnall to the bewildered major. 'What I should have expected.'

'God help him! we must save him out of that last lowest deep!' cried Campbell. 'Where is he, sir?'

'A vow! a vow! I have a vow in heaven!
Why guide the hounds toward the trembling hare?
Our Adonis hath drunk poison, Oh!
What deaf and vigorous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?'

'As I live, sir,' cried Campbell, losing his self-possession in disgust at the lull, 'you may rhyme your own nonsense as long as you will, but you shan't quote the Adonians about that fellow in my presence.'

Mr Barker shook himself fiercely free of Campbell's arm, and faced round at him in a fighting attitude. Campbell stood eyeing him sternly, but at his wit's end.

'Mr Barker,' said Tom blandly, 'will you have another glass of brandy-and-water, or shall I call a policeman?'

'Sn,' sputtered he, speaking prose at last, 'this gentleman has insulted me.' He has called my poetry nonsense, and my friend a fellow. And blood shall not wipe out—what liquor may!'

The hint was sufficient. But ere he had drained another glass, Mr Barker was decidedly incapable of managing his affairs, much less theirs, and became withal exceedingly quarrelsome, returning angrily to the grievance of Briggs having been called a fellow, in spite of all their enreaties, he talked himself into a passion, and at last, to Campbell's extreme disgust, rushed out of the bar into the street.

'This is too vexatious! To have kept half an hour's company with such an animal, and then to have him escape me after all! A just

punishment on me for pandering to his drunkenness.'

Tom made no answer, but went quietly to the door, and peeped out.

'Pay for his liquor, major, and follow. Keep a few yards behind me, there will be less chance of his recognising us than if he saw us both together.'

'Why, where do you think he's going?'

'Not home, I can see. Ten to one that he will go ragging off straight to Briggs, to put him on his guard against us. Just like a drunkard's cunning it would be. There, he has turned up that side street. Now follow me quick. Oh that he may only keep his legs!'

They gained the bottom of that street before he had turned out of it, and so through another, and another, till they ran him to earth in one of the courts out of St. Martin's Lane.

Into a doorway he went, and up a stair. Tom stood listening at the bottom, till he heard the fellow knock at a door far above, and call out in a drunken tone. Then he beckoned to Campbell, and both, careless of what might follow, ran upstairs, and pushing him aside, entered the room without ceremony.

Then chances of being on the right scent were small enough, considering that, though every one was out of town, there were a million, and a half of people in London at that moment, and, unfortunately, at least fifty thousand who would have considered Mr. John Barker a desirable visitor, but somehow, in the excitement of the chase, both had forgotten the chances against them, and the probability that they would have to retire downstairs again, apologising humbly to some wrathful Joseph Higgins, whose convivialities they might have interrupted. But no, Tom's cunning had, as usual, played him true, and as they entered the door, they beheld none other than the lost Elsie Vivasour, *alias* John Briggs.

Major Campbell advanced bowing, hat in hand, with a courteous apology on his lips.

It was a low lean to garret, there was a deal table and an old chair in it, but no bed. The windows were broken, the paper hanging down in strips. Elsie was standing before the empty fireplace, his hand in his bosom, as if he had been startled by the rattle outside. He had not shaved for some days.

So much Tom could note, but no more. He saw the glance of recognition pass over Elsie's face, and that an ugly one. He saw him draw something from his bosom, and spring like a cat almost upon the table. A flash—a crack. He had fired a pistol full in Campbell's face.

Tom was startled, not at the thing, but that such a man should have done it. He had seen souls, and too many, flit out of the world by that same tiny crack, in Californian taverns, Arabian deserts, Australian gullies. He knew all about that; but he liked Campbell; and he breathed more freely the next moment, when he saw him standing still erect, a quiet smile on his face, and felt the plaster dropping from the

wall upon his own head. The bullet had gone over the major. All was right.

'He is not man enough for a second shot,' thought Tom quietly, 'while the major's eye is on him.'

'I beg your pardon, Mr Vavasour,' he heard the major say, in a gentle unimoved voice, 'for this intrusion. I assure you that there is no cause for any anger on your part, and I am come to entreat you to forget and forgive any conduct of mine which may have caused you to mistake either me or a lady whom I am unworthy to mention.'

'I am glad the beggar fired at him,' thought Tom. 'One space of danger, and he's himself again, and will overawe the poor cur by mere civility. I was afraid of some abject Methodist parson humbly, which would give the other party a handle.'

Elsley heard him with a stupefied look, like that of a trapped wild beast, in which rage, shame, suspicion, and fear were mingled with the vacant glare of the opium-eater's eye. Then his eyes drooped beneath Campbell's steady gentle gaze, and he looked uneasily round the room, still like a trapped wild beast, as if for a hole to escape by, then up again, but sidelong, at Major Campbell.

'I assure you, sir, on the word of a Christian and a soldier, that you are labouring under an entire misapprehension. For God's sake and Mrs Vavasour's sake, undo luck, sir, to those who will receive you with nothing but affection! Your wife has been all but dead, she thinks of no one but you, asks for no one but you! In God's name, sir, what are you doing here, while a wife who adores you is dying from you?—I do not wish to be rude, sir, but let me say at least—neglect?'

Elsley looked at him still askance, puzzled, inquiring. Suddenly his great beautiful eyes opened to preternatural wideness, as if trying to grasp a new thought. He started, shifted his foot to and fro, his arms straight down by his sides, his fingers chattering after something. Then he looked up hurriedly again at Campbell, and Thurnall looked at him also, and his face was as the face of an angel.

'Miserable ass!' thought Tom, 'if he don't see innocence in that man's countenance, he wouldn't see it in his own child's.'

Elsley suddenly turned his back to them, and thrust his hand into his bosom. Now was Tom's turn.

In a moment he had vaulted over the table, and seized Elsley's wrist ere he could draw the second pistol.

'No, my dear Jack,' whispered he quietly, 'once is enough in a day!'

'Not for him, Tom, for myself!' moaned Elsley.

'For neither, dear lad! Let bygones be bygones, and do you be a new man, and go home to Mrs Vavasour.'

'Never, never, never, never, never, never!' shrieked Elsley like a baby, every word increas-

ing in intensity, till the whole house rang, and then threw himself into the crazy chair, and dashed his head between his hands upon the table.

'This is a case for me, Major Campbell. I think you had better go now.'

'You will not leave him?'

'No, sir. It is a very curious psychological study, and he is a Whitbury man.'

Campbell knew quite enough of the would-be cynical doctor, to understand what all that meant. He came up to Elsley.

'Mr Vavasour, I am going to the war, from which I expect never to return. If you believe me, give me your hand before I go.'

Elsley, without lifting his head, beat on the table with his hand.

'I wish to die at peace with you and all the world. I am innocent in word, in thought. I shall not insult another person by saying that she is so. If you believe me, give me your hand.'

Elsley stretched his hand, his head still buried. Campbell took it and went silently downstairs.

'Is he gone?' moaned he, after a while.

'Yes.'

'Does she—does she care for him?'

'Good heavens! How did you ever dream such an absurdity?'

Elsley only beat upon the table.

'She has been ill.'

'Is ill. She has lost her child.'

'Which?' shrieked Elsley.

'A boy whom she should have had.'

Elsley only beat on the table, then—

'Give me the bottle, Tom!'

'What bottle?'

'The laudanum,—there in the cupboard.'

'I shall do no such thing. You are poisoning yourself.'

'Let me, then! I must, I tell you! I can live on nothing else. I shall go mad if I do not have it. I should have been mad by now. Nothing else keeps off these fits. I feel one coming now. Curse you! Give me the bottle!'

'What fits?'

'How do I know? Agony and torture—ever since I got wet on that mountain.'

Tom knew enough to guess his meaning, and felt Elsley's pulse and forehead.

'I tell you it turns every bone to red-hot iron!' almost screamed he.

'Neuralgia, rheumatic, I suppose,' said Tom to himself. 'Well, this is not the thing to cure you, but you shall have it to keep you quiet.' And he measured him out a small dose.

'More, I tell you, more!' said Elsley, lifting up his head, and looking at it.

'Not more while you are with me.'

'With you! Who the devil sent you here?'

'John Briggs, John Briggs, if I did not mean you good, should I be here now? Now do, like a reasonable man, tell me what you intend to do.'

'What is that to you, or any man?' said Elsley, writhing with neuralgia.

'No concern of mine, of course. But your poor wife—you must see her.'

'I can't, I won't!—that is, not yet! I tell you I cannot face the thought of her, much less the sight of her, and her family—that Valentin! I'd rather the earth should open and swallow me! Don't talk to me, I say!'

And hiding his face in his hands he writhed with pain, while Thurnall stood still patiently watching him, as a pointer dog does a partridge. He had found his game, and did not intend to lose it.

'I am better now, quite well!' said he, as the laudanum began to work. 'Yes! I'll go that will be it—go to . . . at once. He'll give me an order for a magazine article, I'll earn ten pounds, and then off to Italy.'

'If you want ten pounds, my good fellow, you can have them without racking your brains over an article.'

Elsley looked up proudly

'I do not borrow, sir!'

'Well—I'll give you five for those pistols. They are of no use to you, and I shall want a spare brace for the East.'

'Ah! I forgot them. I spent my last money on them,' said he with a shudder, 'but I won't sell them to you at a fancy price. No dealings between gentleman and gentleman. I'll go to a shop, and get for them what they are worth.'

'Very good. I'll go with you if you like. I fancy I may get you a better price for them than you would yourself, being rather a knowing one about the pretty little barkers.' And Tom took his arm, and walked him quietly down into the street.

'If you ever go up those kennel-stairs again, friend,' said he to himself, 'my name's not Tom Thurnall.'

They walked to a gunsmith's shop in the Strand, where Tom had often dealt, and sold the pistols for some three pounds.

'Now then, let's go into 333, and get a mutton chop.'

'No.'

Elsley was too shy, he was 'not fit to be seen.'

'Come to my rooms, then, in the Adelphi, and have a wash and a shave. It will make you as fresh as a lark again, and then we'll send out for the catables, and have a quiet chat.'

Elsley did not say no. Thurnall took the thing as a matter of course, and he was too weak and tired to argue with him. Beside, there was a sort of relief in the company of a man who, though he knew all, chatted on to him cheerily and quietly, as if nothing had happened, who at least treated him as a sane man. From any one else he would have shrunk, lest they should find him out. But a companion, who knew the worst, at least saved him suspicion and dread. His weakness, now that the collapse after passion had come on, clung to any human friend. The very sound of Tom's clear sturdy

voice seemed pleasant to him, after long solitude and silence. At least it kept off the hands of memory.

Tom, anxious to keep Elsley's mind employed on some subject which should not be painful, began chatting about the war and its prospects. Elsley soon caught the cue, and talked with wild energy and pathos, opium-fed, of the coming struggle between despotism and liberty, the arising of Poland and Hungary, and all the grand dreams which then haunted minds like his.

'By Jove!' said Tom, 'you are yourself again now. Why don't you put all that into a book?'

'I may, perhaps,' said Elsley proudly.

'And if it comes to that, why not come to the war, and see it for yourself? A new country—one of the finest in the world. New scenery, new actors,—why, Constantinople itself is a poem! Yes, there is another "Revolt of Islam" to be written yet. Why don't you become our war poet? Come and see the fighting, for there'll be plenty of it, let them say what they will. The old bear is not going to drop his dead donkey without a snap and a lug. Come along, and tell people what it's all really like. There will be a dozen Cockneys writing battle songs, I'll warrant, who never saw a man shot in their lives, not even a hare. Come and give us the real genuine grit of it,—for if you can't, who can?'

'It is a grand thought! The true war poets, after all, have been warriors themselves. Homer and Aeneas fought as well as sang, and sang because they fought. Old Homer, too,—who can believe that he had not hewn his way through the very battles which he describes, and seen every wound, every shape of agony? A noble thought, to go out with that army against the northern Anarch, singing in the van of battle, as Taillefer sang the song of Roland before William's knights, and to die like him, the proto-martyr of the crusade, with the melody yet upon one's lips!'

And his face blazed up with excitement.

'What a handsome fellow he is, after all, if there were but more of him!' said Tom to himself. 'I wonder if he'd fight, though, when the singing-fever was off him.'

He took Elsley upstairs into his bedroom, got him washed and shaved, and sent out the woman of the house for mutton chops and stout, and began himself setting out the luncheon table, while Elsley in the room within chanted to himself snatches of poetry.

'The notion has taken, he's composing a war song already, I believe.'

It actually was so, but Elsley's brain was weak and wandering, and he was soon silent and motionless so long, that Tom opened the door and looked in anxiously.

He was sitting on a chair, his hands fallen on his lap, the tears running down his face.

'Well?' asked Tom smilingly, not noticing the tears; 'how goes on the opera? I heard

through the door the orchestra tuning for the prelude.'

Elsley looked up in his face with a puzzled piteous expression.

'Do you know, Thurnall, I fancy at moments that my mind is not what it was. Fancies flit from me as quickly as they come. I had twenty verses five minutes ago, and now I cannot recollect one.'

'No wonder,' thought Tom to himself. 'My dear fellow, recollect all that you have suffered with this neuralgia. Believe me, all you want is animal strength. Chops and porter will bring all the verses back, or better ones instead of them.'

He tried to make Elsley eat, and Elsley tried himself but failed. The moment the meat touched his lips he loathed it, and only courtesy prevented his leaving the room to escape the smell. The laudanum had done its work upon his digestion. He tried the porter, and drank a little. Then, suddenly stopping, he pulled out a phial, dropped a heavy dose of his poison into the porter, and tossed it off.

'Sold, am I?' said Tom to himself. 'He must have hidden the bottle as he came out of the room with me. Oh, the cunning of those opium-eaters! However, it will keep him quiet just now, and to Katon Square I must go.'

'You had better be quiet now, my dear fellow, after your dose, talking will only excite you. Settle yourself on my bed, and I'll be back in an hour.'

So he put Elsley on his bed, carefully removing razors and pistols (for he had still his fears of an outburst of passion), then locked him in, ran down into the Strand, threw himself into a cab for Katon Square, and asked for Valentina.

Campbell had been there already, so Tom took care to tell nothing which he had not told, expecting, and rightly, that he would not mention Elsley's having fired at him. Luena was still all but senseless, too weak even to ask for Elsley, to attempt any meeting between her and her husband would be madness.

'What will you do with the unhappy man, Mr Thurnall?'

'Keep him under my eye, day and night, till he is either rational again, or ---'

'Do you think that he may? Oh, my poor sister!'

'I think that he may yet end very sadly, madam. There is no use concealing the truth from you. All I can promise is, that I will treat him as my own brother.'

Valentina held out her fair hand to the young doctor. He stooped, and lifted the tips of her fingers to his lips.

'I am not worthy of such an honour, madam. I shall study to deserve it.' And he bowed himself out, the same sturdy, self-confident Tom, doing right, he hardly knew why, save that it was all in the way of business.

And now arose the puzzle, what to do with Elsley? He had set his heart on going down to Whitbury the next day. He had been in

England nearly six months, and had not yet seen his father, his heart yearned, too, after the old place, and Mark Armsworth, and many an old friend, whom he might never see again.

'However, that fellow I must see to, come what will: business first and pleasure afterwards. If I make him all right if I even get him out of the world decently, I get the Scoutbush interest on my side—though I believe I have it already. Still, it's as well to lay people under as heavy an obligation as possible. I wish Miss Valentina had asked me whether Elsley wanted any money: it's expensive keeping him myself. However, poor thing, she has other matters to think of, and, I dare say, never knew the pleasures of an empty purse. Here we are! Three and-sixpence—eh, (ahman? I suppose you think I was born Saturday night? There's three shillings. Now, don't chaff me, my excellent friend, or you will find you have met your match, and a little more!'

And Tom hurried into his rooms, and found Elsley still sleeping.

He set to work, packing and arranging, for with him every moment found its business, and presently heard his patient call faintly from the next room.

'Thurnall!' said he, 'I have been a long journey. I have been to Whitbury once more, and followed my father about his garden, and sat upon my mother's knee. And she taught me one text, and no more. Over and over again she said it, as she looked down at me with still sad eyes, the same text which she spoke the day I left her for London. I never saw her again. "By this, my son, be admonished, of making of books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Yes, I will go down to Whitbury, and be a little child once more. I will take poor lodgings, and crawl out day by day, down the old lanes, along the old river bank, where I fed my soul with fair and mad dreams, and reconsider it all from the beginning,—and then die. No one need know me, and if they do, they need not be ashamed of me, I trust—ashamed that a poet has risen up among them, to speak words which have been heard across the globe. At least, they need never know my shame—never know that I have broken the heart of an angel, who gave herself to me, body and soul—attempted the life of a man whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose—never know that I have killed my own child—that a blacker brand than Cain's is on my brow!—Never know—Oh, my God, what care I? Let them know all, as long as I can have done with shams and affectations, dreams and vain ambitions, and be just my own self once more for one day, and then die!'

And he burst into convulsive weeping.

'No, Tom, do not comfort me! I ought to die, and I shall die. I cannot face her again, let her forget me, and find a husband who

will—and be a father to the children whom I neglected! Oh, my darlings, my darlings! If I could but see you once again—but no! you too would ask me where I had been so long. You too would ask me—your innocent faces at least would—why I had killed your little brother!—Let me weep it out, Thunall, let me face it all! This very misery is a comfort, for it will kill me all the sooner.

'If you really mean to go to Whithury, my poor dear fellow,' said Tom at last, 'I will start with you to-morrow morning. For I too must go, I must see my father.'

'You will really?' asked Elsley, who began to cling to him like a child.

'I will indeed. Believe me, you are right, you will find friends there, and admirers too I know one.'

'You do?' asked he, looking up.

'Mary Arnsworth, the banker's daughter.'

'What! That nurse-proud, vulgar nun?'

'Don't be afraid of him. A true and more delicate heart don't beat. No one has more cause to say so than I. He will receive you with open arms, and need be told no more than is necessary, while, as his friend, you may defy gossip, and do just what you like.'

Tom slipped out that afternoon, paid Elsley's pittance of rent at his old lodgings, bought him a few necessary articles, and lent him, without saying anything, a few more. Elsley sat all day as one in a dream, moaning to himself at intervals, and following Tom vacantly with his eyes, as he moved about the room. Excitement, misery, and opium were fast wearing out body and mind, and Tom put him to bed that evening, as he would have put a child.

Tom walked out into the Strand to smoke in the fresh air, and think, in spite of himself, of that fair saint from whom he was so perversely flying. Gay girls shivered past him, looked round at him, but in vain, those two great sad eyes hung in his fancy, and he could see nothing else. Ah—if she had but given him back his money—why, what a fool he would have made of himself! Better as it was. He was meant to be a vagabond and an adventurer to the last, and perhaps to find at last the luck which had flitted away before him.

He passed one of the theatre doors; there was a group outside, more noisy and more earnest than such groups are wont to be, and ere he could pass through them, a shout from within rattled the doors with its mighty pulse, and seemed to shake the very walls. Another, and another!—What was it? Fire?

No. It was the news of Alma.

And the group surged to and fro outside, and talked, and questioned, and rejoiced, and smart gents forgot their vulgar pleasures, and looked for a moment as if they too could have fought—had fought—at Alma, and sinful girls forgot their shame, and looked more beautiful than they had done for many a day, as, beneath the flaring gas-light, their faces glowed for a while with noble enthusiasm and woman's sacred pity,

while they questioned Tom, taking him for an officer, as to whether he thought there were many killed.

'I am no officer—but I have been in many a battle, and I know the Russians well, and have seen how they fight, and there is many a brave man killed, and many a one more will be.'

'Oh, does it hurt them much?' asked one poor thing.

'Not often,' quoth Tom.

'Thank God, thank God!' and she turned suddenly away, and with the impulsive nature of her class, burst into violent sobbing and weeping.

'Poor thing! perhaps among the men who fought and fell that day was he to whom she owed the curse of her young life; and after him her lonely heart went forth once more, faithful even in the lowest pit.'

'You are strange creatures, women, women!' thought Tom. 'but I know that many a year ago. Now then—the game is growing fast and furious, it seems. Oh, that I may find myself soon in the thickest of it!'

So said Tom Thunall, and so said Major Campbell, too, that night, as he prepared everything to start next morning to Southampton. 'The better the day, the better the deed,' quoth he. 'When a man is travelling to a better world, he need not be afraid of starting on a Sunday.'

CHAPTER XXV

THE BANKER AND HIS DAUGHTER

TOM and Elsley are safe at Whithury at last; and Tom, ere he has seen his father, has packed Elsley safe away in lodgings with an old dame whom he can trust. Then he asks his way to his father's new abode, a small old-fashioned house, with low bay windows jutting out upon the narrow pavement.

Tom stops, and looks in the window. His father is sitting close to it, in his arm-chair, his hands upon his knees, his face lifted to the sunlight, with chin slightly outstretched, and his pale eyes feeling for the light. The expression would have been painful, but for its perfect sweetness and resignation. His countenance is not, perhaps, a strong one; but its delicacy and calm, and the high forehead, and the long white locks, are most venerable. With a blind man's exquisite sense, he feels Tom's shadow fall on him, and starts, and calls him by name, for he has been expecting him, and thinking of nothing else all the morning, and takes for granted that it must be he.

In another moment Tom is at his father's side. What need to describe the sacred joy of those first few minutes, even if it were possible? But unrestrained tenderness between man and man, rare as it is, and, as it were, unaccustomed to itself, has no passionate flueney, no metaphor or poetry, such as man pours out to woman, and

woman again to man. All its language lies in the tones, the looks, the little half-concealed gestures, hints which pass themselves off modestly in jest; and such was Tom's first interview with his father, till the old Isaac, having felt Tom's head and hands again and again, to be sure whether it were his very son or no, made him sit down by him, holding him still fast, and began—

'Now tell me, tell me, while Jane gets you something to eat. No, Jane, you mustn't talk to Master Tom yet, to bother about how much he's grown,—nonsense, I must have him all to myself, Jane. Go and get him some dinner. Now, Tom,' as if he was afraid of losing a moment, 'you have been a dear boy to write to me every week, but there are so many questions which only word of mouth will answer, and I have stored up dozens of them! I want to know what a coral reef really looks like, and if you saw any trepangs upon them? And what sort of strata is the gold really in? And you saw one of those giant rays, I want a whole hour's talk about the fellow. And what an old babbler I am! talking to you when you should be talking to me. Now begin. Let us have the trepangs first. Are they real Holothurians or not?'—

And Tom began, and told for a full half hour, interrupted then by some little comment of the old man's, which pivoted how prodigious was the memory within, imprisoned and forced to feed upon itself.

'You seem to know more about Australia than I do, father,' said Tom at last.

'No, child, but Mary Armesworth, God bless her! comes down here almost every evening to read all your letters to me, and she has been reading to me a book of Mrs. Lee's, *Adventures in Australia*, which reads like a novel, delicious book—to me at least. Why, there is her step outside, I do believe, and her father's with her!'

The lighter woman's step was mandible to Tom, but the heavy, deliberate waddle of the banker was not. He opened the house-door, and then the parlour-door, without knocking. But when he saw the visitor, he stopped on the threshold with outstretched arms.

'Hillo, ho! who have we here? Our prodigal son returned, with his pockets full of nuggets from the diggings. Oh, mum's the word, is it?' as Tom laid his finger on his lips. 'Come here, then, and let's have a look at you!' And he catches both Tom's hands in his, and almost shakes them off. 'I knew you were coming, old boy! Mary told me—she's in all the old man's secrets. Come along, Mary, and see your old playfellow. She has got a little fruit for the old gentleman. Mary, where are you? always colloquial with Jane.'

Mary comes in: a little dumpty body, with a yellow face, and a red nose, the smile of an angel, and a heart full of many little secrets of other people's—and of one great one of her own, which is no business of any man's—and with fifty thousand pounds as her portion, for she is

an only child. But no man will touch that fifty thousand, for no one would marry me for myself,' says Mary, 'and no one shall marry me for my money.'

So she greets Tom shyly and humbly, without looking in his face, yet very cordially, and then slips away to deposit on the table a noble pineapple.

'A little bit of fruit from her greenhouse,' says the old man in a disparaging tone. 'and, oh, Jane, bring me a saucer. Here's a sprat I've just capered out of Hemmelford mill-pot, perhaps the doctor would like it fried for supper, if it's big enough not to fall through the gridiron.'

Jane, who knows Mark Armesworth's humour, brings in the largest dish in the house, and Mark pulls out of his basket a great three pound trout.

'Aha! my young rover, old Mark's right hand hasn't forgot its cunning, eh? And this is the month for them, hah! all quiet now. When fools go a shooting, wise men go a fishing! Eh? Come here, and look me over. How do I wear, eh? As like a Muscovy duck as ever, you young rogues! Do you recollect asking me, at the Club dinner, why I was like a Muscovy duck? Because I was a fat thing in green velvet, with a bald red head, that was always waddling about the river bank. Ah! those were the days! We'll have some more of them. Come up to-night and try the old '21 bin.'

'I must have him myself to-night, indeed I must, Mark,' says the doctor.

'All to yourself, you wretched old rogue!'

'Why, no.'

'We'll come down, then, Mary and I, and bring the '21 with us, and hear all his cock and bull stories. Full of travellers' lies as ever, eh? Well, I'll come and smoke my pipe with you. Always the same old Mark, my lad,' nudging Tom with his elbow, 'one fellow comes and borrows my money, and goes out and calls me a stingy old hunk because I won't let him cheat me, another comes, and cuts my janes, and drinks my port, goes home, and calls me a purse proud upstart, because he can't match 'em. Never mind, old Mark's old Mark, sound in the heart, and sound in the liver, just the same as thirty years ago, and will be till he takes his last quouset—'

'—And drops into his grubby nest.'

Bye, bye, doctor! Come, Mary!'

And out he toddled, with silent little Mary at his heels.

'Old Mark wears well, body and soul,' said Tom.

'He is a noble, generous fellow, and as delicate-hearted as a woman within, in spite of his conceit and roughness. Fifty and odd years now, Tom, have we been brothers, and I never found him change. And brothers we shall be, I trust, a few years more, till I see you back again from the East, comfortably settled. And then—'

'Don't talk of that, sir, please!' said Tom,

quite quickly and sharply 'How ill poor Mary looks!'

'So they say, poor child, and one hears it in her voice. Ah, Tom, that girl is an angel, she has been to me daughter, doctor, clergyman, eyes, and library, and would have been nurse, too, if it had not been for making old Jane jealous. But she is ill. Some love affair, I suppose—'

'How quaint it is, that the father has kept all the animal vigour to himself, and transmitted none to the daughter.'

'He has not kept the soul to himself, Tom, or the eyes either. She will hang me in wild flowers, and talk to me about them, till I fancy I can see them as well as ever. Ah, well! It is a sweet world still, Tom, and there are sweet souls in it. A sweet world. I was too fond of looking at it once, I suppose, so God took away my sight, that I might learn to look at Him.' And the old man lay back in his chair, and covered his face with his handkerchief, and was quite still awhile. And Tom watched him, and thought that he would give all his cunning and power to be like that old man.

Then Jane came in, and laid the cloth on a coarse one enough, and Tom picked a cold mutton bone with a steel fork, and drank his pint of beer from the public-house, and lighted his father's pipe and then his own, and vowed that he had never dined so well in his life, and began his traveller's stories again.

And in the evening Mark came in, with a bottle of the '21 in his coat-tail pocket, and the three sat and chatted, while Mary brought out her work, and stitched, listening silently, till it was time to lead the old man upstairs.

Tom put his father to bed, and then made a hesitating request.

'There is a poor sick man whom I brought down with me, sir, if you could spare me half an hour. It really is a professional case, he is under my charge, I may say.'

'What is it, boy?'

'Well, landaunum and a broken heart.'

'Exercise and ammonia for the first. For the second, God's grace and the grave, and those latter medicines you can't exhibit, my dear boy. Well, as it is professional duty, I suppose you must. But don't exceed the hour, I shall be awake till you return, and then you must talk me to sleep.'

So Tom went out and homeward with Mark and Mary, for their roads lay together, and as he went, he thought good to tell them somewhat of the history of John Briggs, *alias* Elsley Vavasour.

'Poor fool!' said Mark, who listened in silence to the end. 'Why didn't he mind his bottles, and just do what Heaven sent him to do? Is he in want of the rhino, Tom?'

'He had not five shillings left after he had paid his fare, and he refuses to ask his wife for a farthing.'

'Quite right—very proper spirit.' And Mark walked on in silence a few minutes.

'I say, Tom, a fool and his money are soon parted. There's a five-pound note for him, you begging, insinuating dog, and be hanged to you both! I shall die in the workhouse at this rate.'

'Oh, father, you will never miss—'

'Who told you I thought I should, pray? Don't you go giving another five pounds out of your pocket-money behind my back, ma'am. I know your tricks of old. Tom, I'll come and see the poor beggar to-morrow with you, and call him Mr Vavasour—Lord Vavasour, if he likes—if you'll warrant me against laughing in his face.' And the old man did laugh, till he stopped and held his sides again.

'Oh, father, father, don't be so cruel. Remember how wretched the poor man is.'

'I can't think of anything but old Bolus's boy turned poet. Why did you tell me, Tom, you had fellow? It's too much for a man at my time of life, and after his dinner too.'

And with that he opened the little gate by the side of the grand one, and turned to ask Tom—

'Won't come in, boy, and have one more cigar?'

'I promised my father to be back as quickly as possible.'

'Good-lul—that's the plan to go on—'

'You'll be churchwarden in five all's over, And so arrive at wealth and fame.'

Instead of writing p-o-o-t-y! Do you recollect that morning, and the black draught? Oh dear, my side!

And Tom heard him keeking to himself up the garden walk to his house, went off to see that Elsley was safe, and then home, and slept like a top, no wonder, for he would have done so the night before his execution.

And what was little Mary doing all the while?

She had gone up to the room, after telling her father, with a kiss, not to forget to say his prayers. And then she fed her canary bird, and made up the Persian cat's bed, and then sat long at the open window, gazing out over the shadow-dappled lawn, away to the poplars sleeping in the moonlight, and the shining silent stream, and the shining silent stars, till she seemed to become as one of them, and a quiet heaven within her eyes took counsel with the quiet heaven above. And then she drew in suddenly, as if stung by some random thought, and shut the window. A picture hung over her mantelpiece—a portrait of her mother, who had been a country beauty in her time. She glanced at it, and then at the looking-glass. Would she have given her fifty thousand pounds to have exchanged her face for such a face as that?

She caught up her little Thomas à Kempis, marked through and through with lines and references, and sat and read steadfastly for an hour and more. That was her school, as it has been the school of many a noble soul. And, for some cause or other, that stinging thought

returned no more, and she knelt and prayed like a little child; and like a little child slept sweetly all the night, and was away before breakfast the next morning, after feeding the canary and the cat, to old women who worshipped her as their ministering angel, and said, looking after her, 'That dear Miss Mary, pity she is so plain! Such a match as she might have made! But she'll be handsome enough when she is a blessed angel in heaven.'

Al! true sisters of mercy, whom the world sneers at as 'old maids,' if you pour out on cats and dogs and parrots a little of the love which is yearning to spend itself on children of your own flesh and blood! As long as such as you walk this lower world, one needs no Butler's *Analogy* to prove to us that there is another world, where such as you will have a fuller and a fairer (I dare not say a juster) portion.

Next morning Mark started with Tom to call on Elsley, chatting and pushing all the way.

'I'll butter him, trust me. Nothing comforts a poor beggar like a bit of praise when he's down, and all fellows that take to writing are as greedy after it as trout after the drape, even if they only scribble in county newspapers. I've watched them when I've been electioneering, my boy!'

'Only,' said Tom, 'don't be angry with him if he is proud and peevish. The poor fellow is all but mad with misery.'

'Poh! quarrel with him? Whom did I ever quarrel with? If he barks, I'll stop his mouth with a good dinner. I suppose he's gentleman enough to invite!'

'As much a gentleman as you and I, not of the very first water, of course. Still, he eats like other people, and don't break many glasses during a sitting. Think! he couldn't have been a very great end to marry a nobleman's daughter!'

'Why, no. Speaks well for him, that, considering his breeding. He must be a very clever fellow to have caught the trick of the thing so soon.'

'And so he is, a very clever fellow, too clever by half, and a very fine-hearted fellow, too, in spite of his conceit and his temper. But that don't prevent his being an awful fool!'

'You speak like a book, Tom!' said old Mark, clapping him on the back. 'Look at me! no one can say I was ever troubled with genius, but I can show my money, pay my way, eat my dinner, kill my trout, hunt my hounds, help a lame dog over a stile' (which was Mark's phrase for doing a generous thing), 'and thank God for all, and who wants more, I should like to know! But here we are—you go up first!'

They found Elsley crouched up over the empty grate, his head in his hands, and a few scraps of paper by him, on which he had been trying to scribble. He did not look up as they came in, but gave a sort of impatient half-turn, as if angry at being disturbed. Tom was about to announce the banker; but he announced himself

'Come to do myself the honour of calling on you, Mr Vavasour. I am sorry to see you so poorly, I hope our Whitbury air will set all right.'

'You mistake me, sir, my name is Briggs!'

said Elsley, without turning his head, but a moment after he looked up angrily.

'Mr Arnsworth! I beg your pardon, sir, but what brings you here? Are you come, sir, to use the rich successful man's right, and lecture me in my misery?'

'Pon my word, sir, you must have forgotten old Mark Arnsworth, indeed, if you fancy him capable of any such dirt. No, sir, I came to pay my respects to you, sir, hoping that you'd come up and take a family dinner. I could do no less, run on the banker, seeing that Elsley was preparing a peevish answer, 'considering the honour that, I hear, you have been to your native town. A very distinguished person, our friend Tom tells me, and we ought to be proud of you, and behave to you as you deserve, for I am sure we don't send too many clever fellows out of Whitbury.'

'Would that you had never sent me!' said Elsley in his bitter way.

'Ah, sir, that's matter of opinion! You would never have been heard of down here, never have had justice done you, I mean, for heard of you have been. There's my daughter has read your poems again and again—always quoting them, and very pretty they sound too. Poetry is not in my line, of course, still, it's a credit to a man to do anything well, if he has the gift, and she tells me that you have it, and plenty of it. And though she's no hue lady, thank Heaven, I'll back her for good sense against any woman. Come up, sir, and judge for yourself if I don't speak the truth, she will be delighted to meet you, and bade me say so.'

By this time good Mark had talked himself out of breath, and Elsley flushing up, as of old, at a little praise, began to stammer an excuse. 'His nerves were so weak, and his spirits so broken with late troubles.'

'My dear sir, that's the very reason I want you to come. A bottle of port will cure the nerves, and a pleasant chat the spirits. Nothing like forgetting all for a little time, and then to it again with a fresh lease of strength, and beat it at last like a man.'

'Too late, my dear sir, I must pay the penalty of my own folly,' said Elsley, really won by the man's cordiality.

'Never too late, sir, while there's life left in us. And,' he went on in a gentler tone, 'if we all were to pay for our own follies, or lie down and die when we saw them coming full ery at our heels, where would any one of us be by now? I have been a fool in my time, young gentleman, more than once or twice, and that too when I was old enough to be your father, and down I went, and deserved what I got, but my rule always was—fight fair, fall soft, know when you've got enough, and don't cry out when you've got it: but just go home, train again.

and say—better luck next fight' And so old Mark's sermon ended (as most of them did) in somewhat Socratic allegory, savouring rather of the market than of the study, but Elsley understood him, and looked up with a smile.

'You too are somewhat of a poet in your way, I see, sir.'

'I never thought to live to hear that, sir. I can't doubt now that you are cleverer than your neighbours, for you have found out something which they never did. But you will come?—for that's my business.'

Elsley looked inquiringly at Tom, he had learnt now to consult his eye, and lean on him like a child. Tom looked a stout yes, and Elsley said languidly—

'You have given me so much flow and good advice in a few minutes, sir, that I must really do myself the pleasure of coming and hearing more.'

'Well done, our side!' cried old Mark. 'Dinner at half-past five. No London late hours here, sir. Miss Arnsworth will be out of her mind when she hears you're coming.'

And off he went.

'Do you think he'll come up to the scratch, Tom?'

'I am very much afraid his courage will fail him. I will see him again, and bring him up with me; but now, my dear Mr. Arnsworth, do remember one thing, that if you go on with him at your usual rate of hospitality, the man will as surely be drunk, as his nerves and brain are all but ruined, and if he is so, he will most probably destroy himself to-morrow morning.'

'Destroy himself?'

'He will. The shame of making a fool of himself just now before you will be more than he could bear. So be stingy for once. He will not wish for it unless you press him, but if he talks (and he will talk after the first half-hour), he will forget himself, and half a bottle will make him mad, and then I won't answer for the consequences.'

'Good gracious! why, these poets want as tender handling as a bag of gunpowder over the fire.'

'You speak like a book there in your turn.' And Tom went home to his father.

He returned in due time. A new difficulty had arisen. Elsley, under the excitement of expectation, had gone out and dined to his landanum—so will an unhealthy craving degrade a man!—of old Bolus himself, who luckily did not recognise him. He had taken his fullest dose, and was now unable to go anywhere or do anything. Tom did not disturb him, but went away, sorely perplexed, and very much minded to tell a white lie to Arnsworth, in whose eyes this would be an offence—not unpardonable, for nothing with him was unpardonable, save lying or cruelty—but very grievous. If a man had drunk too much wine in his house, he would have simply kept his eye on him afterwards, as a fool who did not know when he had his 'quotum'; but laudanum drinking—involving,

too, the breaking of an engagement, which, well managed, might have been of immense use to Elsley—was a very different matter. So Tom knew not what to say or do, and not knowing, determined to wait on Providence, smartened himself as best he could, went up to the great house, and found Miss Mary.

'I'll tell her. She will manage it somehow, if she is a woman, much more if she is an angel, as my father says.'

Mary looked very much shocked and grieved, answered hardly a word, but said at last, 'Come in while I go and see my father.' He came into the smart drawing-room, which he could see was seldom used, for Mary lived in her own room, her father in his counting house, or in his 'den'. In ten minutes she came down. Tom thought she had been crying.

'I have settled it. Poor unhappy man! We will talk of something more pleasant. Tell me about your shipwreck, and that place—Aberlona, is it not? What a pretty name!'

Tom told her, wondering then, and wondering long afterwards, how she had 'settled it' with her father. She chatted on artlessly enough, till the old man came in, and to dinner, in capital humour, without saying one word of Elsley.

'How has the old lion been tamed?' thought Tom. 'The two greatest affronts you could offer him in old times were, to break an engagement, and to despise his good cheer.' He did not know what the quiet oil on the waters of such a spirit as Mary's can effect.

The evening passed pleasantly enough till nine, in chatting over old times, and listening to the history of every extraordinary trout and fox which had been killed within twenty miles, when the footboy entered with a somewhat scared face.

'Please, sir, is Mr. Vavasour here?'

'Here? Who wants him?'

'Mrs. Brown, sir, in Hemmelford Street. Says he lodges with her, and has been to seek for him at Dr. Thurnall's.'

'I think you had better go, Mr. Thurnall,' said Mary quietly.

'Indeed you had, boy. Bother poets; and the day they first began to breed in Whitbury! Such an evening spent! Have a cup of coffee? No? then a glass of sherry?'

Out went Tom. Mrs. Brown had been up, and seen him seemingly sleeping, then had heard him run downstairs hurriedly. He passed her in the passage, looking very wild. 'Seemed, sir, just like my nery's wife's brother, Will Ford, before he made away with hisself.'

Tom goes off post-haste, revolving many things in a crafty heart. Then he stops for Bolus's shop. Bolus is at 'The Angler's Arms', but his assistant is in.

'Did a gentleman call here just now, in a long cloak, with a felt wide-awake?'

'Yes.' And the assistant looks confused enough for Tom to reform—

'And you sold him laudanum?'

'Why—ah—'

'And you had sold him landanum already this afternoon, you young rascal! How dare you, twice in six hours! I'll hold you responsible for the man's life!'

'You dare call me a rascal!' blusters the youth, terror-stricken at finding how much Tom knows.

'I am a member of the College of Surgeons,' says Tom, recovering his coolness, 'and have just been dining with Mr. Annsworth. I suppose you know him?'

The assistant shook in his shoes at the name of that terrible justice of the peace and of the war also, and meekly and contently he replied—

'Oh, sir, what shall I do?'

'You're in a very neat scrape, you could not have feathered your nest better,' says Tom, quietly filling his pipe, and thinking 'As you behave now, I will get you out of it, or leave you to—you know what, as well as I. Get your hat.'

He went out, and the youth followed trembling, while Tom formed his plans in his mind.

'The wild beast goes home to his lair to die, and so may he, for I fear it's life and death now. I'll try the house where he was born. Somewhere in Water Lane it is, I know.'

And toward Water Lane he hurried. It was a low-lying offshoot of the town, leading along the water-meadows, with a straggling row of houses on each side, the perennial haunts of fever and ague. Before them, on each side of the road, and fringed with pollard willows and tall poplars, ran a tiny branch of the Wharf, to feed some mill below, and spread out, meanwhile, into ponds and mires full of offal and duckweed and rank floating grass. A thick mist hung knee-deep over them, and over the gardens right and left, and as Tom came down on the lane from the main street above, he could see the mist spreading across the water-meadows and reflecting the moonbeams like a lake, and as he walked into it, he felt as if he were walking down a well. And he hurried down the lane, looking out anxiously ahead for the long cloak.

At last he came to a better sort of house. That might be it. He would take the chance. There was a man of the middle class, and two or three women, standing at the gate. He went in.

'Bray, sir, did a medical man named Briggs ever live here?'

'What do you want to know that for?'

'Why?'—Tom thought matters were too serious for delicacy—'I am looking for a gentleman, and thought he might have come here.'

'And so he did, if you mean one in a queer hat and a cloak.'

'How long since?'

'Why, he came up our garden an hour or more ago, walked right into the parlour without any—your leave, or by your leave, and stared at us all round like one out of his mind,

and so away, as soon as ever I asked him what he was at—'

'Which way?'

'To the river, I expect. I ran out, and saw him go down the lane, but I was not going far by night alone with any such strange customers.'

'Lend me a lantern, then, for Heaven's sake!'

The lantern is lent, and Tom starts again down the lane.

Now to search! At the end of the lane is a cross road parallel to the river. A broad still ditch lies beyond it, with a little bridge across, where one gets minkows for bait, then a broad water-meadow, then silver White.

The bridge-gate is open. Tom hurries across the road to it. The lantern shows him fresh footmarks going into the meadow. Forward!

Up and down in that meadow for an hour or more did Tom and the trembling youth beat like a brace of pointer dogs, stumbling into grips and over sleeping cows, and more than once stopping short just in time, as they were walking into some broad and deep feeder.

Almost in despair, and after having searched down the river bank for full two hundred yards, Tom was on the point of returning, when his eye rested on a part of the stream where the mist lay higher than usual, and let the reflection of the moonlight off the water reach his eye, and in the moonlight ripples, close to the farther bank of the river—what was that black lump?

Tom knew the spot well, the river there is very broad, and very shallow, flowing round low islands of gravel and turf. It was very low just now too, as it generally is in October, there could not be four inches of water where the black lump lay, but on this side nearest him the water was full knee-deep.

The thing, whatever it was, was forty yards from him, and it was a cold night for wading. It might be a hassock of rushes, a tuft of the great water-dock, a dead dog, one of the 'hangs' with which the club-water was studded, torn up and stranded—but yet to Tom it had not a canny look.

'As usual! Here am I getting wet, dirty, and miserable, about matters which are not the slightest concern of mine! I believe I shall end by getting hanged or shot in somebody else's place, with this confounded spirit of meddling. Yeh! how cold the water is!'

For in he went, the grumbling honest dog, stepped across to the black lump, and lifted it up hastily enough—for it was Elsie Vavasour Drowned!

No. But wet through, and senseless from muddled cold and landanum.

Whether he had meant to drown himself, and lighting on the shallow, had stumbled on till he fell exhausted, or whether he had merely blundered into the stream, careless whither he went, Tom knew not, and never knew; for Elsie himself could not recollect.

Tom took him in his arms, carried him ashore

and up through the water-meadow, borrowed a blanket and a wheelbarrow at the nearest cottage, wrapped him up, and made the offending surgeon's assistant wheel him to his lodgings.

He sat with him there an hour, and then entered Mark's house again with his usual composed face, to find Mark and Mary sitting up in great anxiety.

'Mr Arnsworth, does the telegraph work at this time of night?'

'I'll make it, if it is wanted. But what's the matter?'

'You will indeed?'

'Gad, I'll go myself and kick up the station-master. What's the matter?'

'That if poor Mrs Vavasour wishes to see her husband alive, she must be here in four-and-twenty hours. I'll tell you all presently——'

'Mary, my coat and comforter!' cries Mark, jumping up.

'And, Mary, a pen and ink to write the message,' says Tom.

'Oh! cannot I be of any use?' says Mary.

'No, you angel!'

'You must not call me an angel, Mr Thurnall. After all, what can I do which you have not done already?'

Tom started. Grace had once used to him the very same words. By the bye, what was it in the two women which made them so like? Certainly, neither face nor fortune. Something in the tones of their voices.

'Ah! if Grace had Mary's fortune, or Mary Grace's face!' thought Tom, as he hurried back to Elsley, and Mark rushed down to the station.

Elsley was conscious when he returned, and only too conscious. All night he screamed in agonies of rheumatic fever, by the next afternoon he was falling fast, his heart was affected, and Tom knew that he might die any hour.

The evening train brings two ladies, Valentinia and Lucia. At the risk of her life, the poor faithful wife has come.

A gentleman's carriage is waiting for them, though they have ordered none, and as they go through the station-room, a plain little well-dressed body comes humbly up to them—

'Is either of these ladies Mrs. Vavasour?'

'Yes! I—I—is he alive?' gasps Lucia.

'Alive, and better! and expecting you.'

'Better!—expecting me!' almost shrieks she, as Valentinia and Mary (for it is she) help her to the carriage. Mary puts them in, and turns away.

'Are you not coming too?' asks Valentinia, who is puzzled.

'No thank you, madam, I am going to take a walk. John, you know where to drive these ladies.'

Little Mary does not think it necessary to say that she, with her father's carriage, has been down to two other afternoon trains, upon the chance of finding them.

But why is not Frank Headley with them, when he is needed most? And why are Valentinia's

eyes more red with weeping than even her sister's sorrow need have made them?

Because Frank Headley is rolling away in a French railway on his road to Marseilles, and to what Heaven shall find for him to do.

Yes, he is gone Eastward. He among the many, will he come Westward. He again among the few?

They are at the door of Elsley's lodgings now. Tom Thurnall meets them there, and bows them upstairs silently. Lucia is so weak that she has to cling to the banister a moment; and then, with a strong shudder, the spirit conquers the flesh, and she hurries up before them both.

It is a small low room—Valentinia had expected that. But she had expected, too, confusion and wretchedness for a note from Major Campbell, ere he started, had told her of the condition in which Elsley had been found. Instead, she finds neatness—even gaiety, fresh damask linen, comfortable furniture, a vase of hothouse flowers, while the air is full of cool perfumes. No one is likely to tell her that Mary has furnished all at Tom's hint—'We must smarten up the place, for the poor wife's sake. It will take something off the shock, and I want to avoid shocks for her.'

So Tom had worked with his own hands that morning, arranging the room as carefully as any woman, with that fine doctor's forethought and consideration, which often issues in the loftiest, because the most unconscious, benevolence.

He paused at the door.

'Will you go in?' whispered he to Valentinia, in a tone which meant—'you had better not.'

'Not yet—I dare say he is too weak.'

Lucia darted in, and Tom shut the door behind her, and waited at the stair-head. 'Better,' thought he, 'to let the two poor creatures settle their own concerns. It must end soon, in any case.'

Lucia rushed to the bedside, drew back the curtains—

'Tom!' moaned Elsley.

'Not Tom!—Lucia!'

'Lucia!—Lucia St. Just!' answered he, in a low abstracted voice, as if trying to recollect.

'Lucia Vavasour!—your Lucia!'

Elsley slowly raised himself upon his elbow, and looked into her face with a sad inquiring gaze.

'Elsley—darling Elsley!—don't you know me?'

'Yes, very well indeed; better than you know me. I am not Vavasour at all. My name is Briggs—John Briggs, the apothecary's son, come home to Whitbury to die.'

She did not hear, or did not care for those last words.

'Elsley! I am your wife!—your own wife!—who never loved any one but you—never, never!'

'Yes, my wife at least!—Curse them, that they cannot deny!' said he, in the same abstracted voice.

'Oh God! is he mad?' thought she 'Elsley, speak to me!—I am your Lucia—your love—'

And she tore off her bonnet, and threw herself beside him on the bed and clasped him in her arms, murmuring—'Your wife! who never loved any one but you!'

Slowly his frozen heart and frozen brain melted beneath the warmth of her great love but he did not speak off he passed his weak arm round her neck, and she felt that his cheek was wet with tears, while she murmured on, like a cooing dove, the same sweet words again—

'Call me your love once more, and I shall know that all is past'

'Then call me no more Elsley, love!' whispered he 'Call me John Bugge, and let us have done with shams for ever'

'No, you are my Elsley—my Vavasour I and I am your wife once more!' and the poor thing fondled his head as it lay upon the pillow 'My own Elsley, to whom I gave myself, body and soul, for whom I would die now—oh, such a death!—any death!'

'How could I doubt you?—soul that I was!'

'No, it was all my fault! It was all my odious temper! But we will be happy now, will we not?'

Elsley smiled sadly, and began laughing. Yes, they would take a farm, and he would plough, and sow, and be of some use before he died 'But promise me one thing!' cried he, with sudden strength

'What?'

'That you will go home and burn all the poetry—all the manuscripts, and never let the children write a verse—a verse—when I am dead!' And his head sank back, and his jaw dropped

'He is dead!' cried the poor impulsive creature, with a shudder which brought in Tom and Valentin.

'He is not dead, madam, but you must be very gentle with him, if we are to—'

Tom saw that there was little hope

'I will do anything—only save him!—save him! Mr Thurnall, till I have atoned for all'

'You have little enough to atone for, madam,' said Tom, as he hurried himself about the sufferer. He saw that all would soon be over, and would have had Mrs Vavasour withdraw, but she was so really good a nurse as long as she could control herself, that he could hardly spare her

So they sat together by the sick bedside, as the short hours passed into the long, and the long hours into the short again, and the October dawn began to shine through the shutterless window.

A weary eventless night it was, a night as of many years, as worse and worse grew the weak frame, and Tom looked alternately at the heaving chest, and shortening breath, and rattling throat, and then at the pale still face of the lady

'Better she should sit by,' thought he, 'and watch him till she is tired out. It will come

on her the more gently, after all! He will die at sunrise, as so many die'

At last he began gently feeling for Elsley's pulse. Her eye caught his movement, and she half sprang up, but at a gesture from him she sank quietly on her knees, holding her husband's hand in her own.

Elsley turned toward her once, ere the film of death had fallen, and looked her full in the face, with his beautiful eyes full of love. Then the eyes paled and faded, but still they sought for her painfully long after she had buried her head in the coverlet, unable to bear the sight

And so vanished away Elsley Vavasour, poet and genius, into his own place.

'Let us pray,' said a deep voice from behind the curtain—it was Mark Armsworth's. He had come over with the first dawn, to bring the ladies food, had slipped upstairs to ask what news, found the door open, and entered in time to see the last gasp.

Lucia kept her head still bowed; and Tom, for the first time for many a year, knelt, as the old banker commended to God the soul of one dear brother just departing this life. Then Mark ghided quietly downstairs, and Valentin, rising, tried to lead Mrs Vavasour away

But then broke out in all its wild passion the Irish temperament. Let us pass it over, why try to earn a little credit by depicting the agony and the weakness of a sister?

At last Thurnall got her downstairs. Mark was there still, having sent off for his carriage. He quietly put her arm through his, led her oil, worn out and nursing, drove her home, delivered her and Valentin into Mary's keeping, and then asked Tom to stay and sit with him

'I hope I've no very bad conscience, boy, but Mary's busy with the poor young thing, mere child she is, too, to go through such a night, and, somehow, I don't like to be left alone after such a sight as that!'

'Tom!' said Mark, as they sat smoking in silence, after breakfast, in the study. 'Tom!'

'Yes, sir!'

'That was an awful deathbed, Tom!'

Tom was silent

'I don't mean that he died hard, as we say, but so young, Tom! And I suppose poets' souls are worth something, like other people's—perhaps more. I can't understand em but my Mary seems to, and people, like her, who think a poet the finest thing in the world. I laugh at it all when I am angry, and call it sentiment and cant but I believe that they are nearer heaven than I am though I think they don't quite know where heaven is, nor where' (with a wicked wink, in spite of the sadness of his tone) —'where they themselves are either'

'I'll tell you, sir! I have seen men enough die—we doctors are hardened to it; but I have seen unprofessional deaths—men we didn't kill ourselves, I have seen men drowned, shot, hanged, run over, and worse deaths than that, sir, too,—and somehow, I never felt any death

like that man's. Granted, he began by trying to set the world right, when he hadn't yet set himself right, but wasn't it some credit to see that the world was wrong?

'I don't know that. The world's a very good world.'

'To you and me, but there are men who have higher notions than I of what this world ought to be, and, for aught I know, they are right. That Abielva curate, Headley, had, and so had Briggs, in his own way. I thought him once only a poor discontented devil, who quarrelled with his bread and butter because he hadn't teeth to eat it with, but there was more in the fellow, coxcomb as he was. "Tisn't often that I let that croaking old boggy, Maulm-night-have been, trouble me, but I cannot help thinking that if, fifteen years ago, I had listened to his vapourings more, and bailed him about them less, he might have been here still.'

'You wouldn't have been, then. Well for you that you didn't catch his fever.'

'And write verses too? Don't make me laugh, sir, on such a day as this, I always comfort myself with—"It's no business of mine," but, somehow, I can't do so just now.' And Tom sat silent, more softened than he had been for years.

'Let's talk of something else,' said Mark at last. 'You had the cholera very bad down there, I hear?'

'Oh, sharp, but short,' said Tom, who disliked any subject which brought Grace to his mind.

'Any on my lord's estate with the queer name?'

'Not a one. We stopped the devil out there, thanks to his lordship.'

'So did we here. We were very near in for it, though, I fancy. At least, I chose to fancy so—thought it a good opportunity to clean Whinbry once for all.'

'It's just like you. Well?'

'Well, I offered the Town Council to drain the whole town at my own expense, if they'd let me have the sewage. And that only made things worse, for as soon as the beggars found out the sewage was worth anything, they were down on me, as if I wanted to do them. I, Mark Armaworth!—and would sooner let half the town rot with an epidemic, than have reason to fancy I'd made any money out of them. So a pretty fight I had, for half a dozen meetings, till I called in my lord, and, sir, he came down by the next express, like a crump, all the way from town, and gave them such a piece of his mind—was going to have the Board of Health down, and turn on the Government tap, commissioners and all, and cost 'em hundreds till the fellows shook in their shoes,—and so I conquered, and here we are, as clean as a nut—and a fig for the cholera!—except down in Water Lane, which I don't know what to do with, for if tradesmen will run up houses on spec in a water-meadow, who can stop them? There ought to be a law for it, say I, but I say a good

many things in the twelve months that nobody minds. But, my dear boy, if one man in a town has pluck and money, he may do it. It'll cost him a few. I've had to pay the main part myself, after all, but I suppose God will make it up to a man somehow. That's old Mark's faith, at least. Now I want to talk to you about yourself. My lord comes into town to-day, and you must see him.'

'Why, then? He can't help me with the Bash-bazouks, can he?'

'Bash-biddles! I say, Tom, the more I think over it, the more it won't do. It's throwing yourself away. They say that Turkish contagion is getting on terribly ill.'

'More need of me to make them well.'

'Hang it—I mean—hasn't justice done it, and so on. The papers are full of it.'

'Well,' quoth Tom, 'and why should it?'

'Why, man alive, if England spends all this money on the men, she ought to do her duty by them.'

'I don't see that. As Pecksniff says, "If England expects every man to do his duty, she's very sanguine, and will be much disappointed." They don't intend to do their duty by her, any more than I do, so why should she do her duty by them?'

'Don't intend to do your duty?'

'I'm going out because England's money is necessary to me, and England hires me because my skill is necessary to her. I didn't think of duty when I settled to go, and why should she? I'll get all out of her I can in the way of pay and practice, and she in my get all she can out of me in the way of work. As for being ill-used, I never expect to be anything else in this life. I'm sure I don't care, and I'm sure she don't, so live and let live, talk plain truth, and leave bunkum for right hononables who keep their places thereby. Give me another word.'

'Queer old philosopher you are, but go you shan't!'

'Go I will, sir, don't stop me. I've my reasons, and they're good ones enough.'

The conversation was interrupted by the servant,—Lord Munchampstead was waiting at Mr. Armaworth's office.

'Early lord, his lordship, and gets the worn accordingly,' says Mark, as he hurries off to attend on his ideal hero. 'You come over to the shop in half an hour, mind.'

'But why?'

'Unsound you, sir! you talk of having your reasons. I love mine.'

Mark looked quite cross, so Tom gave way, and went in due time to the bank.

Standing with his back to the fire in Mark's inner room, he saw the old cotton prince.

'And a prince he looks like,' quoth Tom to himself, as he waited in the bank outside, and looked through the glass screen. 'How well the old man wears! I wonder how many fresh thousands he has made since I saw him last, seven years ago.'

And a very noble person Lord Munchampstead!

did look; one to whom hats went off almost without their owners' will, tall and portly, with a soldier-like air of dignity and command, which was relieved by the good-nature of the countenance. Yet it was a good-nature which would stand no trifling. The jaw was deep and broad, though finely shaped, the mouth firm set, the nose slightly aquiline, the brow of great depth and height, though narrow,—altogether a Julius Cæsar's type of head, that of a man born to rule self, and therefore to rule all he met.

Tom looked over his dress, not forgetting, like a true Englishman, to mark what sort of boots he wore. They were boots not quite fashionable, but carefully cleaned on trees, trousers strapped tightly over them, which had adopted the military stripe, but retained the slit at the ankle which was in vogue forty years ago; frock coat with a velvet collar, buttoned up, but not too far, high and tight blue cravat below an immense shirt collar, a certain care and richness of dress throughout, but soberly behind the fashion while the hat was a very shabby and broken one, and the whip still more shabby and broken, all which indicated to Tom that his lordship let his tailor and his valet dress him, and though not unaware that it behoved him to set out his person as it deserved, was far too fine a gentleman to trouble himself about looking fine.

Mark looks round, sees Tom, and calls him in.

'Mr Thurnall, I am glad to meet you, sir. You did me good service at Pentremochyn, and did it cheaply. I was agreeably surprised, I confess, at receiving a bill for ten pounds seven shillings and sixpence, where I expected one or twenty or thirty.'

'I charged according to what my time was really worth there, my lord. I heartily wish it had been worth more.'

'No doubt,' says my lord, in the blindest, but the driest tone.

Some men would have, under a sense of Tom's merits, sent him a check off-hand for five and twenty pounds, but that is not Lord Minchampstead's way of doing business. He had paid simply the sum asked, but he had set Tom down in his memory as a man whom he could trust to do good work, and to do it cheaply, and now—

'You are going to join the Turkish contingent?'

'I am.'

'You know that part of the world well, I believe?'

'Intimately.'

'And the languages spoken there?'

'By no means all. Russian and Tartar well, Turkish tolerably, with a smattering of two or three Circassian dialects.'

'Humph! A fair list. Any Persian?'

'Only a few words.'

'Humph! If you can learn one language, I presume you can learn another. Now, Mr

Thurnall, I have no doubt that you will do your duty in the Turkish contingent.'

Tom bowed.

'But I must ask you if your resolution to join it is fixed?'

'I only join it because I can get no other employment at the seat of war.'

'Humph! You wish to go, then, in any case, to the seat of war?'

'Certainly.'

'No doubt you have sufficient reasons. . . . Armesworth, thus puts the question in a new light.'

Tom looked round at Mark, and, behold, his face bore a ludicrous mixture of anger and disappointment and perplexity. He seemed to be trying to make signals to Tom, and to be afraid of doing so openly before the great man.

'He is as wilful and as foolish as a gull, my lord, and I've told him so.'

'Everybody knows his own business best, Armesworth, Mr Thurnall, have you any fancy for the post of Queen's messenger?'

'I should esteem myself only too happy as one.'

'They are not to be obtained now as easily as they were fifty years ago, and are given, as you may know, to a far higher class of men than they were formerly. But I shall do my best to obtain you one, when an opportunity offers.'

Tom was beginning his profusest thanks for what was not his fortune made; but Lord Minchampstead stopped him with an uplified finger.

'And, meanwhile, there are foreign employments of which neither those who bestow them, nor those who accept them, are expected to talk much, but for which you, if I am rightly informed, would be especially fitted.'

Tom bowed, and his face spoke a hurried assent.

'Very well, if you will come over to Minchampstead to-morrow, I will give you letters to friends of mine in town. I trust that they may give you a better opportunity than the Bash Lazons will, of displaying that courage, address, and self command which, I understand, you possess in so uncommon a degree. Good morning!' And forth the great man went.

Most opposite were the actions of the two whom he had left behind him.

Tom dances about the room, hurrahing in a whisper—

'My fortune's made! The secret service! Oh, what bliss! The thing I've always longed for!'

Mark dashes himself desperately back in his chair, and shoots his angry legs straight out, almost tripping up 'I am.'

'You abominable ass! You have done it with a vengeance! Why, he has been pumping me about you this month! One word from you to say you'd have stayed, and he was going to make you agent for all his Cornish property!'

'Don't he wish he may get it? Catch a fish climbing trees! Catch me staying at home

when I can serve my Queen and my country, and find a sphere for the full development of my talents! Oh, won't I be as wise as a serpent? Won't I be complimented by himself as his best lurcher, worth any ten needy Poles, greedy Armenians, traitors, renegades, rag-tag and bob-tail! I'll shave my head to-morrow, and buy me an assortment of wigs of every hue!"

"Take care, Tom Thurnall! After pain comes a fall, and he who digs a pit may fall into it himself! Has this morning's deathbed given you no lesson that it is as well not to cast ourselves down from where God has put us, for whatsoever seemingly fine ends of ours, lest, doing so, we tempt God once too often?"

Your father quoted that text to John Briggs, here, many years ago! Might he not quote it now to you? True, not one word of murmuring, not even of regret, or fear, has passed his good old lips about your self-willed plan. He has such utter confidence in you, such utter carelessness about himself, such utter faith in God, that he can let you go without a sigh! But will you make his courage an excuse for your own rashness? Again, beware, after pride may come a fall!

On the fourth day Elsie was buried. Mark and Tom were the only mourners, Lucia and Valentin stayed at Mark's house, to return next day under Tom's care to Eaton Square.

The two mourners walked back sadly from the churchyard. "I shall put a stone over him, Tom! He ought to rest quietly now, for he had little rest enough in his life."

"Now I want to talk to you about something when I've taken off my husband, that is, for it would be hardly lucky to mention such matters with a husband on!"

Tom looked up, wondering.

"Tell me about his wife, meanwhile! What made him marry her? Was she a pretty woman?"

"Pretty enough, I believe, before she married, but I hardly think he married her for her face."

"Of course not!" said the old man with emphasis. "Of course not! Whatever faults he had, he'd be too sensible for that. Don't you marry for a face, Tom! I didn't."

Tom opened his eyes at this last assertion, but humbly expressed his intention of not falling into that snare.

"Ah! you don't believe me—well, she was a beautiful woman—I'd like to see her fellow now in the county!—and I won't deny I was proud of her. But she had ten thousand pounds, Tom. And as for her looks, why, if you'll believe me, after we'd been married three months, I didn't know whether she had any looks or not. What are you smiling at, you young rogue?"

"Report did say that one look of Mrs. Armsworth's, to the last, would do more to manage Mr. Armsworth than the opinions of the whole bench of bishops."

"Report's a liar, and you're a puppy! You don't know yet whether it was a pleasant look, or a cross one, lad. But still—well, she was an angel, and kept old Mark straighter than he's ever been since—not that he's so very bad, now. Though I sometimes think Mary's better even than his mother. That girl's a good girl, Tom."

"Report agrees with you in that, at least." "Fool if it didn't. And as for looks—I can speak to you as to my own son—Why, handsome is that handsome does."

"And that handsome has, for you must honestly put that into the account."

"You think so? So do I!" Well, then Tom, —and here Mark was seized with a tendency to St. Vitus's dance, and began overhauling every button on his coat, twirling up his black gloves, till (as undertakers' gloves are generally meant to do) they burst in half a dozen places, taking off his hat, wiping his head fiercely, and putting the hat on again behind before, till at last he snatched his arm from Tom's and, gripping him by the shoulder, recommenced—

"You think so, eh? Well, I must say it, so I'd better have it out now, hand and none! What do you think of the man who married my daughter, face and all?"

"I should think," quoth Tom, wondering who the happy man could be, "that he would be so lucky in possessing such a heart, that he would be a fool to care about the face."

"Then be as good as your word, and take her yourself! I've watched you this last week, and you'll make her a good husband! There, I have spoken, let me hear no more about it!"

And Mark half pushed Tom from him, and pulled on by his wife, highly excited.

It Mark had knocked the young doctor down, he would have been far less astonished and far less puzzled too. "Well," thought he, "I fancied nothing could throw my steady old engine off the rails, but I am off them now, with a vengeance! What to say he knew not, at last."

"It is just like your generosity, sir; you have been a brother to my father, and now—"

"And now I'll be a father to you!" Oh! Mark does nothing by halves.

"But, sir, however lucky I should be in possessing Miss Armsworth's heart, what reason have I to suppose that I do so? I never spoke a word to her. I needn't say that she never did to me—which—"

"Of course she didn't, and of course you didn't! Should like to have seen you making love to my daughter, indeed! No, sir, it's my will and pleasure I've settled it, and done it shall be! I shall go home and tell Mary, and she'll obey me—I should like to see her do anything else! Hoity, toity, fathers must be masters, sir! even in these fly-away new times, when young ones choose their own husbands and their own politics, and their own honour, and their own religion too, and be hanged to them!"

What did this unaccustomed bit of bluster mean? for unaccustomed it was, and Tom knew

well that Mary Armsworth had her own way, and managed her father as completely as he managed Whitbury.

'Humph! It is impossible, and yet it must be. This explains his being so anxious that Lord Minchamstead should approve of me. I have found favour in the poor dear thing's eyes, I suppose, and the good old fellow knows it, and won't betray her, and so shams tyrant just like him!' But—that Mary Armsworth should care for him! Vain fellow that he was to fancy it! And yet, when he began to put things together, little silences, little looks, little nothings, which all together might make something. He would not slander her to himself by supposing that her attentions to his father were paid for his sake; but he could not forget that it was she, always, who read his letters aloud to the old man, or that she had taken home and copied out the story of his shipwreck. Beside, it was the only method of explaining Mark's conduct, save on the supposition that he had suddenly been 'changed by the fancies' in his old age, instead of in the cradle, as usual.

It was a terrible temptation, and to no man more than to Thomas Thurnall. He was no boy, to hanker after mere animal beauty: he had no delicate visions or lofty aspirations, and he knew (no man better) the plain English of fifty thousand pounds, and Mark Armsworth's daughter—a good house, a good consulting practice (for he would take his M.D. of course), a good station in the county, a good clearance with a good pair of horses, good plate, a good dinner with good company thereat, and, over and above all, his father to live with him, and with Mary, whom he loved as a daughter, in luxury and peace to his life's end—Why, it was all that he had ever dreamed of, three times more than he ever hoped to gain!—Not to mention (for how oddly little dreams of selfish pleasure slip in at such moments!) that he would lay such a Ross's microscope! and keep such a horse for a sly by-day with the Whitford Priors! Oh, to see once again a fox break from Coldharbour gorse!

And then rose up before his imagination those drooping steadfast eyes, and Grace Harvey, the unsuspected, the despised, seemed to look through and through his inmost soul, as through a house which belonged of right to her, and where no other woman must dwell, or could dwell, for she was there, and he knew it, and knew that, even if he never married till his dying day, he should sell his soul by marrying any one but her. 'And why should I not sell my soul?' asked he, almost fiercely. 'I sell my talents, my time, my strength, I'd sell my life to-morrow, and go to be shot for a shilling a day, if it would make the old man comfortable for life; and why not my soul too? Don't that belong to me as much as any other part of me? Why am I to be condemned to sacrifice my prospects in life to a girl of whose honesty I am not even sure? What is this intolerable fascination! Witch! I almost believe in mesmerism

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now!—Again, I say, why should I not sell my soul, as I'd sell my coat, if the bargain's but a good one?'

And if he did, who would ever know?—Not even Grace herself. The secret was his, and no one else's. Or if they did know, what matter? Dozens of men sell their souls every year, and thrive thereon: tradesmen, lawyers, squires, popular preachers, great noblemen, kings, and princes. He would be in good company, at all events, and while so many live in glass houses, who dare throw stones?

But then, curiously enough, there came over him a vague dread of possible evil, such as he had never felt before. He had been trying for years to raise himself above the power of fortune, and he had succeeded ill enough, but he had never lost heart. Robbed, shipwrecked, lost in deserts, cheated at cards, shot in revolutions, legging his head, he had always been the same unconquerable light-hearted Tom, whose motto was, 'Fall right, and don't whimper! better luck next round.' But now, what if he played his last court-card, and Fortune, out of her close hidden hand, laid down a trump thereon with quiet sneering smile? And she would! He knew, somehow, that he should not thrive. His children would die of the measles, his horses break their knees, his plate be stolen, his house catch fire, and Mark Armsworth die insolvent. What a fool he was, to fancy such nonsense! Here he had been slaving all his life to keep his father—and now he could keep him, why, he would be justified, right, a good son, in doing the thing. How hard, how unjust of those upper Powers in which he believed so vaguely, to forbid him doing it!

And how did he know that they forbid him? That is too deep a question to be analysed here, but this thing is not worthy that there came next over Tom's mind a strange feeling still—a fancy that if he did this thing, and sold his soul, he could not answer for himself thenceforth on the score of merest respectability, could not answer for himself not to drink, gamble, squander his money, neglect his father, prove unfaithful to his wife, that the innate capacity for blackguardism, which was as strong in him as in any man, might, and probably would, run utterly riot thenceforth. He felt as if he should cast away his last anchor, and drift helplessly down into utter shame and ruin. It may have been very fanciful, but so he felt, and felt it so strongly too, that in less time than I have taken to write this he had turned to Mark Armsworth—

'So, you are what I have always found you. Do you wish me to be what you have always found me?'

'I'd be sorry to see you anything else, boy.'

'Then, sir, I can't do this. In honour, I can't.'

'Are you married already?' thundered Mark. 'Not quite as bad as that,' and in spite of his agitation Tom laughed, but hysterically, at the notion. 'But fool I am; for I am in love with another woman. I am, sir,' went he on

hurriedly. 'Boy that I am' and she don't even know it but if you be the man I take you for, you may be angry with me, but you'll understand me. Anything but be a rogue to you and to Mary, and to my own self too. Fool I'll be, but rogue I won't!'

Mark strode on in silence, frightfully red in the face for full five minutes, then he turned sharply on Tom, and catching him by the shoulder, thrust him from him.

'There—go! and don't let me see or hear of you,—that is, till I tell you! Go along, I say! Hum-hum!' (in a tone half of wrath, and half of triumph) 'his father's child! If you will ruin yourself, I can't help it.'

'Nor I, sir,' said Tom, in a really piteous tone, bemoaning the day he ever saw Absalom, as he watched Mark stride into his own gate. 'If I had but had common luck! If I had but brought my £1500 sale home here, and never seen Grace, and married this girl out of hand! Common luck is all I ask, and I never get it!'

And Tom went home sulkier than a bear but he did not let his father find out his trouble. It was his last evening with the old man. Tomorrow he must go to London, and then to scramble and twist about the world again till he died? 'Well, why not? A man must die somehow but it's hard on the poor old father,' said Tom.

As Tom was packing his scanty carpet-bag next morning, there was a knock at the door. He looked out, and saw Armsworth's clerk. What could that mean? Had the old man determined to avenge the slight, and to do so on his father, by claiming some old debt? There might be many between him and the doctor. And Tom's heart beat fast as Jane put a letter into his hand.

'No answer, sir, the clerk says.'

Tom opened it, and turned over the contents more than once ere he could believe his own eyes.

It was neither more nor less than a cheque on Mark's London broker for just five hundred pounds.

A half sheet was wrapped round it, on which were written these words—

'To Thomas Thunnall, Esq., for behaving like a gentleman. The cheque will be duly honoured at Messrs. Smith, Brown, and Jones, Lombard Street. No acknowledgment is to be sent. Don't tell your father.'

'MARK ARMSWORTH'

'Queer old world it is!' said Tom, when the first burst of childish delight was over. 'And jolly old flirt, Dame Fortune, after all! If I had written this in a book now, who'd have believed it!'

'Father,' said he, as he kissed the old man farewell, 'I've a little money come in. I'll send you fifty from London in a day or two, and lodge a hundred and fifty more with Smith and Co. So you'll be quite in clover while I am poisoning the Turnkeys, or at some better work.'

The old man thanked God for his good son,

and only hoped that he was not straitening himself to buy luxuries for a useless old fellow.

Another sacred kiss on that white head, and Tom was away for London, with a fuller purse, and a more self-contented heart too, than he had known for many a year.

And Elsley was left behind, under the gray church spire, sleeping with his fathers, and vexing his soul with poetry no more. Mark has covered him now with a fair Portland slab. He took Claude Mellot to it this winter before church time, and stood over it long with a puzzled look, as if dimly discovering that there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamed of in his philosophy.

'Wonderful fellow he was, after all! Mary shall read us out some of his verses to-night. But, I say, why should people be born clever, only to make them all the more miserable?'

'Perhaps they learn the more, papa, by their sorrows,' said quiet little Mary, 'and so they are the gainers after all.'

And none of them having any better answer to give, they all three went into the church, to see if one could be found there.

And so Tom Thunnall, too, went Eastward Ho, to take like all the rest, what God might send.

CHAPTER XXVI

AND how was poor Grace Harvey prospering the while? While comfortable folks were praising her, at their leisure, as a heroine, Grace Harvey was learning, so she opined, by fearful lessons, how much of the unheroic element was still left in her. The first lesson had come just a week after the yacht sailed for Port Madox, when the cholera had all but subsided, and it came in this wise. Before breakfast one morning she had to go up to Heale's shop for some cordial. Her mother had passed, so she said, a sleepless night, and come downstairs nervous and without appetite, oppressed with melancholy, both in the spiritual and the physical sense of the word. It was often so with her now. She had escaped the cholera. The remoteness of her house, her care never to enter the town, the purity of the water, which trickled always fresh from the cliff close by, and last, but not least, the scrupulous cleanliness which (to do her justice) she had always observed, and in which she had trained up Grace—all these had kept her safe.

But Grace could see that her dread of the cholera was intense. She even tried at first to prevent Grace from entering an infected house, but that proposal was answered by a look of horror which shamed her into silence, and she contented herself with all but abominating Grace, making her change her clothes whenever she came in; refusing to sit with her, almost to eat with her. But, over and above all this, she

had grown moody, peevish, subject to violent bursts of crying, fits of superstitious depression, spent, sometimes, whole days in reading experimental books, arguing with the preachers, gadding to and fro to every sermon, Arminian or Calvinist, and at last even to church—walking in dry places, poor soul, seeking rest, and finding none.

All this betokened some malady of the mind, rather than of the body, but what that malady was, Grace dare not even try to guess. Perhaps it was one of the fits of religious melancholy so common in the West country, like her own, in fact. Perhaps it was all 'nerves'. Her mother was growing old, and had a great deal of business to worry her, and so Grace thrust away the horrible suspicion by little self-deceptions.

She went into the shop. Tom was busy upon his knees behind the counter. She made her request.

'Ah, Mrs Harvey!' and he sprang up. 'It will be a pleasure to serve you once more in one's life. I am just going.'

'Going where?'

'To Turkey. I find this place too pleasant and too poor. Not work enough, and certainly not pay enough. So I have got an appointment as surgeon in the Turkish contingent, and shall be off in an hour.'

'To Turkey! to the war?'

Yes. It's a long time since I have seen any fighting. I am quite out of practice in gunshot wounds. There is the medicine. Good-bye! You will shake hands once, for the sake of our late cholera work together.'

Grace held out her hand mechanically across the counter, and he took it. But she did not look into his face. Only she said, half to her self—

'Well, better so. I have no doubt you will be very useful among them.'

'Confound the rascal!' thought Tom. 'I really believe that she wants to get rid of me.' And he would have withdrawn his hand in a pet, but she held it still.

Quant it was, those two strong natures, each loving the other better than anything else on earth, and yet parted by the thinnest pane of ice, which a single look would have melted. She longing to follow that man over the wide world, slave for him, die for him, he longing for the least excuse for making a fool of himself, and crying, 'Take me, as I take you, without a penny, for better, for worse.' If their eyes had but met! But they did not meet, and the pane of ice kept them asunder as surely as a wall of iron.

Was it that Tom was piqued at her seeming coldness, or did he expect, before he made any advances, that she should show that she wished at least for his respect, by saying something to clear up the ugly question which lay between them? Or was he, as I suspect, so ready to melt, and make a fool of himself, that he must needs harden his own heart by help of the devil himself? And yet there are excuses for him.

It would have been a sore trial to any man's temper to quit Aberlva in the belief that he left fifteen hundred pounds behind him. Be that as it may, he said carelessly, after a moment's pause—

'Well, farewell! And, by the bye, about that little money matter. The month of which you spoke once was up yesterday. I suppose I am not worthy yet, so I shall be humble, and wait patiently. Don't hurry yourself, I beg you, on my account.'

She snatched her hand from his without a word, and rushed out of the shop.

He returned to his packing, whistling away as shrill as any blackbird.

Little did he think that Grace's heart was bursting, as she hurried down the street, covering her face in her veil, as if every one would spy her dark secret in her countenance.

But she did not go home to hysterics and vain tears. An awful purpose had arisen in her mind, under the pressure of that great agony. Heavens, how she loved that man! To be suspected by him was torture. But she could bear that. It was her cross, she could carry it, lie down on it, and endure. But wrong him she could not—would not! It was sinful enough while he was there, but doubly, unbearably sinful, when he was going to a foreign country, when he would need every farthing he had. So not for her own sake, but for his, she spoke to her mother when she went home, and found her sitting over her Bible in the little parlour, vainly trying to find a text which suited her distemper.

'Mother, you have the Bible before you there.'

'Yes, child! Why? What?' asked she, looking up immensely.

Grace laid her eyes on the ground. She could not look her mother in the face.

'Do you ever read the thirty-second Psalm, mother?'

'Which? Why not, child?'

'Let us read it together then, now.'

And Grace taking up her own Bible, sat quietly down and read, as none in that parish save she could read.

'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.'

'Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.'

'When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my groanings all the day long.'

'For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned to the drought of summer.'

'I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.'

'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.'

Grace stopped, choked with tears which the pathos of her own voice had called up. She looked at her mother. There were no tears in her eyes. Only a dull thwart look of terror and

suspicion. The shaft, however bravely and cunningly sped, had missed its mark.

Poor Grace! Her usual eloquence utterly failed her, as most things do in which one is wont to trust, before the pressure of a real and horrible evil. She had no heart to make fine sentences, to preach a brilliant sermon of commonplaces. What could she say that her mother had not known long before she was born? And throwing herself on her knees at her mother's feet, she grasped both her hands and looked into her face imploringly—'Mother! mother! mother!' was all that she could say, but their tone meant more than all words. Reproof, counsel, comfort, utter tenderness, and under-current of clear deep trust, bubbling up from beneath all passing suspicions, however dark and foul, were in it, but they were vain.

Basest terror, the parent of basest suspicion, had hardened that woman's heart for the while, and all she answered was—

'Get up! What is this foolery?'

'I will not! I will not rise till you have told me.'

'What?'

'Whether'—and she forced the words slowly out in a low whisper—'whether you know—anything of—of—Mr Thurnall's money—has he it?'

'Is the girl mad? Belt? Money? Do you take me for a thief, wench?'

'No! No! No! Only say you—you know nothing of it!'

'Falsa! gull! Go to your school!' and the old woman tried to rise.

'Only say that! only let me know that it is a dream—a hideous dream which the devil put into my wicked, wicked heart—and let me know that I am the basest, meanest of daughters for harbouring such a thought a moment! It will be comfort, bliss, to what I endure! Only say that, and I will crawl to your feet, and beg for your forgiveness,—ask you to beat me, like a child, as I shall deserve! Drive me out, if you will, and let me die, as I shall deserve! Only say the word, and take this life from before my eyes, which burns day and night,—till my brain is dried up with misery and shame! Mother, mother, speak!'

But then burst out the horrible suspicion, which falsehood, suspecting all others of being false as itself, had engendered in that mother's heart.

'Yes, viper! I see your plan! Do you think I do not know that you are in love with that fellow?'

Grace started as if she had been shot, and covered her face with her hands.

'Yes! and want me to betray myself—to tell a lie about myself, that you may enjoy favour with him—a penniless, unbelieving—'

'Mother!' almost shrieked Grace, 'I can bear no more! Say that it is a lie, and then kill me if you will!'

'It is a lie, from beginning to end! What else should it be! And the woman, in the hurry of her passion, confirmed the equivocation

with an oath, and then ran on, as if to turn her own thoughts, as well as Grace's, into commonplaces about 'a poor old mother, who cares for nothing but you, who has worked her fingers to the bone for years to leave you a little money when she is gone! I wish I were gone! I wish I were out of this wretched ungrateful world, I do! To have my own child turn against me in my old age!'

Grace lifted her hands from her face, and looked steadfastly at her mother. And behold, she knew not how or why, she felt that her mother had sworn herself. A strong shudder passed through her, she rose and was leaving the room in silence.

'Where are you going, hussy! Stop!' screamed her mother between her teeth, her rage and cruelty rising, as it will with weak natures, in the very act of triumph,—'to your young man?'

'To pray,' said Grace quietly, and locking herself into the empty schoolroom, gave vent to all her feelings, but not in tears.

How she upbraided herself! She had not used her strength, she had not told her mother all her heart. And yet how could she tell her heart? How face her mother with such vague suspicions, hardly supported by a single fact? How argue it out against her like a lawyer, and convict her to her face? What daughter could do that, who had human love and reverence left in her? No! to touch her inward witness, as the Quakers well and truly term it, was the only method—and it had failed! 'God help me!' was her only cry—but the help did not come yet, there came over her instead a feeling of utter loneliness. Willis dead, Thurnall gone, her mother estranged, and, like a child lost upon a great moor, she looked round all heaven and earth, and there was none to counsel none to guide—perhaps not even God. For would He help her as long as she lived in sin? And was she not living in sin, deadly sin, as long as she knew what she was sure she knew, and left the wrong unrighted?

It is sometimes true, the popular saying, that sunshine comes after storm. Sometimes true, or who could live? but not always not even often. Equally true is the popular antithesis, that misfortunes never come single, that in most human lives there are periods of trouble, blow following blow, wave following wave, from opposite and unexpected quarters, with no natural or logical sequence, till all God's billows have gone over the soul.

How paltry and helpless, in such dark times, are all theories of mere self-education, all proud attempts, like that of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, to hang self-poised in the centre of the abyss, and there organise for oneself a character by means of circumstances! Easy enough and graceful enough does that dream look, while all the circumstances themselves—all which stands around—are easy and graceful, obliging and commonplace, like the sphere of petty experiences with which Goethe surrounds his imperial hero

Easy enough it seems for a man to educate himself without God, as long as he has comfortably on a sofa, with a cup of coffee and a review but what if that 'demonic element of the universe,' which Goethe confessed, and yet in his luxuriousness tried to ignore, because he could not explain—what if that broke forth over the graceful and prosperous student, as it may any moment? What if some thing, or some person, or many things, or many persons, one after the other (questions which he must get answered then, or die), took him up and dashed him down, again, and again, and again, till he was ready to cry, 'I reckoned till morning that like a lion he will break all my bones, from morning till evening he will make an end of me?' What if he thus found himself hurled perforce amid the real universal experiences of humanity, and made free, in spite of himself, by doubt and fear and horror of great darkness, of the brotherhood of woe, common alike to the simplest peasant-woman, and to every great soul, perhaps, who has left his impress and sign-manual upon the hearts of after generations? Jew, Heathen, or Christian, men of the most opposite creeds and aims, whether it be Moses or Socrates, Isaiah or Epictetus, Augustine or Mohammed, Dante or Bernard, Shakespeare or Bacon, or Goethe's self, no doubt, though in his tremendous pride he would not confess it even to himself,—each and all of them have this one fact in common that once in their lives, at least, they have gone down into the bottomless pit and 'stato all' inferno'—as the children used truly to say of Dante, and there, out of the utter darkness, have asked the question of all questions—'Is there a God? And if there be, what is He doing with me?'

What refuge, then, in self education, when a man feels himself powerless in the grasp of some unseen and inevitable power, and knows not whether it be chance, or necessity, or a damning tend? To wrap himself sternly in himself, and cry, 'I will endure, though all the universe be against me,'—how fine it sounds! But who has done it? Could a man do it perfectly but for one moment,—could he absolutely and utterly for one moment isolate him self, and accept his own isolation as a fact, he were then and there a madman or a suicide. As it is, his nature, happily too weak for that desperate self assertion, falls back recklessly on some form, more or less graceful, according to the temperament, of the ancient panacea, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' Why should a man educate self, when he knows not whither he goes, what will befall him to-morrow? No. There is but one escape, one chink through which we may see light, one rock on which our feet may find standing place, even in the abyss, and that is the belief, intuitive, inspired, due neither to reasoning nor to study, that the billows are God's billows, and that though we go down to hell, He is there also,—the belief that not we, but He, is educating us, that these seemingly fantastical and incoherent miseries,

storm following earthquake, and earthquake fire, as if the caprice of all the demons were let loose against us, have in His mind a spiritual coherence, an organic unity and purpose (though we see it not), that sorrows do not come singly, only because He is making short work with our spirits, and because the more effect He sees produced by one blow, the more swiftly He follows it up by another, till, in one great and varied crisis, seemingly long to us, but short enough compared with immortality, our spirits may be—

'Heated hot with burning fears,
And bathed in baths of lussing tears,
And lattered with the strokes of doom,
To shape and use.'

And thus, perhaps, it was with poor Grace Harvey. At least, happily for her, she began after a while to think that it was so. Only after a while, though. There was at first a phase of repining, of doubt, almost of indignation against high heaven. Who shall judge her? What blame if the crucified one writhes when the first nail is driven? What blame if the stoutest turn sick and giddy at the first home thrust of that sword which pierces the joints and marrow, and lays bare to self the secrets of the heart? God gives poor souls time to recover their breaths, etc. He strikes again, and if He be not angry, why should we condemn?

Poor Grace! Her sorrows had been thickening fast during the last few months. She was a bookworm again, true, but where were her children? Those of them whom she loved best, were swept away by the cholera, and could she face the remnant each in mourning for a parent or a brother? That alone was grief enough for her and yet, that was the lightest of all her griefs. She loved Tony Thurnall—how much, she dared not tell herself; she longed to 'save' him. She had thought, and not untruly, during the past cholera weeks, that he was softened, opened to new impressions. But he had avoided her more than ever—perhaps suspected her again more than ever—and now he was gone, gone for ever. That, too, was grief enough alone. But darkest and deepest of all, darker and deeper than the past shame of being suspected by him she loved, was the shame of suspecting her own mother—of believing herself, as she did, privy to that shameful theft, and yet unable to make restitution. There was the horror of all horrors, the close prison which seemed to stifle her whole soul. The only chink through which a breath of air seemed to come, and keep her heart alive, was the hope that somehow, somewhere, she might find that lost, and restore it without her mother's knowledge.

But more—the first of September was come and gone, the bill for five and twenty pounds was due, and was not met. Grace, choking down her honest pride, went off to the grocer, and, with tears which he could not resist, persuaded him to renew the bill for one month more, and now that month was all but past, and yet there was no money. Eight or ten people who owed Mrs. Harvey money had died

of the cholera. Some, of course, had left no effects, and all hope of their working out their debts was gone. Some had left money behind them, but it was still in the lawyer's hands, some of it at sea, some on mortgage, some in houses which must be sold, till their affairs were wound up—(a sadly slow affair when a country attorney has a poor man's unprofitable business to transact)—nothing could come in to Mrs. Harvey. To and fro she went with knitted brow and heavy heart, and brought home again only promises, as she had done a hundred times before. One day she went up to Mrs. Heale. Old Heale owed her thirteen pounds and more, but that was not the least reason for paying. His cholera patients had not paid him, and whether Heale had the money by him or not, he was not going to pay his debts till other people paid theirs. Mrs. Harvey stormed, Mrs. Heale gave her as good as she brought, and Mrs. Harvey threatened to County Court her husband, whereon Mrs. Heale, *en revanche*, dragged out the books, and displayed to the poor widow's horror-struck eyes an account for medicine and attendance, on her and Grace, which nearly swallowed up the debt. Poor Grace was overwhelmed when her mother came home and upbraided her, in her despair, with being a burden. Was she not a burden? Must she not be one henceforth? No, she would take in needle-work, labour in the fields, heave ballast among the coarse pauper girls in the quay-pool, anything rather, but how to meet the present difficulty?

'We must sell our furniture, mother.'

'For a quarter of what it's worth? Never, girl! No! The Lord will provide,' said she, between her clenched teeth, with a sort of hysterical chuckle. 'The Lord will provide!'

'I believe it, I believe it,' said poor Grace, 'but faith is weak, and the day is very dark, mother.'

'Dark, ay! And may be darker yet, but the Lord will provide. He prepares a table in the wilderness for his saints that the world don't think of.'

'Oh, mother! and do you think there is any door of hope?'

'Go to bed, girl, go to bed, and leave me to see to that. Find my spectacles. Wherever have you laid them to, now? I'll look over the books awhile.'

'Do let me go over them for you.'

'No, you shan't! I suppose you'll be wanting to make out your poor old mother's been cheating somebody. Why not, if I'm a thief, miss, oh!'

'Oh, mother! mother! don't say that again.'

And Grace glided out meekly to her own chamber, which was on the ground-floor adjoining the parlour, and there spent more than one hour in prayer, from which no present comfort seemed to come, yet who shall say that it was all unanswered?

At last her mother came upstairs, and put

her head in angrily. 'Why be'n't you in bed, girl! sitting up this way?'

'I was praying, mother,' says Grace, looking up as she knelt.

'Praying! What's the use of praying! and who'll hear you if you pray? What you want's a husband, to keep you out of the workhouse, and you won't get that by kneeling here. Get to bed, I say, or I'll jell you up!'

Grace obeyed uncomplainingly, but utterly shocked, though she was not unacquainted with those frightful fits of morose misbelief, even of fierce blasphemy, to which the excitable West-country mind is liable, after having been over-strained by superstitious self-inspection, and by the desperate attempt to prove itself right and safe from frames and feelings, while fact and conscience proclaim it wrong.

The West-country people are apt to attribute these paroxysms to the possession of a devil, and so did Grace that night.

Trembling with terror and loving pity, she lay down, and began to pray afresh for that poor wild mother.

At last the fear crossed her that her mother might make away with herself. But a few years before, another class-leader in Alverna had attempted to do so, and had all but succeeded. The thought was intolerable. She must go to her, face reproaches, blows, anything. She rose from her bed, and went to the door. It was fastened on the outside.

A cold perspiration stood on her forehead. She opened her lips to shrink to her mother, but checked herself when she heard her stirring gently in the outer room. Her pulses throbbed too loudly at first for her to hear distinctly, but she felt that it was no moment for giving way to emotion, by a strong effort of will, she conquered herself, and then, with that preternatural acuteness of sense which some women possess, she could hear everything her mother was doing. She heard her put on her shawl, her bonnet, she heard her open the front door gently. It was now long past midnight. Whither could she be going at that hour?

She heard her go gently to the left, past the window, and yet her footfall was all but inaudible. No rain had fallen, and her shoes ought to have sounded on the hard earth. She must have taken them off. There, she was stopping, just by the school-door. Now she moved again. She must have stopped to put on her shoes, for now Grace could hear her steps distinctly, down the earth bank, and over the rattling shingle of the beach. Where was she going? Grace must follow!

The door was fast, but in a moment she had removed the table, opened the shutter and the window.

'Thank God that I stayed here on the ground-floor, instead of going back to my own room when Major Campbell left. It was providence! The Lord has not forsaken me yet!' said the sweet saint, as, catching up her shawl, she wrapped it round her, and slipping through the

window, crouched under the shadow of the house, and looked for her mother.

She was hurrying over the rocks, a hundred yards off. Whither? To drown herself in the sea? No; she held on along the mid-beach, right across the cove, toward Arthur's Nose. But why? Grace must know.

She felt, she knew not why, that this strange journey, that wild 'The Lord will provide,' had to do with the subject of her suspicion. Perhaps this was the crisis, perhaps, all will be cleared up to-night, for joy or for utter shame.

The tide was low, the beach was bright in the western moonlight; only along the cliff foot lay a strip of shadow a quarter of a mile long, till the Nose, like a great black wall, lurid the corner of the cove in darkness.

Along that strip of shadow she ran, crouching, now stumbling over a boulder, now crushing her bare feet between the sharp pebbles, as heedless where she stepped, she kept her eye fixed on her mother. As if fascinated, she could see nothing else in heaven or earth but that dark figure, hurrying along with a dogged determination, and then stopping a moment to look round, as if in fear of a pursuer. And then Grace lay down on the cold stones, and pressed herself into the very earth, and the moment her mother turned to go forward, sprang up and followed.

And then a true woman's thought flashed across her, and shaped itself into a prayer. For herself she never thought. But if the coast-guardsmen above should see her mother, stop her, question her? God grant that he might be on the other side of the point! And she hurried on again.

Near the Nose the rocks ran high and jagged, her mother held on to them, passed through a narrow chasm, and disappeared.

Grace now, not fifty yards from her, dashed out of the shadow into the moonlight, and in breathlessly toward the spot where she had seen her mother last. Like Andersen's little sea-maiden she went, every step on sharp knives across the rough beds of barnacles, but she felt no pain, in the greatness of her terror and her love.

She crouched between the rocks a moment, heard her mother slipping and splashing among the pools, and glided after her like a ghost—a guardian angel rather—till she saw her emerge again for a moment into the moonlight, upon a strip of beach beneath the Nose.

It was a weird and lonely spot, and a dangerous spot withal. For only at low spring-tide could it be reached from the land, and then the flood rose far up the cliff, covering all the shingle, and filling the mouth of a dark cavern. Had her mother gone to that cavern? It was impossible to see, so utterly was the chit shrouded in shadow.

Shivering with cold and excitement, Grace crouched down and gazed into the gloom till her eyes swam, and a hundred fantastic figures, and sparks of fire, seemed to dance between her and

the rock. Sparks of fire!—yes, but that last one was no fairy. An actual flash, the crackle and sputter of a match! What could it mean? Another match was lighted, and a moment after, the glare of a lantern showed her her mother entering beneath the polished arch of rock which glared lurid overhead, like the gateway of the pit of fire.

The light vanished into the windings of the cave. And then Grace, hardly knowing what she did, rushed up the beach, and crouched down once more at the cave's mouth. There she sat, she knew not how long, listening, listening, like a hunted hare, her whole faculties concentrated in the one sense of hearing, her eyes wandering vacantly over the black saws of rock, and glancing on weed beds, and bright phosphoric sea. 'Thank heaven, there was not a ripple to break the silence. Ah, what was that sound within? She pressed her ear against the rock to hear more surely. A rumbling as of stones rolled down. And then was it a laney, or were her powers of hearing, intensified by excitement, actually equal to discern the clink of coin? Who knows? But in another moment she had glided in, silently, swiftly, holding her very breath, and saw her mother kneeling on the ground, the lantern by her side, and in her hand the long lost belt.

She did not speak, she did not move. She always knew, in her heart of hearts, that so it was. But when the sin took bodily shape, and was there before her very eyes, it was too dreadful to speak of, to act upon yet. And amid the most torturing horror and disgust of that great sin, rose up in her the divinest love for the sinner; she felt strange paradox—that she had never loved her mother as she did at that moment. 'Oh, that it had been I who had done it, and not she!' And her mother's sin was to her her own sin, her mother's shame her shame, till all sense of her mother's guilt vanished in the light of her divine love. 'Oh, that I could take her up tenderly, tell her that all is forgiven and forgotten by man and God!—save her as I have never saved her yet!—nurture her to sleep in my bosom, and then go forth and bear her punishment, even if need be on the gallows-tree!' And there she stood, in a silent agony of tender pity, drinking her portion of the cup of Him who bore the sins of all the world.

Silently she stood, and silently she turned to go, to go home and pray for guidance in that dark labyrinth of continued duties. Her mother heard the rustle, looked up, and sprang to her feet with a scream, dropping gold pieces on the ground.

Her first impulse was wild terror. She was discovered, by whom, she knew not. She clasped her evil treasure to her bosom, and thrusting Grace against the rock, fled wildly on.

'Mother! mother!' shrieked Grace, rushing after her. The shawl fell from her shoulders. Her mother looked back, and saw the white figure.

'God's angel! God's angel, come to destroy

me' as he came to Balaam's and in the madness of her guilty fancy she saw in Grace's hand the fiery sword which was to smite her.

Another step, looking backward still, and she had tripped over a stone. She fell, and striking the back of her head against the rock, lay senseless.

Tenderly Grace lifted her up, went far water to a pool near by, bathed her face, calling on her in every term of endearment. Slowly the old woman recovered her consciousness, but showed it only in moans. Her head was out and bleeding. Grace bound it up, and then taking that fatal belt, bound it next to her own heart, never to be moved from thence till she should put it into the hands of him to whom it belonged.

And then she lifted up her mother.

'Come home, darling mother,' and she tried to make her stand and walk.

The old woman only moaned, and waved her away impatiently. Grace put her on her feet, but she fell again. The lower limbs seemed all but paralysed.

Slowly that sweet saint lifted her, and laid her on her own back, and slowly she bore her homeward, with aching knees and bleeding feet, while before her eyes hung the picture of Him who bore His cross up Calvary, till a solemn joy and pride in that sacred burden seemed to intertwine itself with her deep misery. And fainting every moment with pain and weakness, she still went on, as if by supernatural strength, and murmured—

'Thou shalt bear more for me, and shalt not I bear even this for Thee?'

Surely, if blest spirits can weep and smile over the woes and sorrows of us mortal men, faces brighter than the stars looked down on that fair girl that night, and in loving sympathy called her, too, blest.

At last it was over. Unhindered she reached home, laid her mother on the bed, and tended her till morning. But long ere morning dawned stupor had changed into delirium, and Grace's ears were all on fire with words—words those who have ever heard will have no heart to write.

And now, by one of those strange vagaries, in which epileptics so often indulge, appeared other symptoms, and by day-dawn cholera itself.

Heale, though recovering, was still too weak to be of use; but, happily, the medical man sent down by the Board of Health was still in the town.

Grace sent for him, but he shook his head after the first look. The wretched woman's ravings at once explained the case, and made it, in his eyes, all but hopeless.

The sudden shock to body and mind, the sudden prostration of strength, had brought out the disease which she had dreaded so intensely, and against which she had taken so many precautions, and which yet lay, all the while, lurking unfelt in her system.

A hideous eight-and-forty hours followed. The preachers and class-leaders came to pray over the dying woman, but she screamed to Grace to send them away. She had just sense enough left to dread that she might betray her own shame. Would she have the new clergyman then? No, she would have no one,—no one could help her! Let her only die in peace!

And Grace closed the door upon all but the doctor, who treated the wild sufferer's wild words as the mere fancies of delirium, and then Grace watched and prayed, till she found herself alone with the dead.

She wrote a letter to Thurnall—

'Sir, I have found your belt, and all the money, I believe and trust, which it contained. If you will be so kind as to tell me where and how I shall send it to you, you will take a heavy burden off the mind of—'

'Your obedient humble servant, who trusts that you will forgive her having been unable to fulfil her promise.'

She addressed the letter to Whithury, for further Tom had ordered his letters to be sent, but she received no answer.

The day after Mrs. Harvey was buried, the sale of all her effects was announced in Aberlva.

Grace received the proceeds, went round to all the creditors, and paid them all which was due. She had a few pounds left. What to do with that she knew full well.

She showed no sign of sorrow. But she spoke rarely to any one. A dead dull weight seemed to hang over her. To preachers, class-leaders, gospelists, who upbraided her for not letting them see her mother, she replied by silence. People thought her becoming idiotic.

The day after the last creditor was paid she packed up her little box, hired a cart to take her to the nearest coach, and vanished from Aberlva, without bidding farewell to a human being, even to her school-children.

Vavasour had been buried more than a week. Mark and Mary were sitting in the dining-room, Mark at his post and Mary at her work, when the footboy entered.

'Sir, there's a young woman wants to speak with you.'

'Show her in, if she looks respectable,' said Mark, who had slippers on, and his feet on the fender, and was, therefore, loth to move.

'Oh, quite respectable, sir, as ever I see;' and the lady entered in a figure, dressed and veiled in deep black.

'Well, ma'am, sit down, pray, and what can I do for you?'

'Can you tell me, sir,' answered a voice of extraordinary sweetness and gentleness, very firm and composed withal, 'if Mr. Thomas Thurnall is in Whithury?'

'Thurnall? He has sailed for the East a week ago. May I ask your business with him? Can I help you in it?'

The black damsel paused so long, that both

Mary and her father felt uneasy, and a cloud passed over Mark's brow.

'Can the boy have been playing tricks?' said he to himself.

'Then, sir, as I hear that you have influence, can you get me a situation as one of the nurses who are going out thither, so I hear?'

'Get you a situation? Yes; of course, if you are competent.'

'Thank you, sir. Perhaps, if you could be so very kind as to tell me to whom I am to apply in town, for I shall go thither to-night.'

'My goodness!' cried Mark. 'Old Mark don't do things in this off-hand, cold-blooded way. Let us know who you are, my dear, and about Mr. Thurnall. Have you anything against him?'

She was silent.

'Mary, just step into the next room.'

'If you please, sir,' said the same gentle voice, 'I had sooner that the lady should stay. I have nothing against Mr. Thurnall, God knows. He has rather something against me.'

Another pause.

Mary rose, and went up to her and took her hand.

'Do tell us who you are, and if we can do anything for you.'

And she looked wistfully up into her face.

The stranger drew a long breath and lifted her veil. Mary and Mark both started at the beauty of the countenance which she revealed—but in a different way. Mark gave a grunt of approbation. Mary turned pale as death.

'I suppose that it is but right and reasonable that I should tell you, at least give proof of my being an honest person. For my capabilities as a nurse—I believe you know Mrs. Vavasour? I heard that she has been staying here.'

'Of course. Do you know her?'

A sad smile passed over her face.

'Yes, well enough, at least for her to speak for me. I should have asked her or Miss St. Just to help me to a nurse's place—but I did not like to trouble them in their distress. Now is the poor lady now, sir?'

'I know who she is!' cried Mary, by a sudden inspiration. 'Is not your name Harvey? Are you not the schoolmistress who saved Mr. Thurnall's life? who behaved so nobly in the cholera? Yes! I knew you were! Come and sit down, and tell me all! I have so longed to know you! Dear creature, I have felt as if you were my own sister. He—Mr. Thurnall—wrote often about all your heroism.'

Grace seemed to choke down somewhat, and then answered steadfastly—

'I did not come here, my dear lady, to hear such kind words, but to do an errand to Mr. Thurnall. You have heard, perhaps, that when he was wrecked last spring, he lost some money. Yes! Then, it was stolen. Stolen!' she repeated with a great gasp. 'never mind by whom. Not by me.'

'You need not tell us that, my dear,' interrupted Mark.

'God kept it. And I have it, here!' and she pressed her hands tight over her bosom.

And here I must keep it till I give it into his hands, if I follow him round the world!' And as she spoke her eyes shone in the lamplight, with an unearthly brilliance which made Mary shudder.

Mark Arnsworth poured a libation to the goddess of Puzzle-dum, in the shape of a glass of port, which first choked him, and then descended over his clean shirt-front. But after he had coughed himself black in the face, he began—

'My good girl, if you are Grace Harvey, you're welcome to my roof, and an honour to it, say I—but as for taking all that money with you across the seas, and such a pretty helpless young thing as you are, God help you, it mustn't be, and shan't be, and that's flat.'

'But I must go to him!' said she, in so naive a half wild a fashion, that Mary, comprehending all, looked imploringly at her father, and putting her arm round Grace, forced her into a seat.

'I must go, sir, and tell him—tell him myself. No one knows what I know about it.'

Mark shook his head.

'Could I not write to him? He knows me as well as he knows his own father.'

Grace shook her head, and pressed her hand upon her heart, where Tom's belt lay.

'Do you think, madam, that after having had the dream of this belt, the shape of this belt, and of the money which is in it, branded into my brain for months—years it seems like—by God's tire of shame and suspicion,—and seen him poor, miserable, trefn, unbeliving, for the want of it—O God! I can't tell even your sweet face all—Do you think that now I have it in my hands, I can part with it, or rest till it is in his? No, not though I walked barefoot after him to the ends of the earth.'

'Let his father have the money, then, and do you take him the belt as a token, if you must—'

'That's it, Mary!' shouted Mark Arnsworth, 'you always come in with the right hint, girl!' and the two, combining their forces, at last talked poor Grace over. But upon going out herself she was bent to ask his forgiveness in her mother's name was her one fixed idea. He might die, and not know all, not have forgiven all, and go she must.

'But it is a thousand to one against your seeing him. We, even, don't know exactly where he is gone.'

Grace shuddered a moment, and then recovered her calmness.

'I did not expect this—but be it so. I shall meet him if God wills, and if not, I can still work—work.'

'I think, Mary, you'd better take the young woman upstairs, and make her sleep here to-night,' said Mark, glad of an excuse to get rid of them, which, when he had done, he pulled his chair round in front of the fire, put a foot on each hob, and began rubbing his eyes vigorously.

'Dear me! Dear me! What a lot of good people there are in this old world, to be sure! Ten times better than me, at least—make one ashamed of oneself—and if one isn't oven good enough for this world, how's one to be good enough for heaven!'

And Mary carried Grace upstairs, and into her own bedroom. 'A bed should be made up there for her. It would do her good just to have anything so pretty sleeping in the same room.' And then she got Grace snuggled and tried to make her talk, but she was *distrustful*, reserved, for a new and sudden dread had seized her at the sight of that fine house, fine plate, fine friends. These were his acquaintances, then—no wonder that he would not look on such as her. And as she cast her eye round the really luxurious chamber, and (after falteringly asking Mary whether she had any brothers and sisters) guessed that she must be the heiress of all that wealth, she settled in her heart that Tom was to marry Mary, and the intimate tone in which Mary spoke of him to her, and her innumerable inquiries about him, made her more certain that it was a settled thing. Handsome she was not, certainly, but so sweet and good, and that her own beauty (if she was aware that she possessed any) could have any weight with Tom, she would have considered as an insult to his sense, so she made up her mind slowly, but steadily, that thus it was to be, and every fresh proof of Mary's sweetness and goodness was a fresh pang to her, for it showed the more how probable it was that Tom loved her.

Therefore she answered all Mary's questions carefully and honestly, as to a person who had a right to ask, and at last went to her bed, and, worn out in body and mind, was asleep in a moment. She had not remarked the sigh which escaped Mary, as she glanced at that beautiful head, and the long black tresses which streamed down for a moment over the white shoulders ere they were knotted back for the night, and then at her own poor countenance in the glass opposite.

It was long past midnight when Grace woke, she knew not how, and looking up, saw a light in the room, and Mary sitting still over a book, her head resting on her hands. She lay quiet and thought she heard a sob. She was sure she heard tears drop on the paper. She stirred, and Mary was at her side in a moment.

'Did you want anything?'

'Only to—to remind you, ma'am, it is not wise to sit up so late.'

'Only that?' said Mary laughing. 'I do that every night, alone with God, and I do not think He will be the farther off for you being here!'

'One thing I had to ask,' said Grace. 'It would lessen my labour so, if you could give me any hint of where he might be.'

'We know, as we told you, as little as you. His letters are to be sent to Constantinople. Some from Aberlona are gone thither already.'

'And mine among them!' thought Grace. 'It is God's will!'. Madam, if it would not seem forward on my part—if you could tell him the truth, and what I have for him, and where I am, in case he might wish—wish to see me—when you were writing.'

'Of course I will, or my father will,' said Mary, who did not like to confess either to herself or to Grace that it was very improbable that she would ever write again to Tom Thurnall.

And so the two sweet maidens, so near at that moment to an explanation which might have cleared up all, went on each in her ignorance, for so it was to be.

The next morning Grace came down to breakfast, modest, cheerful, charming. Mark made her breakfast with them, gave her endless letters of recommendation, wanted to take her to see old Doctor Thurnall, which she declined, and then sent her to the station in his own carriage, paid her fare first-class to town, and somehow or other contrived, with Mary's help, that she should find in her bag two ten-pound notes, which she had never seen before. After which he went out to his counting-house, only remarking to Mary—

'Very extraordinary young woman, and very handsome, too. Will make some man a jewel of a wife, if she don't go mad, or die of the hospital fever.'

To which Mary fully assented. Little she guessed, and little did her father, that it was for Grace's sake that Tom had refused her hand.

A few days more, and Grace Harvey also had gone Eastward Ho.

CHAPTER XXVII

A DIFFERENT EXPOSITION IN AN ANCIENT CHATEAU

It is, perhaps, a pity for the human race in general that some enterprising company cannot buy up the Moselle (not the wine, but the river), cut it into five-mile lengths, and distribute them over Europe, wherever there is a demand for lovely scenery. For lovely is its proper epithet, it is not grand, not exciting—so much the better, it is scenery to live and die in, scenery to settle in, and study a single landscape, till you know every rock, and walnut-tree, and vine leaf by heart, not merely to run through in one hasty steam-trip, as you now do, in a long burning day, which makes you not 'drunk'—but weary—with excess of beauty. Besides, there are two or three points so superior to the rest, that having seen them, one cares to see nothing more. That paradise of emerald, purple, and azure, which opens behind Treis, and that strange heap of old-world houses at Berncastel, which have scrambled up to the top of a rock to stare at the steamer, and have never been able to get down again—between them, and after them, one feels like a child who, after a great mouthful of juicy-apple jam, is condemned to

have poured down its throat an overlasting stream of treacle.

So thought Stangrave on board the steamer, as he smoked his way up the shallows, and wondered which turn of the river would bring him to his destination. When would it all be over! And he never leaped on shore more joyfully than he did at Alf that afternoon, to jump into a carriage, and trundle up the gorge of the Isbach some six lonely weary miles, till he turned at last into the wooded cañon of the Romer-kessel and saw the little chapel crowning the central knoll, with the white high-roofed houses of Bertrich nestling at its foot.

He drives up to the handsome old Kurhaus, nestling close beneath heather-clad rocks, upon its lawn shaded with huge horse-chestnuts, and set round with dahlia, and geraniums, and delicate tinted German stocks, which fill the air with fragrance, a place made only for young lovers—certainly not for those black-petioated worthies, each with that sham of a sham, the modern tinsure, pared down to a puny storm's breadth among their bushy, well-oiled curls, who sit at little tables, passing the lazy day '*à muguetter les bourgeois*' of Sarrebruck and Treves, and sipping the fragrant Josephshofer—perhaps at the good bourgeois' expense.

Past them Stangrave slips angrily, for that 'development of humanity' can find no favour in his eyes, being not human at all, but pos-sessedly superhuman, and therefore, practically, sometimes inhuman. He hurries into the public room, sizes on the visitors' book.

The names are there, in their own hand writing, but where are they?

Waters are seized and questioned. The English ladies came back last night, and are gone this afternoon.

'Where are they gone?'

Nobody recollects not even the man from whom they hired the carriage. But they are not gone far. Then servants and their luggage are still here. Perhaps the Herr Ober-Bad-meister, Lieutenant D—, will know. 'Oh, it will not trouble him. An English gentleman? Der Herr Lieutenant will be only too happy,' and in ten minutes der Herr Lieutenant appears, really only too happy, and Stangrave finds himself at once in the company of a soldier and a gentleman. Had their acquaintance been a longer one, he would have recognised likewise the man of taste and of purity.

'I can well appreciate, sir,' says he in return to Stangrave's anxious inquiries, 'your impatience to rejoin your lovely countrywomen, who have been for the last three weeks the wonder and admiration of our little paradise, and whose four days' absence was regretted, believe me, as a public calamity.'

'I can well believe it; but they are not countrywomen, of mine. The one lady is an Englishwoman; the other—I believe—an Italian.'

'And der Herr?'

'An American.'

'Ah! A still greater pleasure, sir. I trust that you will carry back across the Atlantic a good report of a spot all but unknown, I fear, to your compatriots. You will meet one, I think, on the return of the ladies.'

'A compatriot?'

'Yes. A gentleman who arrived here this morning, and who seemed, from his conversation with them, to belong to your noble fatherland. He went out driving with them this afternoon, whither I unfortunately know not. Ah! good Saint Nicholas!—for though I am a Lutheran, I must invoke him now—Look out yonder!'

Stangrave looked, and joined in the general laugh of lieutenant, waiters, priests, and bourgeois.

For under the chestnuts stunted, like him in *Struclpeter*, as though he were a very king of Ashantee, Salima's black boy, who had taken to himself a scarlet umbrella and a great cigar, while after him came, also like them in *Struclpeter*, Caspar, bretzel in hand, and Ludwig with his hoop, and all the mighty boys of Bertrich town, hooting, and singing in chorus, after the fashion of German children.

The resemblance to the well known scene in the German child's book was perfect, and as the children shouted—

'Fan kohlja brabenschwarzer Mohr,
Du Sonne schen ihm ein Ahrn,
Da nim er seinen Sonnenhelm!'

more than one grown person joined therein.

Stangrave longed to catch hold of the boy, and extract from him all news; but the blackamoer was not quite so respectable company enough at that moment, and Stangrave had to wait till he strutted proudly up to the door, and entered the hall with a bland smile, evidently having taken the hooting as a homage to his personal appearance.

'Ah? Mas' Stangrave? glad see you, sir! Quite a party of us now, among dese 'barian heathen foreigners. Mas' Thurnall he come dis mornin', gone up jekin' bush wid de ladies. He! he! Not seen him dis tree year afore.'

'Thurnall!' Stangrave's heart sank within him. His first impulse was to order a carriage, and return whence he came, but it would look so odd, and, moreover, he so foolish, that he made up his mind to stay and face the worst. So he swallowed a hasty dinner, and then wandered up the narrow valley, with all his suspicions of Thurnall and Marie seething more fiercely than ever in his heart.

Some half mile up, a path led out of the main road to a wooden bridge across the stream. He followed it, careless whither he went, and in two minutes found himself in the quaintest little woodland cavern he ever had seen.

It was simply a great block of black lava, crowned with brushwood, and supported on walls and pillars of Dutch cheeses, or what should have been Dutch cheeses by all laws of shape

and colour, had not his fingers proved to them that they were stone. How they got there, and what they were, puzzled him, for he was no geologist, and finding a bench insule, he sat down, and speculated thereon.

There was more than one doorway to the 'Cheese Collar'. It stood beneath a jutting knoll, and the path ran right through so that, as he sat, he could see up a narrow gorge to his left, roofed in with trees, and down into the main valley on his right, where the Isabach glittered clear and smooth beneath red-berried mountain ash and yellow leaves.

There he sat, and tried to forget Marie in the tinkling of the streams, and the sighing of the autumn leaves, and the cooing of the sleepy doves, while the ice-bird, as the Germans call the water-ouzel, sat on a rock in the river below, and warbled his low sweet song, and then flitted up the grassy reach to perch and sing again on the next rock above.

And, whether it was that he did forget Marie awhile, or whether he were tired, as he well might have been, or whether he had too rapidly consumed his bottle of red Wylpöschmer, forgetful that it alone of German wines combines the delicacy of the Rhine with the potency of its Burgundian vinestock, transplanted to the Ahr by Charlemagne,—whether it were any of these causes or whether it were not, Stangrave fell fast asleep in the Kaiser-keller, and slept till it was dark, at the risk of catching a great cold.

How long he slept, he knew not, but what awakened him he knew full well. Voices of people approaching, and voices which he recognised in a moment.

Sabina! Yes, and Marie too, laughing merrily, and among their shriller tones the voice of Thurnall. He had not heard it for years, but, considering the circumstances under which he had last heard it, there was no fear of his forgetting it again.

They came down the side glen, and before he could rise, they had turned the sharp corner of the rock, and were in the Kaiser-keller, close to him, almost touching him. He felt the awkwardness of his position. To keep still was, perhaps, to overhear, and that too much. To discover himself was to produce a scene, and he could not trust his temper that the scene would not be an ugly one, and such as women must not witness.

He was relieved to find that they did not stop. They were laughing about the gloom, about being out so late.

'How jealous some one whom I know would be,' said Sabina, 'if he found you and Tom together in this darksome den!'

'I don't care,' said Tom, 'I have made up my mind to shoot him out of hand, and marry Marie myself. Shan't I now, my—' and they passed on, and down to their carriage, which had been waiting for them in the road below.

What Marie's answer was, or by what name Thurnall was about to address her, Stangrave did not hear, but he had heard quite enough.

He rose quietly after a while, and followed them.

He was a dupe, an ass! The dupe of those bad women, and of his ancient enemy! It was maddening! Yet, how could Sabina be in fault? She had not known Marie till he himself had introduced her, and he could not believe her capable of such baseness. The crime must lie between the sister two. Yet—

However that might be mattered little to him now. He would return, order his carriage once more, and depart, shaking off the dust of his feet against them! 'Pah! There were other women in the world, and women, too, who would not demand of him to become a hero.'

He reached the Kurhaus, and went in, but not into the public room, for fear of meeting people whom he had no heart to face.

He was in the passage, in the act of settling his account with the waiter, when Thurnall came hastily out, and ran against him.

Stangrave stood by the passage lamp, so that he saw Tom's face at once.

Tom drew back, begged a thousand pardons, and saw Stangrave's face in turn.

The two men looked at each other for a few seconds. Stangrave longed to say, 'You intend to shoot me? Then try at once,' but he was ashamed, of course, to make use of words which he had so accidentally overheard.

Tom looked carefully at Stangrave, to divine his temper from his countenance. It was quite angry enough to give Tom excuse for saying to himself—

'The fellow is mad at being caught at last. Very well.'

'I think, sir,' said he, quietly enough, 'that you and I had better walk outside for a few minutes. Allow me to retract the apology I just made, till we have had some very explicit conversation on other matters.'

'Curse his impudence!' thought Stangrave. 'Does he actually mean to bully me into marrying her?' and he replied haughtily enough.

'I am aware of no matters on which I am inclined to be explicit with Mr. Thurnall, or on which Mr. Thurnall has a right to be explicit with me.'

'I am, then,' quoth Tom, his suspicion increasing in turn. 'Do you wish, sir, to have a scene before this waiter and the whole house, or will you be so kind as to walk outside with me?'

'I must decline, sir, not being in the habit of holding intercourse with an actress's bully.'

Tom did not knock him down, but replied smilingly enough.

'I am far too much in earnest in this matter, sir, to be stopped by any coarse expressions. Waiter, you may go. Now will you fight me to-morrow morning, or will you not?'

'I may fight a gentleman, but not you.'

'Well, I shall not call you a coward, because I know that you are none; and I shall not make a row here, for a gentleman's reasons, which you, calling yourself a gentleman, scorn

to have forgotten. But this I will do, I will follow you till you do fight me, if I have to throw up my own prospects in life for it. I will proclaim you, wherever we meet, for what you are—a mean and base intriguer, I will insult you in Kirsals, and cane you on public places, I will be Frankenstein's man to you day and night, till I have avenged the wrongs of this poor girl, the dust of whose feet you are not worthy to kiss off.

Stangrave was surprised at his tone. It was certainly not that of a conscious villain, but he only replied unceremoniously—

'And pray what may give Mr Thunall the right to consider himself the destined avenger of this frail beauty's wrongs?'

'I will tell you that after we have fought, and somewhat more. Meanwhile, that expression, "frail beauty," is a fresh offence, for which I should certainly cane you, if she were not in the house.'

'Will,' drawled Stangrave, feigning an ostentatious yawn, 'I believe the wise method of ridding myself of importunity is to grant their requests. Have you pistols? I have none.'

'I have both duellers and revolvers at your service.'

'Ah! I think we'll try the revolvers then,' said Stangrave, savage from despair, and disbeliever in all human goodness. 'After what has passed, five or six shots apiece will be hardly *outré*.'

'Hardly, I think,' said Tom. 'Will you name your second?'

'I know no one. I have not been here two hours, but I suppose they do not matter much.'

'Humph! It is as well to have witnesses in case of accident. There are a couple of toasting Burschen in the public room, who, I think, would enjoy the office. Both have scars on their faces, so they will be *au fait* at the thing. Shall I have the honour of sending one of them to you?'

'As you will, sir, my number is 31.' And the two fools turned on their respective heels, and walked off.

At sunrise next morning Tom and his second are standing on the Falkenhöhe, at the edge of the vast circular pit, blasted out by some explosion which has torn the slate into mere dust and shivers, now covered by a thin coat of turf.

'Schöne ansicht!' says the Bursch, waving his hand round, in a tone which is benevolently meant to withdraw Tom's mind from painful considerations.

'Very pretty prospect indeed. You're sure you understand that revolver thoroughly?'

The Bursch mutters to himself something about English monochrome, and assures Thunall that he is competently acquainted with the weapon, and indeed he ought to be, for having never seen one before, he has been talking and thinking of nothing else since they left Bertrich.

And why does not Tom care to look at the

prospect? Certainly not because he is afraid. He slept as soundly as ever last night, and knows not what fear means. But somehow, the glorious view reminds him of another glorious view, which he saw last summer walking by Grace Harvey's side from Tolchard's farm. And that subject he will sternly put away. He is not sure but what it might maim even him.

The likeness certainly exists, for the rock, being the same in both places, has taken the same general form, and the wanderer in Rhine-Prussia and Nassau might often fancy himself in Devon or Cornwall. True, here there is no sea and there no Moselkopf raises its huge crater-cone far above the uplands, all golden in the level sun. But that brown Tannus far away, or that brown Hindsrück opposite, with its deep-wooded gorges layered with level gleams of light across black gullies of shade, might well be Duntun, or Chinnarrow moor itself, high over Alverton town, which he will see no more. True, in Cornwall there would be no slag cliffs of the Falkenley beneath his feet, as black and blasted at this day as when you or hard meadow was the mouth of hell, and the south-west wind dashed the great flame against the under-cliff behind, and forged it into walls of time-defying glass. But that might well be Alva stream, that lashed in its green gulf far below, winding along toward the green gulf of the Moselle—he will look at it no more, lest he see Grace herself come to him across the down, to chide him, with sad and horror, for the dark deed which he has come to do.

And yet he does not wish to kill Stangrave. He would like to 'wing him'. He must punish him for his conduct to Mary, punish him for last night's insult. It is a necessity, but a disagreeable one, he would be sorry to go to the war with that man's blood upon his hand. He is sorry that he is out of practice.

'A year ago I could have counted on hitting him where I liked. I trust I shall not blunder against his vitals now. However, if I do, he is himself to blame.'

The thought that Stangrave may kill him never crosses his mind. Of course, out of six shots, fired at all distances from forty paces to fifteen, one may hit him. But as for being killed—

Tom's heart is hardened, melted again and again this summer for a moment, only to freeze again. He all but believes that he bears a charmed life. All the miraculous escapes of his past years, instead of making him believe in a living, guiding, protecting Father, have become to that proud hard heart the excuse for a deliberate, though unconscious, atheism. His fall is surely near.

At last Stangrave and his second appear. Stangrave is haggard, not from fear, but from misery, and rage, and self-condemnation. This is the end of all his fine resolves! Pah! what use in them? What use in being a martyr in this world? All men are liars, and all women too!

Tom and Stangrave stand a little apart from each other, while one of the seconds paced the distance. He steps out away from them, across the crater floor, carrying Tom's revolver in his hand, till he reaches the required point, and turns.

He turns but not to come back. Without a gesture or an exclamation which could explain his proceedings, he faces about once more, and rushes up the slope as hard as legs and wind permitted.

Tom is confounded with astonishment. Either the Bursch is seized with terror at the whole business, or he covets the much-admired revolver, in either case he is making off with it before the owner's eyes.

'Stop! Hillo! Stop this!' He's got my pistol! and away goes Thurnall in chase after the Bursch, who, never looking behind, never sees that he is followed. While Stangrave and the second Bursch look on with wide eyes.

Now the Bursch is a 'gymnast,' and a capital runner, and so is Tom likewise, and brilliant is the race upon the Falkenbohe. But the victory, after a while, becomes altogether a question of wind, for it was all up hill. The crater, being one of 'explosion, and not of elevation,' as the geologists would say, does not slope downward again, save on one side, from its outer lip, and Tom and the Bursch were breasting a fair hill, after they had emerged from the 'kessel' below.

Now the Bursch had had too much Thronerbofberger the night before; and possibly, as Burschen will in their vacations, the night before that also, whereby his diaphragm surrendered at discretion, while his heels were yet unconquered, and he suddenly felt a strong gripe, and a stronger kick, which jelled him over on the turf.

The hapless youth, who fancied himself alone upon the mountain tops, reared more incoherently, and Tom, too angry in haste, and too hurried to punish, tore the revolver out of his grasp, whereon one barrel exploded—

'I have done it now!'

No. The ball had luckily buried itself in the ground.

Tom turned, to rush down hill again, and meet the impatient Stangrave.

Crack—whing—g—g!

'A bullet!'

Yes! And, prodigy on prodigy, up the hill towards him charged, as he would upon a whole army, a Prussian gendarme, with bayonet fixed.

Tom sat down upon the mountain-side, and burst into inextinguishable laughter, while the gendarme came charging up, right toward his very nose.

But up to his nose he charged not, for his wind was short, and the noise of his roaring went before him. Moreover, he knew that Tom had a revolver, and was a 'mad Englishman.'

Now he was not afraid of Tom, or of a whole army, but he was a man of drills and of orders, of rules and of precedents, as a Prussian gendarme

ought to be; and for the modes of attacking infantry, cavalry, and artillery, man, woman, and child, thief and poacher, stray pig, or even stray wolf, he had drill and orders sufficient. But for attacking a Colt's revolver, none.

Moreover, for arresting all manner of riotous Burschen, drunken bores, French red republicans, Mazzini-hunted Italian refugees, suspect Polish incendiaries, or other *feras nature*, he had precedent and regulation. But for arresting a mad Englishman, none. He held fully the opinion of his superiors that there was no saying what an Englishman might not, could not, and would not do. He was a sphinx, a chimera, a humanie broke loose, who took unintelligible delight in getting wet, and dirty, and tired, and starved, and all but killed, and called the same 'taking exercise.'—who would see everything that nobody ever cared to see, and who knew mysteriously everything about everywhere, whose deeds were like his opinions, utterly subversive of all constituted order in heaven and earth, being, probably, the inhabitant of another planet, possibly the man in the moon himself, who had been turned out, having made his native satellite too hot to hold him. All that was to be done with him was to inquire whether his passport was correct, and then (with a due regard to self-preservation) to endure his vagaries in jutting wonder.

So the gendarme paused panting, and not daring to approach, walked slowly and solemnly round Tom, keeping the point of his bayonet carefully towards him, and roaring at intervals—

'You have murdered the young man!'

'But I have not!' said Tom. 'Look and see!'

'But I saw him fall!'

'But he has got up again, and run away!'

'So! Then where is your passport?'

That one other fact, cognizable by the mind of a Prussian gendarme, remained as an anchor for his brains under the new and trying circumstances, and he used it. 'Here!' quoth Tom, pulling it out.

The gendarme stepped cautiously forward.

'Don't be frightened. I'll stick it on your bayonet-point,' and suiting the action to the word, Tom caught the bayonet-point, put the passport on it, and pulled out his cigar-case.

'Mad Englishman!' murmured the gendarme.

'So! The passport is correct. But der Herr must consider himself under arrest. Der Herr will give up his death-instrument.'

'By all means,' says Tom, and gives up the revolver.

The gendarme takes it very cautiously, meditates awhile how to carry it, sticks the point of his bayonet into its muzzle, and lifts it aloft.

'Schon! Das kriegt! Has der Herr any more death-instruments?'

'Dorrens!' says Tom, and begins fumbling in his pockets, from whence he pulls a case of surgical instruments, another of mathematical ones, another of lancets, and a knife with unnumerable blades, saws, and pickers, every one of which he opens carefully, and then spreads

the whole fearful array upon the grass before him.

The gendarme scratches his head over those too plain proofs of some tremendous conspiracy.

'So! *Mazymust* have a dozen hands! He is surely Palmerston himself; or at least Hecker, or Mazzini!' murmurs he as he meditates how to stow them all.

He thinks now that the revolver may be safe elsewhere, and that the knife will do best on the bayonet-point. So he nudges the revolver.

Bang goes barrel number two, and the ball goes into the turf between his feet.

'You will shoot yourself soon at that rate,' says Tom.

'So! *Der Herr* speaks German like a native,' says the gendarme, growing complimentary in his perplexity. 'Perhaps *der Herr* would be so good as to carry his death-instruments himself and attend on the *Herr Polizeirath*, who is waiting to see him.'

'By all means!' And Tom picks up his tackle, while the prudent gendarme reloads, and Tom marches down the hill, the gendarme following, with his bayonet disagreeably near the small of Tom's back.

'Don't stumble! Look out for the stones, or you'll have that skewer through me!'

'So! *Der Herr* speaks German like a native,' says the gendarme, civilly. 'It is certainly *der Palmerston*,' thinks he, 'his manners are so polite.'

Once at the crater edge, and able to see into the pit, the mystery is, in part at least, explained for there stand not only Stangrave and Bursch number two, but a second gendarme, two elderly gentlemen, two ladies, and a black boy.

One is Lieutenant D—, by his white mustache. He is lecturing the Bursch, who looks sufficiently foolish. The other is a jolly and awful-looking personage in uniform, evidently the *Polizeirath* of those parts, armed with the just terrors of the law, but Justice has, if not her eyes bandaged, at least her hands tied, for on his arm hangs Sabina, smiling, chaffing, ontreating. The *Polizeirath* smiles, bows, ogles, evidently a willing captive. Venus has disarmed Rhadamanthus, as who has Mars so often, and the sword of justice must rust in its scabbard.

Some distance behind them is Stangrave, talking in a low voice, earnestly, passionately — to whom but to Marie?

And lastly, opposite each other, and like two dogs who are uncertain whether to make friends or fight, are a gendarme and Sabina's black boy. The gendarme, with shouldered musket, is trying to look as stiff and cross as possible, being scandalised by his superior officer's defection from the path of duty, and still more by the irreverence of the black boy, who is dancing, grinning, snapping his fingers, in delight at having discovered and prevented the coming tragedy.

Tom descends, bowing courteously, apologises for having been absent when the highly distinguished gentleman arrived, and turning to the

Bursch, begs him to transmit to his friend who has run away his apologies for the absurd mistake which had led him to, etc. etc.

The *Polizeirath* looks at him with much the same blank astonishment as the gendarme had done, and at last ends by lifting up his hands, and hursting into an enormous German laugh, and no one on earth can laugh as a German can, so genially and lovingly, and with such intense self-enjoyment.

'Oh, you English! you English! You are all mad, I think! Nothing can shame you, and nothing can frighten you! *Potz!* I believe when your Guards at Alma walked into that battery, the other day, every one of them was whistling your *Jina Crow*, even after he was shot dead!' And the jolly *Polizeirath* laughed at his own joke, till the mountain rang. 'But you must leave the country, sir, indeed you must. We cannot permit such conduct here—I am very sorry.'

'I entreat you not to apologise, sir. In any case, I was going to Alfay eight o'clock, to meet the steamer for Treves. I am on my way to the war in the East, *via* Marseilles. If you would, therefore, be so kind as to allow the gendarme to return me that second revolver, which also belongs to me —'

'Give him his pistol!' shouted the magistrate. '*Potz!* Let us be rid of him at any cost, and live in peace, like honest Germans. Ah, poor Queen Victoria! What a lot! To have the government of five-and-twenty million such!'

'Not five and twenty millions,' says Sabina. 'That would include the Indies, and we no not mind too, surely, your Excellency?'

The *Polizeirath* likes to be called your Excellency, of course, or any other mighty title which does or does not belong to him, and that Sabina knows full well.

'Ah, my dear madam, how do I know that? The English ladies do every day here what no other dames would dare or dream—what then must you be at home? Ah! your poor husbands!'

'*Mr Thurnall!*' calls Marie, from behind. '*Mr Thurnall!*'

Tom comes with a quaint, dogged smile on his face.

'You see him, Mr Stangrave! You see the man who risked for me liberty, life—who rescued me from slavery, shame, suicide—who was to me a brother, a father, for years!—without whose disinterested heroism you would never have set eyes on the free which you pretend to love. And you repay him by suspicion—maudit. Apologise to him now! Ask his pardon now, here, utterly, humbly, or never speak to Marie Lavington again!'

Tom looked first at her, and then at Stangrave. Marie was convulsed with excitement, her thin cheeks were crimson, her eyes flashed very flame. Stangrave was pale—calm outwardly, but evidently not within. He was looking on the ground, in thought so intense that he hardly seemed to hear Marie. Poor fellow! he had

heard enough in the last ten minutes to boggle his brain.

At last he seemed to have strung himself for an effort, and spoke, without looking up.

'Mr Thurnall!'

'Sir!'

'I have done you a great wrong!'

'We will say no more about it, sir. It was a mistake, and I do not wish to complicate the question. My true ground of quarrel with you is your conduct to Miss Lavington. She seems to have told you her true name, so I shall call her by it.'

'What I have done, I have undone!' said Stangrave, looking up. 'If I have wronged her, I have offered to right her, if I have left her, I have sought her again, and if I left her when I knew nothing, now that I know all, I ask her here, before you, to become my wife!'

Tom looked inquiringly at Marie.

'Yes, I have told him all—all!' and she hid her face in her hands.

'Well,' said Tom, 'Mr Stangrave is a very enviable person, and the match, in a worldly point of view, is a most fortunate one for Miss Lavington, and that stupid moral of a gentleman has broken my resolve.'

'But I have not accepted him,' cried Marie, 'and I will not, unless you give me leave.'

Tom saw Stangrave's brow lower, and per-
doubly enough, at this.

'My dear Miss Lavington, as I have never been able to settle my own love affairs satisfactorily to myself, I do not feel at all competent to settle other people's. Good-bye. I shall be late for the steamer.' And, bowing to Stangrave and Marie, he turned to go.

'Sabina! stop him!' cried she, 'he is going, without even a kind word!'

'Sabina,' whispered Tom as he passed her, 'a bad business—selfish coxcomb, when his beauty goes, won't stand her temper and her slightness, but I know you and Claude will take care of the poor thing, if anything happens to me.'

'You're wrong—prejudiced—indeed!'

'Tut, tut, tut! Good-bye, you sweet little sunbeam. Good morning, gentlemen!'

And Tom hurried up the slope and out of sight, while Marie burst into an agony of weeping.

'Gone, without a kind word!'

Stangrave bit his lip, not in anger, but in mainly self-reproach.

'It is my fault, Marie! my fault! He knew me too well of old, and had too much reason to despise me! But he shall have reason no longer. He will come back, and find me worthy of you, and all will be forgotten. Again I say it, I accept your quest, for life and death. So help me God above, as I will not fail or falter, till I have won justice for you and for your race, Marie!'

He conquered how could he but conquer, for he was man and she was woman, and he looked more noble in her eyes, while he was

confessing his past weakness, than he had ever done in his proud assertion of strength.

But she spoke no word in answer. She let him take her hand, pass her arm through his, and lead her away, as one who had a right.

They walked down the hill behind the rest of the party, blest, but silent and pensive, he with the weight of the future, she with that of the past.

'It is very wonderful,' she said at last. 'Wonderful . . . that you can care for me.'

Oh, if I had known how noble you were, I should have told you all at once.'

'Perhaps I should have been as ignoble as ever,' said Stangrave, 'if that young English viscount had not put me on my mettle by his own nobleness.'

'No! no! Do not belie yourself. You know what he does not—what I would have died sooner than tell him.'

Stangrave drew the arm closer through his, and clasped the hand. Marie did not withdraw it.

'Wonderful, wonderful love!' she said, quite humbly. Her theatre passionateness had passed—

'Nothing was left of her,
Now, but pure womanly.'

'That you can love me—me, the slave, me, the scourged, the scarred. Oh, Stangrave! it is not much—not much really, only a little mark or two.'

'I will prize them,' he answered, smiling through tears, 'more than all your loveliness. I will see in them God's commandment to me, written not on tables of stone, but on fair, pure, noble flesh. My Marie! You shall have cause even to rejoice in them!'

'I glory in them now, for, without them, I never should have known all your worth.'

The next day Stangrave, Marie, and Sabina were homing home to England, while Tom Thurnall was homing to Marseilles, to vanish Eastward Ho!

He has escaped once more—but his heart is hardened still. What will his fall be like?

CHAPTER XXVIII

LAST CHRISTMAS EVE

AND now two years and more are past and gone, and all whose lot it was have come Westward. No once more, sadder and wiser men to their lives' end, save one or two, that is, from whom not even Solomon's pestle and mortar discipline would pound out the innate folly.

Frank has come home stouter and browner, as well as heartier and wiser, than he went forth. He is Valentia's husband now, and rector, not curate, of Abernethy town; and Valentia makes him a noble rector's wife.

She, too, has had her sad experiences—of

more than absent love, for when the news of Inkerman arrived, she was sitting by Lucia's deathbed, and when the ghastly list came home, and with it the news of Scoutlash 'severely wounded by a musket-ball,' she had just taken her last look of the fair face, and seen in fancy the fair spirit greeting in the eternal world the soul of him whom she loved unto the death. She had hurried out to Scutari, to nurse her brother, had seen there many a night—she best knows what she saw. She sent Scoutlash back to the Crimea, to try his chance once more, and then came home to be a mother to those three orphan children, from whom she vowed never to part. So the children went with Frank and her to Aberlona, and Valentin had learnt half a mother's duties ere she had a baby of her own.

And thus to her, as to all hearts, has the war brought a discipline from heaven.

Frank shrank at first from returning to Aberlona, when Scoutlash offered him the living on old St. Just's death. But Valentin all but commanded him, so he went—and behold, his return was a triumph.

All was understood now, all forgiven, all forgotten, save his conduct in the cholera, by the loving, honest, brave West-country hearts, and when the new married pair were rung into the town, amid cheers and greetings, flags and laurels, the first man to welcome Frank into his rectory was old Tardew.

Not a word of repentance or apology ever passed the old bull-dog's lips. He was an Englishman, and kept his opinions to himself. But he had had his lesson like the rest, two years ago, in his young daughter's death, and Frank had therefore no faster friend than old Tardew.

Frank is still as High Church as ever, and likes all pomp and circumstance of worship. Some few things he has given up, certainly, for fear of giving offence, but he might indulge them once more, if he wished, without a quarrel. For now that the people understand him, he does just what he likes. His congregation is the best in the archdeaconry, one meeting-house is dead, and the other dying. His choir is admirable, for Valentin has had the art of drawing to her all the musical talent of the tuneful West-country folk, and all that he needs, he thinks, to make his parish perfect, is to see Grace Harvey schoolmistress once more.

What can have worked the change? It is difficult to say, unless it be that Frank has found out, from cholera and hospital experiences, that his parishioners are beings of like passions with himself, and found out, too, that his business is to leave the gospel of damnation to those whose hapless lot it is to earn their bread by pandering to popular superstition, and to employ his independent position, as a free rector, in telling his people the gospel of salvation—that they have a Father in heaven.

Fattle Scoutlash comes down often to Aberlona now, and often to his Irish estates. He is going to marry the Manchester lady after all,

and to settle down, and try to be a good landlord, and use for the benefit of his tenants the sharp experience of human hearts, human sorrows, and human duty, which he gained in the Crimea two years ago.

And Major Campbell?

Look on Cathcart's Hill. A stone is there, which is the only earthly token of that great experience of all experiences which Campbell gained two years ago.

A little silk bag was found, hung round his neck, and lying next his heart. He seemed to have expected his death, for he had put a label on it—

'To be sent to Viscount Scoutlash for Miss St. Just.'

Scoutlash sent it home to Valentin, who opened it, blind with tears.

It was a note, written seven years before, but not by her, by Lucia ere her marriage. A simple invitation to dinner in Eaton Square, written for Lady Knockdown, but with a postscript from Lucia herself: 'Do come, and I will promise not to tease you as I did last night.'

That was, perhaps, the only kind or familiar word which he had ever had from his idol, and he had treasured it to the last. Women can love, as this book sets forth—but now and then men can love too, if they be men, as Major Campbell was.

And Trebooze of Trebooze?

Even Trebooze got his new lesson two years ago. Terrified into sobriety, he went into the militia, and soon took delight therein. He worked, for the first time in his life, early and late, at a work which was suited for him. He soon learnt not to swear and rage, for his men would not stand it, and not to get drunk, for his messmates would not stand it. He got into better society and better health than he ever had had before. With new self-discipline has come new self-respect, and he tells his wife frankly, that if he keeps straight henceforth, he has to thank for it his six months at Alder shot.

And Mary?

When you meet Mary in heaven, you can ask her there.

But Frank's desire, that Grace should become his schoolmistress once more, is not fulfilled.

How she worked at Scutari and at Balaklava, there is no need to tell. Why mark her out from the rest, when all did more than nobly? 'The lesson which she needed was not that which hospitals could teach, she had learnt that already. It was a deeper and more dreadful lesson still. She had set her heart on finding Tom, on righting him, on righting herself. She had to learn to be content not to find him, not to right him, not to right herself.'

And she learnt it. Fearless, unconquering, she 'trusted in God, and made no haste.' She did her work, and read her Bible, and read too, again and again, at stolen moments of rest, a book which some one lent her, and which was to her as the finding of an unknown sister—

Longfellow's *Evangeline*. She was *Evangeline*, seeking as she sought, perhaps to find as she found—'No! merciful God!' Not so! yet better so than not at all. And often and often, when a new freight of agony was landed, she looked round from bed to bed, if his face, too, might be there. And once, at Balaklava, she knew she saw him—but not on a sick-bed.

Standing beneath the window, chatting merrily with a group of officers—It was he! Could she mistake that figure, though the face was turned away?

Her head swam, her pulses beat like church bells, her eyes were ready to burst from their sockets. But—she was assisting at an operation. It was God's will, and she must endure.

When the operation was over, she darted wildly down the stairs without a word. He was gone.

Without a word she came back to her work, and possessed her soul in patience.

Inquiries, indeed, she made, as she had a right to do, but no one knew the name. She questioned, and caused to be questioned, men from Varna, from Sevastopol, from Kertch, from the Circassian coast, English, French, and Sardinian, Pole and Turk. No one had ever heard the name. She even found at last, and questioned, one of the officers who had formed that group beneath the window.

'Oh! that man! He was a Pole, Michałowski, or some such name. At least, so he said, 'till he suspected the man to be really a Russian spy.'

Grace knew that it was Tom, but she went back to her work again, and in due time went home to England.

Home, but not to Aberlona. She presented herself one day at Mark Arnsworth's house in Whitbury, and humbly begged him to obtain her a place as servant to old Dr. Thurnall. What her purpose was therein she did not explain, perhaps she hardly knew herself.

Jane, the old servant who had clung to the doctor through his reverses, was growing old and feeble, and was all the more jealous of an intruder—but Grace disarmed her.

'I do not want to interfere, I will be under your orders. I will be kitchen-maid—maid-of-all-work. I want no wages. I have brought home a little money with me, enough to last me for the little while I shall be here.'

And, by the help of Mark and Mary, she took up her abode in the old man's house, and ere a month was past she was to him as a daughter.

Perhaps she had told him all. At least, there was some deep and pure confidence between them, and yet one which, so perfect was Grace's humility, did not make old Jane jealous. Grace cooked, swept, washed, went to and fro as Jane bade her, submitted to all her grumbings and tossings, and then came at the old man's bidding to read to him every evening, her hand in his, her voice cheerful, her face full of quiet light. But her hair was becoming streaked with gray. Her face, howsoever

gentle, was sharpened, as if with continual pain. No wonder, for she had worn that belt next her heart for now two years and more, till it had almost eaten into the heart above which it lay. It gave her perpetual pain, and yet that pain was a perpetual joy—a perpetual remembrance of him, and of that walk with him from Tolehard's fidem.

Mary loved her—taunted to treat her as an equal—to call her sister—but Grace drew back lovingly, but humbly, from all advances, for she had divined Mary's secret with the quick eye of woman, she saw how Mary grew daily paler, thinner, sadder, and knew for whom she mourned. Be it so, Mary had a right to him, and she had none.

And where was Tom Thurnall all the while? No man could tell.

Mark inquired, Lord Munchamptstead inquired, great personages who had need of him at home and abroad inquired, but all in vain.

A few knew, and told Lord Munchamptstead, who told Mark, in confidence, that he had been heard of last in the Circassian mountains, about Christmas 1854, but since then all was blank. He had vanished into the infinite unknown.

Mark swore that he would come home some day, but two full years were past, and Tom came not.

The old man never seemed to regret him, never mentioned his name after a while.

'Mark,' he said once, 'remember David. Why weep for the child? I shall go to him, but he will not come to me.'

None knew, meanwhile, why the old man needed not to talk of Tom to his friends and neighbours, it was because he and Grace never talked of anything else.

So they had lived, and so they had waited, till that week before last Christmas Day, when Mellot and Staungrave made their appearance in Whitbury, and became Mark Arnsworth's guests.

The weeks slipped on. Staungrave hunted on alternate days, and on the others went with Claude, who photographed (when there was sun to do it with) Staungrave End, and Whitford Priory, interiors and exteriors, not forgetting the Staungrave monuments in Whitbury Church, and sat, too, for many a pleasant hour with the good doctor, who took to him at once, as all men did. It seemed to give fresh life to the old man to listen to Tom's dearest friend. To him, as to Grace, he could talk openly about the lost son, and live upon the memory of his prowess and his virtues, and ere the week was out, the doctor, and Grace too, had heard a hundred gallant feats, to tell all which would add another volume to this book.

And Grace stood silently by the old man's chair, and drank all in without a smile, without a sigh, but not without full many a prayer.

It is the blessed Christmas Eve, the light 14

falling fast, when down the High Street comes the mighty Roman-nosed rat-tail which carries Mark's portly bulk, and by him Stangrave, on a right good horse.

They shoo on side by side—not home, but to the doctor's house. For every hunting evening Mark's groom meets him at the doctor's door to lead the horses home, while he, before he will take his bath and dress, brings to his blind friend the gossip of the field, and details to him every joke, fence, find, kill, hap, and mishap of the last six hours.

The old man, meanwhile, is sitting quietly, with Claude by him, talking as Claude can talk. They are not speaking of Tim just now, but the eloquent artist's conversation suits well enough the temper of the good old man, yearning after fresh knowledge, even on the brink of the grave—but too feeble now, in body, and in mind, to do more than listen. Claude is telling him about the late Photographic Exhibition, and the old man listens with a triumphant smile to wonders which he will never behold with mortal eyes. At last

'This is very pleasant to feel surer and surer, day by day, that one is not needed, that science moves forward swift and sure, under a higher guidance than one's own, that the sacred torch-race never can stand still, that He has taken the lamp out of old and failing hands, only to put it into young and brave ones, who will not falter till they reach the goal.'

Then he lies back again, with closed eyes, waiting for more facts from Claude.

'How beautiful!' says Claude. 'I must compliment you, sir—to see the childlike heart thus still beating fresh beneath the honours of the gray head, without envy, without vanity, without ambition, welcoming every new discovery, rejoicing to see the young outstripping them.'

'And what credit, sir, to us? Our knowledge did not belong to us, but to Him who made us, and the universe, and our sons' belonged to Him likewise. If they be wiser than their teachers, it is only because they, like their teachers, have made His testimonies their study. When we rejoice in the progress of science, we rejoice not in ourselves, not in our children, but in God our Instructor.'

And all the while, hidden in the gloom behind, stands Grace, her arms folded over her bosom, watching every movement of the old man, and listening, too, to every word. She can understand but little of it—but she loves to hear it, for it reminds her of Tom Thynall. Above all she loves to hear about the mirrors' case, a mystery inseparable in her thoughts from him who first showed her its wonders.

At last the old man speaks again—

'Ah! How delighted my boy will be when he returns, to find that so much has been done during his absence.'

Claude is silent awhile, startled.

'You are surprised to hear me speak so confidently? Well, I can only speak as I feel. I

have had, for some days past, a presentiment—you will think me, doubtless, weak for yielding to it. I am not superstitious.'

'Not so,' said Claude, 'but I cannot deny that such things as presentiments may be possible. However miraculous they may seem, are they so very much more so than the daily fact of memory? I can as little guess why we can remember the past as why we may not, at times, be able to foresee the future.'

'True. You speak, if not like a physician, yet like a metaphysician, so you will not laugh at me, and compel the weak old man and his fancy to take refuge with a girl—who is not weak. Grace, darling, you think still that he is coming?'

She came forward and leaned over him.

'Yes,' she half-whispered. 'He is coming soon to us—or else we are soon going to him. It may mean that, sir. Perhaps it is better that it should.'

'It matters little, child, if he be near, as near he is. I tell you, Mr. Mellot, this conviction has become so intense during the last week, that—that I believe I should not be thrown off my balance if he entered at this moment. I feel him so near me, sir, that—that I could swear, did not I know how the weak brain imitates expected sounds, that I heard his footstep outside now.'

'I heard horse's footsteps,' says Claude. 'Ah, there come Stangrave and our host.'

'I heard them—but I heard my boy's likewise,' said the old man quietly.

The next minute he seemed to have forgotten the fancy, as the two hunters entered, and Mark began open-mouthed as usual—

'Well, Ned! In good company, eh? That's right. Mortal cold I am! We shall have a white Christmas, I expect. Snow's coming.'

'What sport?' asked the doctor blandly.

'Oh! Nothing new. Bothered about Sudric stone till one got away at last with an old fox, and over the downs into the vale. I think Mr. Stangrave liked it.'

'Mr. Stangrave likes the vale better than the vale likes him. I have fallen into two brooks following, Claude, to the delight of all the desperate Englishmen.'

'Oh! You rode straight enough, sir! You must pay for your fun in the vale—but then you have your fun. But there were a good many falls the last ten minutes—ground heavy, and pace awful, old rat-tail had enough to do to hold his own. Saw one fellow ride bang into a pollard-willow, when there was an open gate close to him—cut his cheek open and lay, but some one said it was only Smith of Ewebury, so I rode on.'

'I hope you English showed more pity to your wounded friends in the Crimea,' quoth Stangrave, laughing. 'I wanted to stop and pick him up—but Mr. Arnsworth would not hear of it.'

'Oh, sir, if it had been a stranger like you, half the field would have been round you in a

minute—but Smith don't count—he breaks his neck on purpose three days a week. By the bye, doctor, got a good story of him for you. Suspected his keepers last month. Slips out of bed at two in the morning, into his own covers, and blazes away for an hour. Nobody comes. Home to bed, and tries the same thing next night. Not a soul comes near him. Next morning has up keepers, watchers, beaters, the whole posse, and "Now, you rascals! I've been poaching my own covers two nights running, and you've been all drunk in bed. There are your wages to the last penny, and vanish! I'll be my own keeper henceforth, and never let me see your faces again!"

The old doctor laughed cheerily. "Well, but did you kill your tax?"

"All right—but it was a burster—just what I always tell Mr. Stangrave. Afternoon runs are good runs, pretty sure of an empty fox and a good scent after one o'clock."

"Exactly," answered a fresh voice from behind, "and fox-hunting is an epitome of human life. You chop in lose your first two or three—but keep up your pluck, and you'll run into one before sundown, and I seem to have run into a whole cartful!"

All looked round, for all knew that voice.

Yes! There he was, in bodily flesh and blood, thin, mallow, backed to the eyes, dressed in ragged sailor's clothes—but Tom himself.

Grace uttered a long, low, soft, half-laughing cry, full of the delicious agony of sudden relief, a cry as of a mother when her child is born, and then slipped from the room past the unheeding Tom, who had no eyes but for his father. Straight up to the old man he went, took both his hands, and spoke in the old cheerful voice—

"Well, my dear old daddy! So you seem to have expected me, and gathered, I suppose, all my friends to bid me welcome. I'm afraid I have made you very anxious—but it was not my fault, and I knew you would be certain I should come at last, eh?"

"My son! my son! Let me feel whether thou be my very son Esau or not!" murmured the old man, hiding half-playful expression in the words of Scripture, for feelings beyond his failing powers.

Tom knelt down—and the old man passed his hands in silence over and over the forehead, and face, and beard, while all stood silent.

Mark Arnsworth burst out blubbing like a great boy—

"I said so! I always said so! The devil could not kill him, and God wouldn't!"

"You won't go away again, dear boy? I'm getting old—and forgetful, and I don't think I could hear it again, you see."

Tom saw that the old man's powers were failing. "Never again, as long as I live, daddy!" said he, and then, looking round—"I think that we are too many for my father. I will come and shake hands with you all presently."

"No, no," said the doctor. "You forget that I cannot see you, and so must only listen to you."

It will be a delight to hear your voice and theirs;—they all love you!"

A few moments of breathless congratulation followed, during which Mark had seized Tom by both his shoulders, and held him admiringly at arm's length.

"Look at him, Mr. Mellot! Mr. Stangrave! Look at him!" As they said of Liberty Wilkes, you might rob him, strip him, and hit him over London Bridge—and you find him the next day in the same place, with a lined coat, a sword by his side, and money in his pocket! But how did you come in without our knowing?"

"I waited outside, afraid of what I might hear—for how could I tell?" and he, lowering his voice, "but when I saw you go in, I knew all was right, and followed you, and when I heard my father laugh, I knew that he could bear a little surprise. But, Stangrave, did you say? Ah! this is too delightful, old fellow! How's Marie and the children?"

Stangrave, who was very uncertain as to how Tom would receive him, had been about to make his *amuse honorable* in a fashion grateful, magnificent, and, as he expressed it afterwards laughingly to Thornall himself, "altogether highfalutin!" but whatsoever chivalrous and courtly words had arranged themselves upon the tip of his tongue, were so utterly upset by Tom's matter-of-fact *bonhomie*, and by the cool way in which he took for granted the fact of his marriage, that he burst out laughing, and caught both Tom's hands in his—

"It is delightful, and all it needs to make it perfect is to have Marie and the children here."

"How many?" asked Tom.

"Two."

"Is she as beautiful as ever?"

"More so, I think."

"I dare say you're right, you might to know best, certainly."

"You shall judge for yourself. She is in London at this moment."

"Tom!" says his father, who has been sitting quietly, his face covered in his handkerchief, listening to all, while holy tears of gratitude steal down his face.

"Sir!"

"You have not spoken to Grace yet!"

"Grace!" cries Tom, in a very different tone from that in which he had yet spoken.

"Grace Harvey, my boy. She was in the room when you came in."

"Grace! Grace! What is she doing here?"

"Nursing him, like an angel as she is!" said Mark.

"She is my daughter now, Tom, and has been these twelve months past."

Tom was silent, as one astonished.

"If she is not, she will be soon," said he quietly, between his clenched teeth. "Gentlemen, if you'll excuse me for five minutes, and see to my father"—and he walked straight out of the room, closing the door behind him to find Grace waiting in the passage.

She was trembling from head to foot, stepping

to and fro, her hands and face all but convulsed, her left hand over her bosom, clutching at her dress, which seemed to have been just disarranged, her right drawn back, holding something, her lips parted, struggling to speak, her great eyes opened to preternatural wideness, fixed on him with an intensity of eagerness, — was she mad?

At last words bubbled forth. 'There! there! There it is! — the belt! your belt! Take it! take it, I say!'

He stood silent and wondering, she thrust it into his hand.

'Take it! I have carried it for you worn it next my heart, till it has all but eaten into my heart. To Vania, and you were not there! — Sventur, Balaklava, and you were not there! — I bound it only a week after! — I told you I should! and you were gone! (Noel, not to wait! And Mr. Amisworth has the money — every farthing and the gold — he has had it these two years!'

I would give you the belt myself, and now I have done it, and the snake is unclasped from my heart at last, at last, at last!'

Her arms dropped by her side, and she burst into an agony of tears.

Tom caught her in his arms — but she put him back, and looked up in his face again.

'Promise me!' she said, in a low clear voice, 'promise me this one thing only, as you are a gentleman, as you have a man's pity, a man's gratitude, in you —'

'Anything!'

'Promise me that you will never ask, or seek to know, who had that ball!'

'I promise! — but, Grace —'

'Then my work is over,' said she in a calm collected voice. 'Amen! So lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. Good bye, Mr. Thurnall! I must go and pack up my few things now. You will forgive and forget!'

'Grace!' cried Tom, 'stay!' and he girdled her in a grasp of iron. 'You and I never part more in this life, perhaps not in all lives to come!'

'No! — I! let me! — I am not worthy of you!'

'I have heard that once already, the only folly which ever came out of those sweet lips. No, (No! — I love you, as much as I love but once, and you shall not refuse me! You will not have the heart, Grace! You will not dare, Grace! For you have begun the work, and you must finish it!'

'Work! What work?'

'I don't know,' said Tom. 'How should I? I want you to tell me that!'

She looked up in his face, puzzled. His old self-confident look seemed strangely past away.

'I will tell you,' he said, 'because I love you. I don't like to show it to them, but I've been frightened, Grace, for the first time in my life!'

She paused for an explanation, but she did not struggle to escape from him.

'Frightened, beat, run to earth myself,

though I talked so bravely of running others to earth just now. (Grace, I've been in prison!'

'In prison! In a Russian prison! Oh, Mr. Thurnall!'

'Ay, Grace, I'd tried everything but that, and I could not stand it. Death was a joke to that. Not to be able to get out! — To rage up and down for hours like a wild beast, — long to fly at one's gaoler and tear his heart out, — beat one's head against the wall in the hope of knocking one's brains out, — anything to get rid of that horrid notion, night and day over one — I can't get out!'

Grace had never seen him so excited.

'But you are safe now,' said she soothingly.

'Oh, those brutal Russians!'

'But it was not Russians! — if it had been, I could have borne it. That was all in my bargain, the fair chance of war, but to be shot up by a rustlike! at the very outset, too by a boorish villain of a khin, on a drunken suspicion, — a fellow whom I was trying to save, and who wouldn't, or wouldn't, or damn't under stand me. Oh, Grace I was caught in my own trap! I went out full blown with self conceit. Never was any one so cunning as I was to be! — Such a game as I was going to play, and make my fortune by it! And this brute to stop me short — to make a fool of me — to keep me there eighteen months threatening to cut my head off once a quarter, and wouldn't understand me, let me talk with the tongue of the old serpent!'

'He did not stop you — God stopped you!'

'You're right, Grace, I saw that at last! I found out that I had been lying for years which was the stronger. God or I, I found out I had been lying whether I could not do well enough without Him — and there I found that I could not, Grace, could not! I felt like a child who had marched off from home, fancying it can find its way, and is lost at once! I felt like a lost child in Aushdu once, for one moment — but not as I felt in that prison — for I had not heard you, Grace, then! I did not know that I had a Father in heaven, who had been looking after me, when I fancied that I was looking after myself, — I don't half believe it now — If I did, I should not have lost my nerve as I have done! — Grace, I dare hardly stir about now, lest some harm should come to me! I fancy at every turn, what if that chimney fell? what if that horse kicked out? — and, Grace, you, and you only, can cure me of my new cowardice! I said in that prison, and all the way home, — If I can but find her! let her but see her — ask her — let her teach me, and I shall be sure! Let her teach me, and I shall be brave again! Teach me, Grace! and forgive me!'

Grace was looking at him with her great soft eyes opening slowly, like a startled hound's, as if the wonder and delight were too great to be taken in at once. The last words unlocked her lips.

'Forgive you? What? Do you forgive me?'

'You! It is I am the brute, ever to have suspected you! My conscience told me all along I was a brute! And you — have you not proved

it to me in this last minute, Grace!—proved to me that I am not worthy to kiss the dust from off your feet!’

Grace lay silent in his arms but her eyes were fixed upon him, her hands were folded on her bosom, her lips moved as if in prayer.

He put back her long tresses tenderly, and looked into her deep glorious eyes.

‘There! I have told you all. Will you forgive my baseness, and take me, and teach me, about this Father in heaven, through poverty and wealth, for better, for worse, as my wife my wife?’

She leapt up at him suddenly as if waking from a dream, and wreathed her arms about his neck.

‘Oh, Mr Thurnall! my dear, brave, wise, wonderful Mr Thurnall! come home again!—home to God!—and home to me! I am not worthy! Too much happiness, too much, too much—but you will forgive, will you not,—and forget—forget!’

And so the old heart passed away from THOMAS THURNALL and instead of it grew up a heart like his father’s, even the heart of a little child.

THE END

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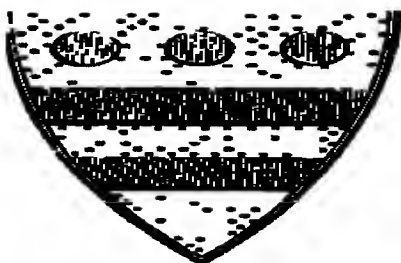
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HEREWARD THE WAKE

‘LAST OF THE ENGLISH’



HEREWARD THE WAKE

'LAST OF THE ENGLISH'

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY

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TO THOMAS WRIGHT, ESQ, F S A, ETC ETC

MY DEAR WRIGHT,

Thus does Hereward, the hero of your youth, reappear at last in a guise fitted for a modern drawing-room. To you is due whatever new renown he may win for himself in that new field. You first disinterred him, long ago, when scarcely a hand or foot of him was left standing out from beneath the dust of ages. You taught me, since then, how to furlish his rusty harness, botch his hursten saddle, and send him forth once more, upon the ghost of his gallant mare. Truly he should feel obliged to you, and though we cannot believe that the last infirmity of noble minds endures beyond the grave, or that any touch of his old vanity still stains the spirit of the mighty Wake, yet we will please ourselves --why should we not!-- with the fancy that he is as grateful to you as I am this day.

Yours faithfully,

C. KINGSLEY.

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HERWARD THE WAKE

'LAST OF THE ENGLISH'

PRELUDE

OF THE FEN

THE heroic deeds of highlanders, both in these islands and elsewhere, have been told in verse and prose, and not more often, nor more loudly, than they deserve. But we must remember, now and then, that there have been heroes like wise in the lowland, and in the fen. Why, however, poets have so seldom sung of them, why no historian, save Mr Motley in his *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, has condescended to tell the tale of their mighty deeds, is a question not difficult to answer.

In the first place, they have been fewer in number. The lowlands of the world, being the richest spots, have been generally the soonest conquered, the soonest civilised, and therefore the soonest taken out of the sphere of romance and wild adventure into that of order and law, hard work and common sense, as well as—too often—into the sphere of slavery, cowardice, luxury, and ignoble greed. The lowland populations, for the same reasons, have been generally the first to deteriorate, though not on account of the vices of civilisation. The vices of incivilisation are far worse, and far more destructive of human life, and it is just because they are so, that rude tribes deteriorate physically less than polished nations. In the savage struggle for life, none but the strongest, healthiest, cunningest, have a chance of living, prospering and propagating their race. In the civilised state, on the contrary, the weakest and the silliest, protected by law, religion, and humanity, have their chance likewise, and transmit to their offspring their own weakness or silliness. In these islands, for instance, at the time of the Norman Conquest, the average of man was doubtless superior, both in body and mind, to the average of man now, simply because the weaklings could not have lived at all; and the rich and delicate beauty, in which the women of the Eastern Counties still surpass all other races in these isles, was doubtless far more common in proportion to the numbers of the population.

Another reason why lowland heroes 'carent vate sacro,' is that the lowlands and those who live in them are wanting in the poetic and romantic elements. There is in the lowland none of that background of the unknown, fantastic, magical, terrible, perpetually feeding curiosity and wonder, which still remains in the Scottish highlands, and which, when it disappears from thence, will remain embalmed for ever in the pages of Walter Scott. Against that half-magical background his heroes stand out in vivid relief, and justly so. It was not put there by him for stage purposes, it was there as a fact, and the men of whom he wrote were conscious of it, were moulded by it, were not ashamed of its influence. For nature among the mountains is too fierce, too strong for man. He cannot conquer her, and she awes him. He cannot dig down the cliffs, or chain the storm blasts, and his fear of them takes bodily shape. He begins to people the weird places of the earth with weird beings, and sees nixes in the dark fens as he fishes by night, dwarfs in the caves where he digs, half-trembling, morsels of iron and copper for his weapons, witches and demons on the snow-blast which overwhelms his herd and his hut, and in the dark clouds which brood on the untrodden mountain peak. He lives in fear and yet, if he be a valiant-hearted man, his fears do him little harm. They may break out, at times, in witch manias, with all their horrible suspicions, and thus breed cruelty, which is the child of fear; but on the whole they rather produce in man thoughtfulness, reverence, a sense, confused yet precious, of the boundless importance of the unseen world. His superstitious develop his imagination, the moving accidents of a wild life call out in him sympathy and pathos, and the mountaineer becomes instinctively a poet.

The lowlander, on the other hand, has his own strength, his own 'virtues,' or manfulnesses, in the good old sense of the word; but they are not for the most part picturesque, or even poetical.

He finds out, soon enough for his weal and his bane, that he is stronger than nature and right tyrannously and irreverently he lords it

over her, clearing, delving, dyking, building, without fear or shame. He knows of no natural force greater than himself, save an occasional thunderstorm, and against that, as he grows more cunning, he ensures his crops. Why should he reverence nature? Let him use her, and live by her. One cannot blame him. Man was sent into the world (so says the *Scopdaro*) to fill and subdue the earth. But he was sent into the world for other purposes also, which the lowlander is but too apt to forget. With the awe of nature, the awe of the unseen dies out in him. Meeting with no visible superior, he is apt to become not merely impious and irreverent, but somewhat of a sensualist and an atheist. The sense of the beautiful dies out in him more and more. He has little or nothing around him to refine or lift up his soul, and unless he meet with a religion, and with a civilisation which can deliver him, he may sink into that dull brutality which is too common among the lowest classes of the English lowlands, and remain for generations gilded with the strength and industry of the ox, and with the courage of the lion, but, alas! with the intellect of the former and the self-restraint of the latter.

Nevertheless, there may be a period in the history of a lowland race when they, too, become historic for a while. There was such a period for the men of the Eastern and Central Counties for they proved it by their deeds.

When the men of Wessex, the once conquering, and even to the last the most civilised, race of Britain, fell at Hastings once and for all, and struck no second blow, then the men of the Danelagh disdained to yield to the Norman invader. For seven long years they held their own, not knowing, like true Englishmen, when they were beaten, and fought on desperate, till there were none left to fight. Then bones lay white on every island in the fens, then corpses rotted on gallows beneath every Norman keep, then few survivors crawled into manasteries, with eyes pucked out, hands and feet cut off, or took to the wild wood as strong outlaws, like their successors and representatives, Robin Hood, Scarlet, and Little John, Adam Bell, and Glyn of the Clough, and William of Clonteske. But they never really bent their necks to the Norman yoke, they kept alive in their hearts that proud spirit of personal independence which they brought with them from the moors of Denmark and the dales of Norway, and they kept alive, too, though in abeyance for a while, those free institutions which were without a doubt the germs of our British liberty.

They were a changed folk since first they settled in that Danelagh, - since first in the days of King Beorntrix, 'in the year 787, three ships of Northmen came from Hferetha land, and the king's reeve rode to the place and would have driven them up to the kugg's town, for he knew not what men they were' but they slew him there and then', and after that the Saxons and Angles began to find out to their little bale

what men they were, those fierce Vikings out of the dark north-east.

But they had long ceased to burn farms, sack convents, torture monks for gold, and slay every human being they met, in mere Berserker lust of blood. No Barnakill could now earn his meknamo by murdering his comrades, as they tossed the children on their spear-points, to 'Na kill the hams'. Gradually they had settled down on the land, intermarried with the Angles and Saxons, and colonised all England north and east of Wathing Street (a rough line from London to Chester), as far as the Tees.¹ Gradually they had deserted Thor and Odm for 'the white Christ', had their own priests and bishops, and built their own minsters. The convents which the fathers had destroyed, the sums, or at least the goldsmiths, rebuilt, and often casting away sword and axe, they entered them as monks themselves, and Peterborough, Ely, and above all Crowland, destroyed by them in Alfred's time with a horrible destruction, had become then holy places, where they decked the altars with gold and jewels, with silks from the far East, and furs from the far North, and where, as in sacred fortresses, they, and the liberty of England with them, made their last manful stand.

For a while they had been lords of all England. The Anglo-Saxon time was wearing out. The men of Wessex, priest-ridden and enslaved by their own aristocracy, quailed before the free Norsemen, among whom was not a single serf. The God-descended line of Cerdic and Alfred was exhausted. Vain, incapable, profligate kings, the tools of such prelates as Odo and Dunstan, were no match for such wild heroes as Thorkill the Tall, or Olaf Trygvasson, or Swend Forkbeard. The Danes had gradually scored not only their own Danelagh and Northumbria, but great part of Wessex. Vast sums of Danegelt were yearly sent out of the country to buy off the fresh invasions which were perpetually threatened. Then Ethelred the Unready, or, rather Evil counsel, advised himself to fulfil his

¹ For the distribution of Danish and Norwegian names in England, and the prevalence, north of the Danelagh, from Tees to Forth, of names neither Scandinavian nor Celtic, but purely Anglo-Saxon, consult the Rev Isaac Taylor's book, *Words and Places*. But it is evident, meanwhile, that these names represent for the most part, if not altogether, the Danish and Norse settlement at the end of the ninth century, but that the Scandinavian element was further strengthened by the free men who conquered England under Sweyn and Canute, at the beginning of the eleventh century. These men seem to have become not so much settlers of great lands as an intrusive military aristocracy, who gave few or no vassals to estates, but amalgamated themselves rapidly by marriage with the remnants of that English nobility which was destroyed at the battle of Assington. This fact explains the number of purely Anglo-Saxon names to be met with among Hereward's companions. Some of them, like 'Godric of Corby,' themselves with English names, held manors with Danish ones, even in that part of Lincolnshire where the Scandinavian element was strongest. In fact the aristocracy and the two races had been so well assimilated, not merely in the Danelagh, but in the whole of the north and east of England, that the Saxons and Angles began to find out to their little bale

name, and the curse which Dunstan had pronounced against him at the baptismal font. By his counsel the men of Wessex rose against the unrespecting Danes, and on St. Bruce's Eve, A.D. 1002, murdered them all, or nearly all, man, woman, and child. It may be that they only did to the children as the fathers had done to them, but the deed was 'worse than a crime, it was a mistake.' The Danes of the Danelagh and Northumbria, their brethren of Denmark and Norway, the Orkneys and the east coast of Ireland, remained unharmed. A mighty host of Vikings poured from thence into England the very next year, under Swend Forkbeard and the great Canute, and after thirteen fearful campaigns came the great battle of Assingdon in Essex, where 'Canute had the victory, and all the English nation fought against him, and all the nobility of the English race was there destroyed.'

That same year saw the mysterious death of Edmund Ironside, the last man of Cerdic's race worthy of the name. For the next twenty-five years Danish kings ruled from the Forth to the Land's End.

A noble figure he was, that great and wise Canute, the friend of the famous Godiva, and Leofric, Godiva's husband, and Godwin Ulfbiothsson, and Seward Digre, trying to expiate by justice and mercy the dark deeds of his hindstained youth, trying (and not in vain) to blend the two races over which he ruled, rebuilding the churches and monasteries which his father had destroyed, bringing back in state to Canterbury the body of Archbishop Elphege—not unjustly called by the Saxons martyr and saint—whom Tall Thorkill's men had murdered with beef bones and ox skulls, because he would not give up to them the money destined for God's poor, remarking, as every child has heard, his housewives' flattery by setting his chain on the hump of this rising tide, and then laying his golden crown, in token of humility, on the high altar of Winchester, never to wear it more. In Winchester he has homes unto this day, or what of them the civil wars have left, and by them he the bones of his son Harthacnut in whom, as in his half brother Harold Harefoot before him, the Danish power fell to swift decay, by insolence and drink and civil war, while with the Danish power England fell to pieces likewise.

Canute had divided England into four great earldoms, each ruled, under him, by a jarl, or earl, a Danish, not a Saxon title.

At his death in 1036 the earldoms of Northumbria and East Anglia—the more strictly Danish parts—were held by a true Danish hero, Seward Bunn, *alias* Digre, 'the Stout,' conqueror of Maelket and son of the Fairy Bear; proving his descent, men said, by his pointed and hairy ears.

Mercia, the great central plateau of England, was held by Earl Leofric, husband of the famous Lady Godiva.

Wessex, which Canute had at first kept in his

own hands, had passed into those of the famous Earl Godwin, the then ablest man in England. Possessed of boundless tact and cunning, gifted with an eloquence which seems from the accounts remaining of it to have been rather that of a Greek than an Englishman, and married to Canute's niece,¹ he was fitted, alike by fortunes and by talents, to be the king-maker which he became.

Such a system may have worked well as long as the brain of a hero was there to overlook it all. But when that brain was turned to dust, the history of England became, till the Norman Conquest, little more than the history of the rivalries of the two great houses of Godwin and Leofric.

Leofric had the first success in king-making. He, though bearing a Saxon name, seems to have been the champion of the Danish party, and of Canute's son, or reputed son, Harold Harefoot, and he succeeded, by the help of the Danes north of Thames, and the fishermen of London, which city was more than half Danish in those days, in setting his puppet on the throne. But the blood of Canute had exhausted itself. Within seven years Harold Harefoot and Harthacnut, who succeeded him, had died as fully as they lived, and Godwin's turn had come.

He, though married to a Danish princess, and acknowledging his Danish connection by the Norse names which were borne by his three most famous sons, Harold, Sweyn, and Tostig, constituted himself (with a sound patriotic instinct) the champion of the men of Wessex and the house of Cerdic. He had probably counsel, or at least allowed, to be murdered, Alfred the Etheling, King Athelred's son and heir-apparent, when he was supporting the claims of Harthacnut against Harefoot, he now tried to atone for that crime (if indeed he actually committed it) by placing Alfred's youngest brother on the throne, to become at once his king, his son-in-law, and his puppet.

It had been well, perhaps, for England, had Godwin's power over Edward been even more complete than it actually was. The 'Confessor' was, if we are to believe the monks, unmixed virtue and piety, meekness and magnanimity, a model ruler of men. No wonder, therefore, that (according to William of Malmesbury) the happiness of his times (inward as he was both for miracles and the spirit of prophecy) was revealed in a dream to Brithnot, bishop of Winton, who made it public, for meditating in King Canute's time on the near extinction of the

¹ The *Archæological Journal*, in vol. xi and vol. xii, contains two excellent articles on the Life and Death of Earl Godwin, from the pen of that able antiquary, E. A. Freeman, but happily the facts of Godwin's life have been more carefully investigated, and his character more fully judged, than by any author of whom I am aware, and I am the more bound to draw attention to these articles, because some years since I had a little paper controversy with Mr. Freeman on this very subject. I have now the pleasure of saying that he has proved himself to have been in the right, while I was in the wrong.

royal race of the English, he was rapt up on high, and saw St. Peter consecrating Edward king. 'His ohaste life also was pointed out, and the exact period of his reign (twenty-four years) determined, and when he inquired about his posterity, it was answered, "The kingdom of the English belongs to God. After Edward, He will provide a king according to His pleasure." But the conduct which earned him the title of Confessor was the direct cause of the Norman Conquest and the ruin of his people; while those who will look at facts will see in the holy king's character little but what is pitiable, and in his reign little but what is tragical —

Civil wars, invasions, outlawry of Godwin and his sons by the Danish and French parties, then of Alfgar, Leofric's son, by the Saxon party, the outlaws on either side attacking and plundering the English shores by the help of Norsemen, Welshmen, Irish, and Danes—any mercenaries who could be got together, and then—"In the same year Bishop Aldred consecrated the minster at Gloucester to the glory of God and of St. Peter, and then went to Jerusalem with such splendour as no man had displayed before him", and so forth. The sum and substance of what was done in those 'happy times' may be well described in the words of the Anglo-Saxon chronicler for the year 1058. 'This year Alfgar the earl was banished but he came in again with violence, through and at Griffin (the king of North Wales, his brother-in-law). And this year came a fleet from Norway. It is tedious to tell how these matters went.'—These were the normal phenomena of a reign which seemed to the eyes of chroniclers a holy and a happy one, because the king refused, whether from spite or superstition, to leave an heir to the house of Cerdic, and spent his time between prayer, hunting, the seeing of fancied visions, the uttering of fancied prophecies, and the performance of fancied miracles.

But there were excuses for him. An Englishman only in name, a Norman, not only by his mother's descent (she was aunt of William the Conqueror), but by his early education on the Continent, he loved the Norman better than the Englishman. Norman knights and clerks filled his court, and often the high dignities of his provinces, and returned as often as they were expelled, the Norman-French language became fashionable, Norman customs and manners the signs of civilisation, and thus all was preparing steadily for the great catastrophe, by which, within a year of Edward's death, the Norman became master of the land.

We have gained, doubtless, by that calamity. By it England and Scotland, and in due time Ireland, became integral parts of the county of Christendom, and partakers of that classic civilisation and learning, the fount wherof, for good or for evil, was Rome and the pope of Rome: but the method was at least wicked, the actors in it tyrannous, brutal, treacherous, hypocritical; and to say that so it must have been; that by no other method could the result

(or some far better result) have been obtained—is it not to say that men's crimes are not merely overruled by, but necessary to, the gracious designs of Providence; and that—to speak plainly—the Deity has made this world so ill, that He is forced at times to do ill that good may come?

Against the new tyranny the freemen of the Danelagh and of Northumbria rose. If Edward the descendant of Cerdic had been little to them, William the descendant of Rollo was still less. That French-speaking knights should expel them from their homes, Frenchchanting monks from their convents, because Edward had promised the crown of England to William, his foreign cousin, or because Harold Godwinsson of Wessex had sworn on the relics of all the saints to be William's man, was contrary to their common sense of right and reason.

So they rose, and fought; too late, it may be, and without unity or purpose, and they were worsted by an enemy who had both unity and purpose, whom superstition, greed, and feudal discipline kept together, at least in England, in one compact body of unscrupulous and terrible confederates.

And theirs was a land worth fighting for—a good land and large from Humber mouth inland to the Trent and merry Sherwood, across to Chester and the Dee, round by Leicester and the five burghs of the Banas, eastward again to Huntingdon and Cambridge (then a poor village on the site of an old Roman town), and then northward again into the wide fens, the land of the Gyrvi, where the great central plateau of England slides into the sea, to form, from the rain and river washings of eight shires, lowlands of a fertility inexhaustible, because ever-growing to this day.

Into those fens, as into a natural fortress, the Anglo-Danish noblemen crowded down mustotively from the inland, to make their last stand against the French. Children of the old Vikings, or 'Crookers,' they took, in their great need, ^{from} the seaward and the estuaries, as other conquered races take to the mountains, and died, like their forefathers, within scent of the salt sea from whence they came.

They have a beauty of their own, these great fens, even now, when they are dyked and drained, tilled and fenced—a beauty as of the sea, of boundless expanse and freedom. Much more had they that beauty eight hundred years ago, when they were still, for the most part, as God had made them, or rather was making them even then. The low rolling uplands were clothed in primeval forest; oak and ash, beech and elm, with here and there perhaps a group of ancient pines, ragged and decayed, and fast dying out in England even then, though lingering still in the forests of the Scotch highlands.

Between the forests were open wolds, dotted with white sheep and golden gorse, rolling plains of rich though ragged turf, whether cleared by the hand of man or by the wild fires which often swept over the hills. And between

the wood and the wold stood many a Danish 'town,' with its clusters of low straggling buildings round the holder's house, of stone or mud below, and of wood above, its high dykes round tiny fields, its flocks of sheep ranging on the wold, its herds of swine in the forest, and below—a more precious possession still—its herds of mares and colts, which fed with the cattle and the geese in the rich grass-fen.

For always, from the foot of the wolds, the green flat stretched away, illimitable, to an horizon where, from the roundness of the earth, the distant trees and islands were hulled down like ships at sea. The firm horse-fen lay, bright green, along the foot of the wold, beyond it, the browner peat, or deep fen, and, among that, dark velvet alder beds, long lines of reed-pond, emerald in spring and golden under the autumn sun, shining 'eas' or river-reaches, broad meres dotted with a million fowl, while the cattle waded along their edges after the rich sedge-grass, or wallowed in the mire through the hot summer's day. Here and there, too, upon the far horizon, rose a tall line of ash trees, marking some island of firm rich soil. In some of them, as at Ramsey and Crowland, the huge ashes had disappeared before the axes of the monks, and a minster tower rose over the fen, amid orchards, gardens, cornfields, pastures, with here and there a tree left standing for shade. 'Painted with flowers in the spring,' with 'pleasant shores embosomed in still lakes,' as the monk chronicler of Ramsey has it, those islands seemed to such as the monk terrestrial paradises.

Overhead the arch of heaven spread more ample than elsewhere, as over the open sea, and that vastness gave, and still gives, such cloudlands, such sunrises, such sunsets, as can be seen nowhere else within these isles. They might well have been star worshippers, those Gyrns, had their sky been as clear as that of the East, but they were like to have worshipped the clouds rather than the stars, according to the too universal law, that mankind worship the powers which do them harm, rather than the powers which do them good. Their priestly teachers, too, had darkened still further their notion of the world around, as accursed by sin, and swarming with evil spirits. The gods and fairies of their old mythology had been transformed by the Church into fiends, alluring or loathsome, but all alike destructive to man, against whom the soldier of God, the celibate monk, fought day and night with relics, Agnus Dei, and sign of Holy Cross.

And therefore the Danelagh men, who feared not mortal sword or axe, feared witches, ghosts, Puks, Wills-o'-the-Wisp, Werewolves, spirits of the wells and of the trees, and all dark, capricious, and harmful beings whom their fancy conjured up out of the wild, wet, and unwholesome marshes, or the dark wolf-haunted woods. For that fair land, like all things on earth, had its darker aspect. The foul exhalations of autumn called up fever and ague, crippling and

enervating, and tempting, almost compelling, to that wild and desperate drinking which was the Scandinavian's special sin. Dark and sad were these short autumn days, when all the distances were shut off, and the air choked with foul brown fog and drenching rains from off the eastern sea, and pleasant the hurrying forth of the keen north-east wind, with all its whirling snow-storms. For though it sent men hurrying out into the storm, to drive the cattle in from the fen, and lift the sheep out of the snow-wreaths, and now and then never to return, lost in instant mire, in ice and snow,—yet all knew that after the snow would come the keen frost and bright sun and cloudless blue sky, and the tenant's yearly holiday, when, work being impossible, all gave themselves up to play, and swarmed upon the ice on skates and sledges, to run races, township against township, or visit old friends full forty miles away, and met everywhere faces as bright and ruddy as their own, cheered by the keen wine of that dry and bracing frost.

Such was the Fenland, hard, yet cheerful, rearing a race of hard and cheerful men, showing their power in old times in valiant fighting, and for many a century since in that valiant industry which has drained and embanked the land of the Gyrn, till it has become a very Garden of the Lord. And the highlander who may look from the promontory of Peterborough, the 'golden borough' of old time, or from that Witham on the Hill, which once was a farm of Hereward the Wake's, or from the tower of Crowland, while he and Torfrida sleep in the ruined nave beneath, or from the heights of that Isle of Ely which was so long the camp of refuge for English freedom, over the labyrinth of dykes and lodes, the squares of rich corn and verdure,—will confess that the lowlands, as well as the high lands, can at times breed gallant men.

Most gallant of them all, and their leader in the fatal struggle against William, was Hereward the Wake, Lord of Beornes, and ancestor of that family of Wake, the arms of whom appear at the beginning of this book. These, of course, are much later than the time of Hereward. Not so, probably, the badge of the 'Wake Knot,' in which (according to tradition) two monks' girdles are worked into the form of the letter W. It, and the motto 'Vigila et ora,' may well have been used by Hereward himself. I owe them (as I do unnumbered details and corrections) to the exceeding courtesy of that excellent antiquary, the Rev. E. Trollope, of Leasingham, in those parts.

Hereward's pedigree is a matter of no importance, save to a few antiquaries, and possibly to his descendants, the ancient and honourable house of the Wakes. But as I have, in this story, followed facts as strictly as I could, altering none which I found, and inventing little more than was needed to give the story coherence, or to illustrate the manners of the time, I owe it to myself to give my reason for

believing Hereward to have been the son of Earl Leofric and Godiva, a belief in which I am supported, as far as I know, only by Sir Henry Ellis (Introduction to Domesday) and by Mr Thomas Wright. The reasons against my belief (well known to antiquaries) are these - Richard of Ely calls him simply the son of Leofric, Lord of Brunne, and of Æliva, and his MS is by far the most important document relating to Hereward. But he says that the older MSS which he consulted were so ruined by damp, and torn, that 'vix ex eis jamquam a gemeribus ejus incertum, et pance incerto expressimus, et nomen', in fact, that he had much difficulty in making out Hereward's pedigree. He says, moreover, as to Leofric the Mercian's Anglo-Saxon MSS, 'In quibus (Anglice littere) vero non licet non satis pariti aut potius exarare deleta incognitarum litterarum' - which passage (whatever may have been the word now wanting to complete it) certainly confesses that he was but a poor adept at deciphering Anglo-Saxon MSS. He need hardly have confessed as much, for the misspellings of English names in his work are more gross than even those in Domesday, and it is not improbable that among the rest he may have rendered Godiva, in its English equivalent, by Æliva.

That he should have been ignorant that Leofric was not merely Lord of Brunne, but Earl of Mercia, will not seem surprising to those who know how utterly the English nobility were trampled into the mud. To the Normans they were barbarians without a name or a race. They were dead and gone, too, and who cared for the pedigree of a dead man whose lands had passed to another? Thus of Mailesweyn nothing is known. Of Ædric the Wild, a great chieftain in his day, all but nothing. Gospatric's pedigree has been saved, in part, by his relationship to royalty, both Scotch and English, and Sward Digra's, like that of Gyda, his kinswoman, by their relationship with the kings of Denmark and the Fairy Bear. But Gyda's husband, the great Earl Godwin, had become within three generations a 'barbarian's son,' and even Mr Freeman's research and judgment cannot decide his true pedigree. As to Leofric, we know that he was son (according to Florence of Worcester) of Leofwin the Alderman, and had two brothers, one Norman, killed by Canute with Ædric Stroom 1017 (according to Ingulf), the other Ædric Edwin, killed by the Welsh 1039. But we know no more.

That Ingulf should make him die A.D. 1057 is not strange, in spite of his many mistakes, for the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle gives the same date. But the monk who, probably a century or more after Ingulf, interpolated from Richard of Ely the passage beginning, 'At this time a nobleman, the Lord of Bourne, etc.,' sub anno 1063, may well have been ignorant that Leofric, Lord of Bourne, was also Earl of Mercia. But what need to argue over any statement of the so-called Ingulf, or rather 'Ingulfic Cycle'? I shall only add that this passage sub anno 1066,

beginning 'Hereward, who has been previously mentioned,' seems to be again by a different hand.

Meanwhile the *Excerptum de Familia Herewardi* calls him plainly the son of Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and the Lady Godiva, giving to her the same genealogy as is given by Richard of Ely to Æliva.

This account of Hereward's family is taken from a document of no greater antiquity than the thirteenth century, a genealogical roll of the Lords of Bourne and Dering, who traced their descent and title to the lands from Hereward's daughter but it was no doubt taken either from previously existing records, or from the old tradition of the family, and, with no authority for contradicting it, and considering its general agreement with the other evidence, it is plain that Leofric of Bourne was generally understood to be the great Earl of Mercia of that name.

But the strongest evidence of the identity between Leofric of Bourne and Leofric, Earl of Mercia, is to be found in Domesday-book.

The Lord of Bourne at the time of the Conquest, as is proved by the *Chronicles de Kentuari*, was Morcar, Leofric of Mercia's grandson. This one fact is all but conclusive, unless we suppose that Leofric of Bourne had been dispossessed of his 'dominium' by Morcar, or by Earl Algar his father, or, again, by Earl Leofric his grandfather. But such an hypothesis accords ill with the acuity between Morcar and Hereward, and it is all but impossible that, if Hereward's family were then dispossessed, the fact should not appear in any of his sagas.

But Domesday-book gives no hint of any large landholders in or near Bourne, save Morcar, lord of Leccol, whose name still lingers in the 'Monkey Woods,' a few miles off, Edwin his brother, and Algar his father, son of Earl Leofric and Godiva. The famous Godiva, also, was probably a Lincolnshire woman, though the manors which she held in her widowhood were principally in Shropshire. The domains of her ancestor, 'the magnificent Earl Osric,' who lived in the days of King Edgar, were Deira, i.e. Danish Northumbria, from Humber to Tees, and he may have sprung from (as his name hints) the ancient kings of Deira. But charters (as far as we can trust them) connect him both with Peterborough and Crowland, and his descendant was Thorold of Bokenhale near Crowland, sheriff of Lincoln; from whom the ancient Thorolds of those parts claim descent, and this Thorold appears, in a charter of 1061, attested by Leofric and Godiva, as giving the cell of Spalding to Crowland. The same charter describes the manor of Spalding as belonging to Earl Leofric. His son Algar, whose name remains in Algarkirk,¹ appears as a benefactor to

¹ The first Earl 'Algar,' who signs a charter in the days of Beorhred, king of the Mercians, and who does doughty deeds about A.D. 870, is, to me, as mythical as the first 'Morcar,' Lord of Deira, who accompanies him, the first Thorold of Bokenhale, who gave that place to Crowland about A.D. 804, and the first Leofric, or 'Leovic,' Earl of Leicester (i.e. Mercia), who helps to

Crowland. And, in fine, the great folk of Bourne, as well as Spalding, were without doubt the family of Leofric, Earl of Mercia and Chester, and of the Lady Godiva, the parents, as I conceive, of Herward. He would thus, on the death of Morecar, son of his elder brother Algar, take possession by natural right of the lordship of Bourne, and keep up a special annuity against Ivo Taillebois, who had taken Spalding from his patrimony.

Lastly, it is difficult to me to suppose that Herward would have been allowed to take the undivided command of a rebellion so aristocratic as that of the Fens, over the heads of three earls, Morecar among them, had he not possessed some such natural right of birth as an earl's son, and, probably, like most great English earls' families, of ancient royal, and therefore God descended, blood.

On the supposition, too, that he was the last remaining heir of the Earls of Mercia, may be explained William's strong desire to spare his life and receive his homage, as an atonement for his conduct to Edwin and Morcan, and a last effort to attach to himself the ancient English nobility. But of this enough, and more than enough, and so to my story.

CHAPTER I

HOW HERWARD WAS OUTLAWED, AND WENT NORTH TO SEEK HIS FORTUNES

IN Kesteven of Lincolnshire, between the forest and the fen, lies the good market-town of Bourne, the birthplace, according to all tradition, of two great Englishmen of Cecil Lord Burleigh, justly remembered throughout all time, and of Herward the Wake, not unjustly, perhaps, long forgotten. Two long streets meet opposite the house where Burleigh was born, one from Spalding and the eastern fens, the other from the forest, and the line of the old Roman road on the north. From thence the Watergang Street leads, by the side of clear running streams, to the old Priory church, and the great labyrinth of grass-grown banks, which was once the castle

found in Crowland, A. D. 716, a 'monastery of black monks.' The Monks of Crowland were, perhaps, trying to work on King Eadwig, Herward's son-in-law, or Richard of Eborac, his grandfather-in-law, as they were trying to work on the Norman kings, when they invented these charters of the eighth and ninth centuries, with names of Saxon kings, and nobles of Leofric and Godiva's house, or, again, the land being notoriously given to Crowland by men of certain names, who were then of no authority as rebels and dispossessed, it was necessary to invent men of like names, who were safely entrenched behind Saxon antiquity with the ancestors of Edward the Confessor. But in their clumsiness they seem to have mingled with them, in the said charters and their mythic battles against the Danes, purely Danish names, such as Siward, Asketyl, Aser, Harding, Grimketyl, Wulfketyl, etc., which surely prove the fraud. Meanwhile, the very names of Leofric, Algar, Morecar, Thorold, genuine or not, seem to prove that the houses of Leofric and Godiva were ancient rulers in these parts, whose phantoms had to be evoked when needed.

of the Wakes. Originally, it may be, those earthworks were a Roman camp, guarding the King Street, or Roman road, which splits off from the Ermine Street near Castor, and runs due north through Bourne to Sleaford. They may have guarded, too, the Car-dyke, or great Cat-hwater drain, which runs from Peterborough northward into the heart of Lincolnshire, a still-enduring monument of Roman genius. Their site, not on one of the hills behind, but on the dead flat meadow, was determined doubtless by the noble fountain, bourn, or brunne, which rises among the earthworks, and gives its name to the whole town. In the flat meadow bubbles up still the great pool of limestone water, crystal clear, suddenly and at once, and runs away, winter and summer, a stream large enough to turn many a mill, and spread perpetual verdure through the fat champagne lands.

The fountain was, doubtless, in the middle ages, miraculous and haunted perhaps, in heathen times, divine and consecrated. Even till a late date, the millers of Bourne paid water-dues to those of a village some miles away, on the strength of the undoubted fact, that a duck put into Bourne Pool would pass underground into the mill-race of the said village. Doubtless it was a holy well, such as were common in the eastern counties, as they are still in Ireland, a well where rains, flowers, and other gaw-gaws might have been seen bringing offerings to the spirit of the well, whether one of those 'nickers,' 'devils,' or 'luther-gosses,' which St. Botulf met when he founded Boston near by, or one of those 'tan ladies,' 'elves,' or water-nymphs, who, exorcised from the North, still linger in the fountains of modern Greece. Exorcised, certainly, the fury of Bayne was at an early date, for before the Conquest the Peterborough monks had founded a cell outside the castle ditch, and, calling in the aid of the chief of the Apostles against those spirits of darkness who peopled, innumerable earth, air, water, and fen, had rechristened it as 'Peterspool,' which name it bears unto this day.

Military skill has, evidently, utilised the waters of the Peterspool from the earliest times. They filled, at some remote period, the dykes at a great earthwork to the north, which has been overlooked by antiquaries, because it did not (seemingly) form part of the *enceinte* of the medieval castle of the Wakes. It still fills the dykes of that castle, whereof nothing remains now save banks of turf, and one great artificial barrow, on which stood the keep, even in Ireland's time, it would seem, somewhat dismally. 'I here appear,' he says, 'great ditches, and the dungeon hill of an ancient castle again the west end of the Priory.' It long led to the Lord Wake, and much service of the Wake too is done to this Castle, and every feodary knoweth his station and place of service.

Of the stonework nothing now remains. The square dungeon, 'a fayre and prettie building, with iv. square towers . . . hall, chambers, all manner of houses and offices for the lord and his

train,¹ and so forth, is utterly gone. The gate-house, thirty feet high, with its circular Saxon (probably Norman) arch, has been pulled down by the Lords of Bureleigh, to build a farmhouse, the fair park is divided into fair meadows, and a large part of the town of Bourne is, probably, built of the materials of the Wakes' castle, and the Priory, which arose under its protection. Those Priory lands passed into the hands of Trollopas and Pochins, as did the lands of the castle into those of the Cocles, and of that foe of the Wakes, all, as far as I know, is lost, *for l'honneur*, which shone out of late in that hero of Arrah, who proved, by his valour, pertinacity, and shiftfulness, not unworthy of his great ancestor Hereward. Verily the good old blood of England is not yet worn out.

A pleasant place, and a rich, is Bourne now, and a pleasant place and rich must it have been in the old Anglo-Danish times, when the hall of Loofric, the great Earl of Mercia, stood where the Wakes' feudal castle stood in after years. To the south and west stretched, as now, the illimitable flat of fen, with the spires of Crowland gleaming bright between high trees upon the southern horizon, and to the north, from the very edge of the town fields, rose the great Brunescwald, the forest of oak, and ash, and elm, which still covers many miles of Lincolnshire, as Bourne Wood, Grimsthorpe Park, and parks and woodlands without number. To the south-west it joined the great forest of Rookingham, in Northamptonshire. To the west, it all but marched with Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire, and to the north-west, with the great Sherwood, which covered Nottinghamshire, and reached over the borders of Yorkshire. Mighty fowling and fishing was there in the fen below, and mighty hunting on the wealth above, where still haunt, in Grimsthorpe Park, the primeval red deer, descendants of those who fell by Hereward's bow, ere yet the first Lovell had built his castle on the steep, or the Cistercian monks of Fountains had found out the deep-cumbersome vale of God, and settled themselves in the glen beneath the castle walls.

It is of those earlier days that this story tells, of the latter half of the eleventh century, and the eve of the Norman Conquest, when Leofric the Earl had the dominion in forest and manorial rights, in wood, and town, and fen, and beside him, upon the rich strip of champaign, other free Danish holders, whose names may be still found in Domesday-book, held small estates and owed, probably, some military service to the great earl at the hall within the Roman earthwork.

The house of Bourne, as far as it can be reconstructed by imagination was altogether unlike one of the tall and gloomy Norman castles which, in the course of the next few generations, must have taken its place. It was much more like a house in a Chinese painting, an irregular group of low buildings, almost all of one story, stone below and timber above, with high-peaked

roofs—at least in the more Danish country—affording a separate room, or rather house, for each different need of the family. Such a one may be seen in illuminations of the century. In the centre of the building is the hall, with a door or doors opening out into the court, and sitting-thorvat, at the top of a flight of steps, the lord and lady, dealing clothes to the naked and bread to the hungry. Behind the hall is a round tower, seemingly the strong place of the whole house. It must have stood at Bourne upon the dungeon hill. On one side of the hall is a chapel, by it a large room or bower for the ladies, on the other side a kitchen, and stuck on to lower, kitchen, and every other principal building, lean to after lean-to, the uses of which it is impossible now to discover. The house had grown with the wants of the family—as many good old English houses have done to this day. Round it would be scattered barns and stables, in which grooms and herdsmen slept side by side with their own horses and cattle, beyond, the yard, garth, or garden-fence, high earth-banks with palisades on top, while the waters of the Peterspool wandered around out side all. Such was most probably the 'villa,' 'ton,' or 'town,' of Earl Leofric, the Lord of Bourne, such too, probably, the hall at Loughiton-en-le-Moithen in Yorkshire, which belonged to his grandson Edwin, and therefore, probably, to him. Leofric's other residence, the castle of Warwick, was already, it may be, a building of a more solid and Norman type, such as had been built already here and there, for Edward the Confessor's French courtiers, by the hands of 'Welsh men,' i.e. French speaking foreigners.¹

Known, I presume, to all is Lady Godiva, mistress of Bourne, the most beautiful as well as the most saintly woman of her day, who, all her life, kept at her own expense thirteen poor folk wherever she went, who, throughout Lent, watched in the church at triple matins, namely, one for the Trinity, one for the Cross, and one for St. Mary, who every day read the psalter through, and so persevered in good and holy works to her life's end, the devoted friend of St. Mary, ever a virgin, who enriched monasteries without number—Leominster, Wenlock, Chester St. Mary's Stow by Lincoln, Worcester, Evesham, and who, above all, founded the great monastery in that town of Coventry which has made her name immortal for another and a far nobler deed, and enriched it so much, that no monastery in England possessed such abundance of gold, silver, jewels, and precious stones, besides that most precious jewel of all, the arm of St. Augustine, which not Lady Godiva, but her friend Archbishop Ethelnoth, presented to Coventry, having bought it at Pavia for a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.²

¹ One such had certainly been built in Herefordshire. Lappenberg attributes it, with great probability, to Raoul, or Ralph the Staller, nephew of Edward the Confessor, and a near relation of Leofric.

² William of Malmesbury.

¹ Peak's account of the towns in Kenten.

Less known, save to students, is her husband Leofric, whose bones lie by those of Godiva in that same minster of Coventry, how 'his counsel was as if one had opened the divine oracles', very 'wise,' says the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 'for God and for the world, which was a blessing to all this nation', the greatest man, as I have said, in Edward the Confessor's court, save his still greater rival, Earl Godwin.

Less known, again, are the children of that illustrious pair, Algar, or Alfgar, Earl of Merca after his father, who died after a short and stormy life, leaving two sons, Edwin and Morcar, the fair and hapless young earls, always spoken of together, as if they had been twins, a daughter, Aelfthra, or Elfgyva, married first (according to some) to Guthin, King of North Wales, and certainly afterwards to Harold, King of England, and another, Lucia (as the Normans at least called her), whose fate was, if possible, more sad than that of her brothers.

Their second son was Hereward, whose history this tale sets forth, their third and youngest, a boy whose name is unknown.

They had probably another daughter besides, married, it may be, to some son of Leofric's staunch friend old Siward Digre, and the mother, may be, of the two young Siwards, the 'white' and the 'red,' who figure in chronicle and legend as the nephews of Hereward. But this last pedigree is little more than a conjecture.

Be these things as they may, Godiva was the greatest lady in England, save two Edith, Harold's sister, the nominal wife of Edward the Confessor, and Githa, or Gytha, as her own Danes called her, Harold's mother, niece of Canute the Great. Great was Godiva, and might have been proud enough, had she been inclined to that pleasant sin. But always (for there is a skeleton, they say, in every house) she carried that about her which might well keep her humble, namely, shame at the misconduct of Hereward, her son.

Now on a day—about the year 1054—while Earl Siward was helping to bring Binham wood to Dunsunane, to avenge his murdered brother-in-law, Lady Godiva sat, not at her hall-door, dealing food and clothing to her thirteen poor folk, but in her bower, with her youngest son, a two-years' boy, at her knee. She was listening with a face of shame and horror to the complaint of Herhelm, steward of Peterborough, who had fallen in that afternoon with Hereward and his crew of housecarles.

To keep a following of stout housecarles, or men-at-arms, was the pride as well as the duty of an Anglo-Danish lord, as it was, till lately, of a Sooto-Danish Inghland laird. And Hereward, in imitation of his father and his elder brother, must needs have his following from the time he was but fifteen years old. All the unruly youths of the neighbourhood, sons of free 'holders,' who owed some sort of military service to Earl Leofric, Geri, Hereward's cousin, Winter, whom he called his brother-in-arms,

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the Wulfrics, the Wulfards, the Azers, and many another wild blade, had banded themselves round a young nobleman more unruly than themselves. Their names were already a terror to all decent folk, at wakes and fairs, alehouses and village sports. They atoned, be it remembered, for their early sins, by making those names in after years a terror to the invaders of their native land, but as yet their prowess was limited to drunken brawls and faction fights, to upsetting old women at their work, levying blackmail from quiet chapmen on the high road, or bringing back in triumph, sword in hand and club on shoulder, their leader Hereward from some duel which his insolence had provoked.

But this time, if the story of the steward was to be believed, Hereward and his housecarles had taken an ugly stride forward toward the pit. They had met him riding along, intent upon his psalter, home towards his abhey from its cell at Bourne—'Whereon your son, most gracious lady, bade me stand, saying that his men were thirsty, and he had no money to buy ale withal, and none so likely to help him thereto as a fat parst—for so he scandalously termed me, who, as your ladyship knows, am leaner than the minster bell ropes, with fasting Wednesday and Fridays throughout the year, beside the vigils of the saints, and the former and latter Lent.'

'But when he saw who I was, as if injured by a malignant spirit, he shouted out my name, and bade his companions throw me to the ground.'

'Throw you to the ground?' shuddered the Lady Godiva.

'In much mire, madam. After which he took my palfrey, saying that heaven's gate was too lowly for men on horseback to get in thereto, and then my marten's fur gloves and cape which your gracious self bestowed on me, alleging that the rules of my order allowed only one garment, and no furs save catskins and suchlike. And lastly—I tremble while I relate, thinking not of the loss of my poor money, but the loss of an immortal soul—took from me a purse with sixteen silver pennies, which I had collected from our tenants for the use of the monastery, and said blasphemously that I and mine had cheated your ladyship, and therefore him your son, out of many a fat manor ere now, and it was but fair that he should take the rents thereof, as he should never get the hinds out of our claws again, with more of the like, which I blush to repeat—and so left me to trudge hither in the mire.'

'Wretched boy!' said the Lady Godiva, and hid her face in her hands, 'and more wretched I, to have brought such a son into the world!'

The monk had hardly finished his doleful story, when there was a pattering of heavy feet, a noise of men shouting and laughing outside, and a voice above all calling for the monk by name, which made that good man crouch behind the curtain of Lady Godiva's bed. The next

moment the door of the bower was thrown violently open, and in swaggered a noble lad eighteen years old. His face was of extraordinary beauty, save that the lower jaw was too long and heavy, and that his eyes wore a strange and almost sinister expression, from the fact that the one of them was gray, and the other blue. He was short, but of immense breadth of chest and strength of limb, while his delicate hands and feet and long locks of golden hair marked him of most noble, and even, as he really was, of ancient royal race. He was dressed in a gaudy costume, resembling on the whole that of a Highland chieftain. His wrists and throat were tattooed in blue patterns,¹ and he carried sword and dagger, a gold ring round his neck,² and gold rings on his wrists. He was a lad to have gladdened the eyes of any mother, but there was no gladness in the Lady Godiva's eyes as she received him, nor had there been for many a year. She looked on him with sternness, with all but horror, and he, his face flushed with wine, which he had tossed off as he passed through the hall to steady his nerves for the coming storm, looked at her with smiling defiance, the result of long estrangement between mother and son.

'Well, my lady,' said he, ere she could speak, 'I heard that this good fellow was here, and came home as fast as I could, to see that he told you as few lies as possible.'

'He has told me,' said she, 'that you have robbed the Church of God.'

'Robbed him, it may be, an old hoody crow, against whom I have a grudge of ten years' standing.'

'Wretched, wretched boy! What wickedness next? Know you not that he who robs the Church, robs God Himself?'

'If a man sin against another,' put in the monk from behind the curtain, 'the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?'

'Who indeed?' cried Lady Godiva. 'Think, think, hapless boy, what it is to go about the world henceforth with the wrath of Him who made it abiding on you—cut off from the protection of all angels, open to the assaults of all devils! How will your life be safe a moment from lightning, from flood, from shipping knife,

¹Some antiquaries have denied, on the ground of insufficient evidence, that the English tattooed themselves. Others have referred to some such custom the secret marks by which heroes are so often recognised in old romances, as well as those by which Edith the Swan neck is said to have recognised Harold's body on the field of Hastings. Hereward is, likewise, recognised by 'signis satis exquisitis in corpore designatis vulnera tenebimusque cicatricebus.' I am not answerable for the Latin, but as I understand it, it refers not to war-wounds but to very delicate marks. Moreover, William of Malmesbury, sub anno 1066, seems sufficiently explicit when he says that the English 'adorned their skins with punctured designs.'

May not our sailors' fashion of tattooing their arms and chests with strange devices be a remnant of this very fashion, kept up, if not originated, by the desire that the corpse should be recognised after death?

² Earl Waltheof appears to ingulf in a dream, a few years after, with a gold ring round his neck.

from stumbling horse, from some hidden and hideous death! If the fen-fiends lure you away to drown you in the river, or the wood-fiends leap on you in the thicket to wring your neck, of what use to you then the suffrages of the saints, or the sign of the holy cross! What help, what hope, for you—for me—but that you must perish foully, and, it may be, never find a grave!'

Lady Godiva—as the constant associate of clerks and monks—spoke after an artificial and Latinised fashion, at which Hereward was not wont to laugh and jest, but as he believed, no less than his pious mother, in innumerable devils and ghosts, and other uncanny creatures, who would surely do him a mischief if they could, he began to feel somewhat frightened, but he answered none the less stoutly—

'As for devils, and suchlike, I never saw one yet, by flood or field, night or day. And if one comes, I must just copy old Baldwin Bras-des-Fers of Flanders, and see whether the devil or I can hit hardest. As for the money—I have no grudge against St. Peter, and I will warrant myself to rob some one else of sixteen pennies ere long, and pay the saint back every farthing.'

'The saint takes not the fruits of robbery. He would hurl them far away, by might divine, were they laid upon his altar,' quoth the steward.

'I wonder he has not hurled thee away long ago, then, with thy gifts about thine ears, for thou hast brought many a bag of grist to his mill, ere now, that was as fondly earned as aught of mine. I tell thee, man, if thou art wise, thou wilt hold thy tongue, and let me and St. Peter settle this quarrel between us. I have a long score against thee, as thou knowest, which a gentle battery in the greenwood has but half paid off, and I warn thee not to make it longer by thy tongue, lest I shorten the said tongue for thee with cold steel.'

'What does he mean?' asked Godiva, shuddering.

'Thus!' quoth Hereward, fiercely enough, 'that this monk forgets that I have been a monk myself, or should have been one by now, if you, my pious mother, had had your will of me, as you may if you like of that baby there at your knee. He forgets why I left Peterborough Abbey, when Winter and I turned all the priest's books upside down in the choir, and they would have flogged us—me, the earl's son—me, the Viking's son—me, the champion, as I will be yet, and make all lands ring with the fame of my deeds, as they rang with the fame of my forefathers, before they became the slaves of monks, and how, when Winter and I got hold of the kitchen spits, and up to the top of the peat-stack by Bolldyke-gate, and held them all at bay there, a whole abbeyful of cowards there against two seven-years' children,—it was that weasel there bade set the peat-stack alight under us, and so bring us down, and would have done it, too, had it not been for my uncle Brand, the only man that I care for in this wide world. Do you think I have not owed you a grudge ever

since that day, monk! And do you think I will not pay it? Do you think I would not have burned Peterborough minster over your head before now, had it not been for uncle Brand's sake? See that I do not do it yet! See that when there is another prior in Borough you do not find Hereward the Berserker smoking you out some dark night, as he would smoke a wasp's nest. And I will, ify—'

'Hereward, Hereward!' cried his mother, 'godless, God-forgotten boy, what words are these? Silence, before you burden your soul with an oath which the devils in hell will accept and force you to keep,' and she sprang up, and seizing his arm, laid her hand upon his mouth.

Hereward looked at her majestic face, once lovely, now stern and careworn, and trembled for a moment. Had there been any tenderness in it, his history might have been a very different one, but alas! there was none. Not that she was in herself untender, but that her great pity (call it not superstition, for it was then the only form known or possible to pure and devout souls) was so outraged by this insult to that clergy whose willing slave she had become, that the only method of reclaiming the sinner had been long forgotten in genuine horror at his sin. 'Is it not enough,' she went on sternly, 'that you should have become the bully and the ruffian of all the fens?—that Hereward the leaper, Hereward the wrestler, Hereward the thrower of the hammer—sports after all only fit for the sons of slaves, should be also Hereward the drunkard, Hereward the common fighter, Hereward the breaker of houses, Hereward the leader of mobs of boon companions who bring back to us, in shame and sorrow, the days when our heathen forefathers ravaged this land with fire and sword? Is it not enough for me that my son should be a common stabber—?'

'Whoever called me stabber to you, hea! I have killed men, or had them killed, I have done it in fair fight.'

But she went on unheeding—'Is it not enough that after having squandered on your fellows all the money that you could wring from my bounty or win at your base sports, you should have robbed your own father, collected his rents behind his back, taken money and goods from his tenants by threats and blows, but that, after outraging them, you must add to all this a worse sin likewise, outraging God, and driving me—me who have borne with you, me who have concealed all for your sake—to tell your father that of which the very telling will turn my hair to gray?'

'So you will tell my father!' said Hereward coolly.

'And if I should not, this monk himself is bound to do so, or his superior, your uncle Brand.'

'My uncle Brand will not, and your monk dare not.'

'Then I must. I have loved you long and well; but there is one thing which I must love better than you, and that is my conscience and my Maker.'

'Those are two things, my lady mother, and not one, so you had better not confound them. As for the latter, do you not think that He who made the world is well able to defend His own property—if the lands, and houses, and cattle, and money, which these men wheedle and threaten and forge out of you and my father, are really His property, and not merely their plunder? As for your conscience, my lady mother, really you have done so many good deeds in your life, that it might be beneficial to you to do a bad deed once in a way, so as to keep your soul in a wholesome state of humility.'

The monk groaned aloud. Lady Godiva groaned, but it was inwardly. There was silence for a moment. Both were abashed by the lad's utter shamelessness.

'And you will tell my father?' said he again. 'He is at the old miracle-worker's court at Westminster. He will tell the miracle-worker, and I shall be outlawed.'

'And if you be, wretched boy, whom have you to blame but yourself? Can you expect that the king, sainted even as he is before his death, dare pass over such an offence against Holy Church?'

'Blame? I shall blame no one. Pass over? I hope he will not pass over it. I only want an excuse like that for turning kempy-man—knight-errant, as those Norman puppets call it—like Ragnar Lothbrok, or Hrolf, or Harold Hardraade, and try what a man can do for himself in the world with nothing to help him in heaven and earth, with neither saint nor angel, friend or counsellor, to see to him, save his wits and his good sword. So send off the messenger, good mother mine, and I will promise you I will not have him hamstringing on the way, as some of my housecarles would do if I but held up my hand, and let the miracle monger fill up the measure of his folly by making an enemy of one more bold fellow in the world.'

And he swaggered out of the room.

When he was gone the Lady Godiva bowed her head into her lap, and wept long and bitterly. Neither her maidens nor the priest dare speak to her for nigh an hour, but at the end of that time she lifted up her head, and settled her face again, till it was like that of a marble saint over a minster door, and called for ink and paper, and wrote her letter, and then asked for a trusty messenger who should carry it up to Westminster.

'None so swift or sure,' said the house steward, 'as Martin Lightfoot.'

Lady Godiva shook her head. 'I mistrust that man,' she said. 'He is too fond of my poor—of the Lord Hereward.'

'He is a strange one, my lady, and no one knows whence he came, and I sometimes fancy whether he may go either, but ever since my lord threatened to hang him for talking with my young master he has never spoken to him, nor scarcely, indeed, to living soul. And one thing there is makes him or any man sure, as long as he is well paid, and that is, that he

cares for nothing in heaven or earth save himself and what he can get.

So Martin Lightfoot was sent for. He came in straight into the lady's bedchamber, after the simple fashion of those days. He was a tall, bony man, as was to be expected from his nickname, lean as a rake, with a long hooked nose, a scanty brown beard, and a high conical head. His only garment was a shabby gray woollen tunic which served him both as coat and kilt, and laced breeches of untanned hide. He might have been any age from twenty to forty, but his face was disfigured with deep scars and long exposure to the weather. He dropped on one knee, holding his greasy cap in his hand, and looked, not at his lady's face, but at her feet, with a stupid and frightened expression. She knew very little of him, save that her husband had picked him up upon the road as a wanderer some five years since, that he had been employed as a doer of odd jobs and runner of messages, and that he was supposed from his taciturnity and strangeness to have something uncanny about him.

'Martin,' said the lady, 'they tell me that you are a skilful and a prudent man.'

'That am I.'

'"Tongue breaketh lance,"
Though she herself hath none.'

'I shall try you, do you know your way to London?'

'Yes, Cardyke, King Street, Emma Street, London Town.'

'To your lord's lodgings?'

'Yes.'

'How long shall you be going there with this letter?'

'A day and a half.'

'When shall you be back hither?'

'On the fourth day.'

'And you will go to my lord and deliver this letter safely?'

'Yes.'

'And safely bring back an answer?'

'Nay, not that.'

'Not that?'

Martin made a doleful face, and drew his hand first across his leg, and then across his throat, as hints of the doom which he expected.

'He—the Lord Hereward—has promised not to let thee be harmed.'

Martin gave a start, and his dull eyes flashed out a moment, but the next he answered, as earnestly as was his wont.

'The more fool he. But women's bodkins are sharper as well as men's knives.'

'Bodkins? Whose? What habblest of?'

'Them,' said Martin, pointing to the hower maidens—girls of good family who stood round, chosen for their beauty, after the fashion of those times, to attend on great ladies. There was a cry of angry and contemptuous denial, not unminged with something like laughter, which showed that Martin had but spoken the truth. Hereward, in spite of all his sins, was

the darling of his mother's bower, and there was not one of the damsels but would have done anything short of murder to have prevented Martin carrying the letter.

'Silence, man!' said Lady Godiva, so sternly that Martin saw that he had gone too far. 'How knows such as thou what is in this letter?'

'All the town must know,' said Martin sullenly.

'Best that they should, and know that right is done here,' said she, trying to be stern.

'I will take it,' said Martin. He held out his hand, took it and looked at it, but made no move and without any attempt to read it.

'Thy own mother,' said he, after a while.

'What is that to thee?' said Lady Godiva, blushing and kindling.

'Nothing—I had no mother. But God has one.'

'What meanest thou, knave? Wilt thou take the letter or no?'

'I will take it.' And he again looked at it, without rising off his knee. 'His own father, too.'

'What is that to thee, I say again?'

'Nothing—I have no father. But God's Son has one.'

'What wilt thou, thou strange man?' asked she, puzzled and half frightened, 'and how earnest thou, again I ask, to know what is in this letter?'

'All the town, I say again, must know. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. On the fourth day from this I will be back.'

And Martin rose, and putting the letter solemnly into the purse at his girdle, shot out of the door with clenched teeth, as a man upon a fixed purpose which it would lighten his heart to carry out. He ran rapidly through the huge outer hall past the long oak table, at which Hereward and his boon companions were drinking and roystering. As he passed the young lord he cast on him a look so full of meaning, that though Hereward knew not what the meaning was, it startled him, and for a moment softened him. Did this man, who had sullenly avoided him for more than two years, whom he had looked on as a cloid or a post in the field beneath his notice, since he could be of no use to him, did this man still care for him? Hereward had reason to know better than most that there was something strange and uncanny about the man. Did he mean him well? Or had he some grudge against him, which made him undertake this journey willingly and out of spite—possibly with the will to make bad worse? For an instant Hereward's heart misgave him. He would stop the letter at all risks. 'Hold him!' he cried to his comrades.

But Martin turned to him, laid his finger on his lips, smiled kindly, and saying, 'You promised!' caught up a loaf from the table, slipped from amongst them like an eel, and darted through the door, and out of the close. They followed him to the great gate, and there stopped, some cursing, some laughing. To give Martin Lightfoot a yard of law was never to come up with him again. Some called for bows

to bring him down with a parting shot. But Hereward forbade them, and stood leaning against the gate-post, watching him trot on like a lean wolf over the lawn, till he sprang upon the Cadyke bank, and fled straight south into the misty fen.

'Now, lads,' said Hereward, 'home with you all, and make your peace with your fathers. In this house you never drink¹ ale again.'

They looked at him, surprised.

'You are disbanded, my gallant army. As long as I could cut long thoughts out of other men's hides, I could feel you like early sons, but now I must feel myself, and a dog over his bone wants no company. Outlawed I shall be before the week is out, and unless you wish to be outlawed too, you will obey orders, and home.'

'We will follow you to the world's end,' cried some.

'To the rope's end, lads—that is all you will get in my company. Go home with you, and those who feel a calling, let them turn monks, and those who have not, let them learn

'For to plough and to sow,
And to reap and to mow,
And to be a farmer's boy

Good-night.'

And he went in and shut the great gates after him, leaving them astonished.

To take his advice, and to go home, was the simplest thing to be done. A few of them on their return were soundly beaten, and deserved it, a few were hounded by their mothers for a week in hay lots and hen roosts, till their fathers' anger had passed away. But only one seems to have found monk or clerk, and that was Leofric the Unlucky, grandson of the great earl, and poet in ordinary to the king.

The next morning at dawn Hereward mounted his best horse, armed himself from head to foot, and rode over to Peterborough.

When he came to the abbey gate, he smote 'theroon with his lance butt, till the porter's teeth rattled in his head for fear.

'Let me in!' he shouted. 'I am Hereward Leolinsson. I must see my uncle Brand.'

'Oh, my most gracious lord,' cried the porter, thrusting his head out of the wicket, 'what is this that you have been doing to our steward?'

'The title of what I will do unless you open the gate.'

'Oh, my lord!' said the porter, as he opened it, 'if our Lady and St. Peter would but have mercy on your fair face, and convert your soul to the fear of God and man—'

'She would make me as good an old fool as you. Fetch my uncle the prior.'

The porter obeyed. The son of Earl Leofric was as a young lion among the sheep in those parts, and few dare say him nay, certainly not the monks of Peterborough, moreover, the good porter could not help being strangely fond of Hereward—as was every one whom he did not insult, rob, or kill.

Out came Brand, a noble elder more fit, from

his eye and gait, to be a knight than a monk. He looked sully at Hereward.

'"Dear is bought the honey that is haked off the thorn,"' quoth Hereward, said he.

'Hereward bought his wisdom by experience, I suppose,' said Hereward, 'and so must I. So I am just starting out to see the world, uncle.'

'Naughty, naughty boy! If we had thee safe here again for a week, we would take this hot blood out of thee, and send thee home in thy right mind.'

'Bring a rod and whip me, then. Try, and you shall have your chance. Every one else has had, and this is the end of their labours.'

'By the chains of St. Peter,' quoth the monk, 'that is just what thou needest. To hoist thee on such another fool's back, truss thee up, and lay it on lustily, till thou art ashamed. To treat thee as a man is only to make thee a more heavily blown up ass than thou art already.'

'True, most wise uncle. And therefore my still wiser parents are going to treat me like a man indeed, and send me out into the world to seek my fortunes.'

'Eh?'

'They are going to prove how thoroughly they trust me to take care of myself, by outlawing me. Eh? say I in return. Is not that an honour, and a proof that I have not shewn myself a fool, though I may have a madman?'

'Outlaw you? Oh, my boy, my darling, my jade! Get off thy horse, and don't sit up there, ham on hip, like a timbered Saracen, chiding God and man. But come down and talk reason to me, for the sake of St. Peter and all saints.'

Hereward threw himself off his horse, and threw his arms round his uncle's neck.

'Fish! Now, uncle, don't cry, do what you will, but I cry too. Help me to be a man while I live, even if I go to the black place when I die.'

'It shall not be!' and the monk swore by all the relics in Peterboroughminster.

'It must be. It shall be. I like to be outlawed. I want to be outlawed. It makes me feel like a man. There is not an earl in England, save my father, who has not been outlawed in his time. My brother Algar will be outlawed before he dies, if he has the spirit of a man in him. It is the fashion, my uncle, and I must follow it. So hey for the merry greenwood and the long ships, and the swan's bath, and all the rest of it. Uncle, you will lend me fifty silver pennies?'

'I? I would not lend thee one, if I had it, which I have not. And yet, old fool that I am, I believe I would.'

'I would pay thee back honestly. I shall go down to Constantinople to the Varangers, get my Polotasawit¹ out of the kaiser's treasure, and pay thee back five to one.'

'What does this son of Belial here?' asked an austere voice.

¹ See 'The Heimskringla,' Harold Hardrade's Saga, for the meaning of this word.

'Ah! Abbot Leofric, my very good lord. I have come to ask hospitality of you for some three days. By that time I shall be a wolf's head, and out of the law and then, if you will give me ten minutes' start, you may put your bloodhounds on my track, and see which run fastest, they or I. You are a gentleman, and a man of honour, so I trust to you to feed my horse fairly the meanwhile, and not to let your monks poison me.'

The abbot's face relaxed. He tried to look as solemn as he could, but he ended in bursting into a very great laughter.

'The insolence of this lad passes the miracles of all saints. He robs St. Peter on the highway, breaks into his abbey, insults him to his face, and then asks him for hospitality, and—'

'And gets it,' quoth Hereward.

'What is to be done with him, Brand, my friend? If we turn him out—'

'Which we cannot do,' said Brand, looking at the well-mailed and armed lad, 'without calling in half a dozen of our men-at-arms.'

'In which case there would be bloodshed and scandal made in the holy precincts.'

'And nothing gained, for yield he would not till he was killed outright, which Heaven forbid!'

Amen. And if he stay here, he may be persuaded to repentance.'

'And restitution.'

As for that,' quoth Hereward (who had remounted his horse from prudential motives, and set him athwart the gateway, so that there was no chance of the doors being slammed behind him), 'if either of you will lend me sixteen pennies, I will pay them back to you and St. Peter before I die, with interest enough to satisfy any Jew, on the word of a gentleman and an earl's son.'

The abbot burst again into a great laughter. 'Come in, thou graceless renegade, and we will see to thee and thy horse, and I will pray to St. Peter, and I doubt not he will have patience with thee, for he is very merciful, and after all, thy parents have been exceeding good to us, and the righteousness of the father, like his sins, is sometimes visited on the children.'

Now, why were the two ecclesiastics so uncanonically kind to this wicked youth?

Perhaps because both the old hachelors were wishing from their hearts that they had just such a son of their own. And beside, Earl Leofric was a very great man indeed, and the wind might change, for it is an unstable world.

'Only, mind, one thing,' said the naughty boy, as he dismounted, and hallooed to a lay-brother to see to his horse, 'don't let me see the face of that Herluin.'

'And why? You have wronged him, and he will forgive you, doubtless, like a good Christian as he is.'

'That is his concern. But if I see him, I cut off his head. And as uncle Brand knows, I always sleep with my sword under my pillow.'

'Oh, that such a mother should have borne

such a son!' groaned the abbot, as they went in.

On the fifth day came Martin Lightfoot, and found Hereward in Prior Brand's private cell.

'Well?' asked Hereward coolly.

'Is he——? Is he——?' stammered Brand and could not finish his sentence.

Martin nodded.

Hereward laughed—a loud, swaggering, uneasy laugh.

'See what it is to be born of just and pious parents. Come, Master Trot-alone, speak out and tell us all about it. Thy lean wolf's legs have run to some purpose. Open thy lean wolf's mouth and speak for once, lest I ease thy legs for the rest of thy life by a cut across the hams. Find thy lost tongue, I say!'

'Walls have ears, as well as the wild wood,' said Martin.

'We are safe here,' said the prior, 'so speak, and tell us the whole truth.'

'Well, when the earl read the letter, he turned red, and pale again, and then nought but—"Men, follow me to the king at Westminster." So we went all with our weapons, twenty or more, along the Strand, and up into the king's new hall, and a grand hall it is, but not easy to get into, for the crowd of monks and beggars on the stairs, hindering honest folk's business. And there saw the king on a high settle, with his pink face and white hair, looking as royal as a bell-wether new washed, and on either side of him, on the same settle, sat the old fox and the young wolf!'

'Godwin and Harold? And where was the queen?'

'Sitting on a stool at his feet, with her hands together as if she were prying, and her eyes downcast, as demure as any cat. And so is fulfilled the story, how the sheep-dog went out to get married, and left the fox, the wolf, and the cat to guard the flock.'

'If thou hast found thy tongue,' said Brand, 'thou art like enough to lose it again by sheer of knife, talking such ribaldry of dignities. Dost not know?—and he sank his voice—'that Abbot Leofric is Earl Harold's man, and that Harold himself made him abbot!'

'I said—Walls have ears. It was you who told me that we were safe. However, I will bridle the unruly one.' And he went on. 'And your father walked up the hall, his left hand on his sword-hilt, looking an earl all over, as he is.'

'He is that,' said Hereward in a low voice.

'And he bowed, and the most magnificent, powerful, and virtuous Godwin (as that speaking evil of dignities¹) would have beckoned him up to sit on the high settle, but he looked straight at the king, as if there were never a Godwin or a Godwinsson on earth, and cried as he stood—

"Justice, my lord the king!"'

'And at that the king turned pale, and said:

¹ It must be remembered that the house of Godwin is spoken of throughout this book by hereditary enemies.

"Who! What! O miserable world! O last days drawing nearer and nearer! O earth, full of violence and blood! Who has wronged thee now, most dear and noble earl!"

"Justice against my own son"

'At that the fox looked at the wolf, and the wolf at the fox, and if they did not smile, it was not for want of will, I warrant. But your father went on, and told all his story, and when he came to your robbing master monk—

"O apostate!" cries the bell-wether, "O spawn of Beelzebub! excommunicate him, with bell, book, and candle. May he be thrust down with Korah, Balaam, and Iscariot, to the most Stygian pot of the sempiternal Tartarus."

'And at that your father smiled. "That is bishops' work," says he, "and I want king's work from you, lord king. Outlaw me this young rebel's sinful body, as by law you can, and leave his sinful soul to the priests—or to God's mercy, which is like to be more than theirs."

'Then the queen looked up. "Your own son, noble earl! Think of what you are doing—and one, too, whom all say is so gallant and so fair. Oh, persuade him, father—persuade him, Harold, my brother—or, if you cannot persuade him, persuade the king at least, and save this poor youth from exile."

'Puss Velvet-paw knew well enough,' said Hereward in a low voice, 'that the way to lighten my father's heart was to set Godwin and Harold on softening it. They ask my pardon from the king! I would not take it at their asking, even if my father would.'

'There spoke a true Leofricsson,' said Brand, in spite of himself.

"By the——" (and Martin repeated a certain very solemn oath), 'said your father, "justice I will have, my lord king. Who talks to me of my own son! You put me into my earldom to see justice done, and law obeyed, and how shall I make others keep within bound? I am not to keep in my own flesh and blood! Here is this land running headlong to ruin, because every nobleman—ay every churl who owns a manor, if he dares—must needs arm and mickle, and levy war on his own behalf, and harry and slay the king's lieges, if he have not garlic to his roast goose every time he chooses"—and there your father did look at Godwin, once and for all—"and shall I let my son follow the fashion, and do his best to leave the land open and weak for Norseman, or Dane, or Frenchman, or whoever else hopes next to mount the throne of a king who is too holy to leave an heir behind him!"'

'Aho! Martin the silent! Where learnedst thou so suddenly the trade of preaching! I thought thou hadst kept thy wind for thy running this two years past. Thou wouldst make as good a talker among the Witan as Godwin himself. Thou givest it us all, word for word, and voice and gesture withal, as if thou wert King Edward's French chancellor.'

Martin smiled. 'I am like Falada the

horse, my lords, who could only speak to his own true princess. Why I held my tongue of late was only lest they should cut my head off for talking, as they did poor Falada's.'

'Thou art a very crafty knave,' said Brand, and hast had clerk-learning in thy time, I can see, and made bad use of it. I misdoubt very much that thou art some runaway monk.'

'That am I not, by St Peter's chains!' said Martin, in an eager, terrified voice. 'Lord Hereward, I came hither as your father's messenger and servant. You will see me safe out of this abbey, like an honourable gentleman.'

'I will. All I know of him, uncle, is that he used to tell me stories, when I was a boy, of enchanters and knights and dragons, and such-like, and got into trouble for filling my head with such fancies. Now let him tell his story in peace.'

'He shall. But I misdoubt the fellow very much. He talks as if he knew Latin, and what business has a foot-running slave to do that?'

So Martin went on, somewhat abashed. "And," said your father, "justice I will have, and leave injustice, and the over looking of it, to those who wish to profit thereby."

'And at that Godwin smiled, and said to the king, "The earl is wise, as usual, and speaks like a very Solomon. Your Majesty must, in spite of your own tenderness of heart, have these letters of outlawry made out."

'Then all our men murmured—and I as loud as any. But old Surturbrand the housecarle did more, for out he stepped to your father's side, and spoke right up before the king.

"Bonny times," he said, "I have lived to see, when a lad of Earl Oslac's blood is sent out of the land, a beggar and a wolf's head for playing a boy's trick or two, and upsetting a shaveling priest! We managed such wild young colts better, we Vikings who conquered the Danelagh. If Canute had had a son like Hereward—as would to God he had had—he would have dealt with him as old Swend Forkbeard (God grant I meet him in Valhalla, in spite of all priests!) did by Canute himself when he was young, and kicked and plunged awhile at being first bitten and saddled."

"What does the man say?" asked the king, for old Surturbrand was talking broad Danish.

"He is a housecarle of mine, Lord King, a good man and true, but old age and rough Danish blood have made him forget that he stands before kings and earls."

"By the head of Odin's horse, earl!" says Surturbrand, "I have fought knee to knee beside a braver king than that there, and nobler earls than ever a one here, and was never afraid, like a free Dane, to speak my mind to them by sea or land. And if the king, with his French ways, does not understand a plain man's talk, the two earls yonder do right well, and I say—Deal by this lad in the good old fashion. Give him half a dozen long ships, and what crews he can get together, and

said him out, as Canute would have done, to seek his fortune like a Viking, and if he comes home with plenty of wounds and plunder, give him an earldom as he deserves. Do you ask your countess, Earl Godwin—she is of the right Danish blood, God bless her! though she is your wife—and see if she does not know how to bring a naughty lad to his senses."

"Then Harold the earl said: "The old man is right, king, listen to what he says." And he told them all, quite eagerly."

"How did you know that? Can you understand French?"

"I am a poor idiot, give me a halfpenny," said Martin in a doleful voice, as he threw into his face and whole figure a look of helpless stupidity and awkwardness, which set them both laughing.

But Hereward checked himself. "And then thinkest he was in earnest?"

"As sure as there are holy crows in Crowland. But it was of no use. Your father got a parchment, with an outlandish Norman seal hanging to it, and sent me off with it that same night to give to the lawman. So wolf's head you are, my lord, and there is no use crying over spilt milk."

"And Harold spoke for me? Not that I care, but it will be as well to tell Abbot Leofric that, in case he be inclined to turn traitor, and refuse to open the gates. Once outside them, I fear not mortal man."

"My poor boy, there will be many a one whom thou hast wronged only too ready to be in wait for thee, now thy life is in every man's hand. If the outlawry is published, thou hadst best start to-night, and get past Lincoln before morning."

"I shall stay quietly here, and get a good night's rest, and then ride out to-morrow morning in the face of the whole shire. No, not a word! You would not have me sneak away like a coward!"

Brand smiled and shrugged his shoulders, being very much of the same mind.

"At least, go north!"

"And why north?"

"You have no quarrel in Northumberland, and the king's wit runs very slowly there, if at all. Old Sward Digne may stand your friend."

"He? he is a fast friend of my father's."

"What of that? the old Viking will like you none the less for having shown a touch of his own temper. Go to him, I say, and tell him that I sent you."

"But he is fighting the Scots beyond the Forth."

"So much the better. There will be good work for you to do. And Gilbert of Ghent is up there too, I hear, trying to settle himself among the Scots. He is your mother's kinsman, and as for your being an outlaw, he wants hard hitters and hard riders, and all is fish that comes to his net. Find him out too, and tell him that I sent you."

"You are a good old uncle," said Hereward. "Why were you not a soldier?"

Brand laughed somewhat sadly.

"If I had been a soldier, lad, where wouldst thou have looked for a friend this day? No God has done what was moreiful with me and my sin. May He do the same by thee and thine."

Hereward made an impatient movement. He disliked any word which seemed likely to soften his own hardness of heart. But he kissed his uncle lovingly on both cheeks.

"By the hye, Martin—any message from my lady mother?"

"None!"

"Quite right and pious. I am an enemy to Holy Church and therefore to her. Good-night, uncle."

"Hey?" asked Brand, "who is that footman Martin you call him? I must have another word with him."

But Martin was gone.

"No matter. I shall question him sharply enough to-morrow, I warrant."

And Hereward went out to his lodging while the good prior went to his prayers.

When Hereward entered his room, Martin started out of the darkness, and followed him in. Then he shut the door carefully, and pulled out a bag.

"There was no message from my lady but there was this."

The bag was full of money.

"Why did you not tell me of this before?"

"Never show money before a monk."

"Villain! would you mistrust my uncle?"

"Any man with a shaven crown. St Peter is his God, and Lord, and conscience, and if he saw but the shine of a penny, for St Peter he would wint it."

"And he shall have it," quoth Hereward, and flung out of the room, and into his uncle's.

"Uncle, I have money. I have come to pay back what I took from the steward, and as much more into the bargain." And he told out eight and-thirty pieces.

"Thank God and all His saints!" cried Brand, weeping abundantly for joy, for he had acquired, by long devotion, the domum lacrymarum—that lachrymose and somewhat hysterical temperament common among pious monks, and held to be a mark of grace.

"Blessed St. Peter, thou art repaid, and thou wilt be merciful."

Brand believed, in common with all monks then, that Hereward had robbed, not merely the abbey of Peterborough, but what was more, St. Peter himself, thereby converting into an impudable and intercessor for the chief of the Apostles, the rock on which was founded the whole Church.

"Now, uncle," said Hereward, "do me one good deed in return. Promise me that, if you can help it, none of my poor housecarles shall suffer for my sin. I led them into trouble. I am punished. I have made restitution—at least to St. Peter. See that my father and mother, if they be the Christians they call themselves, forgive and forget all offences except mine."

'I will so help me all saints and our Lord
Oh, my boy, my boy, thou shouldst have been a
king's thane and not an outlaw!'

And he hurried off with the news to the abbot.
When Hereward returned to his room, Marian
was gone.

'Farewell, good men of Peterborough,' said
Hereward, as he leapt into the saddle next
morning. 'I had made a vow against you, and
came to try you, and see whether you would
force me to fulfil it or not. But you have been
so kind that I have half repented thereof, and
the evil shall not come in the days of Abbot
Leofric, nor of Brand the prior, though it may
come in the days of Herlun the steward, if he
live long enough.'

'What meanest thou, incarnate fiend, only
fit to worship Thor and Odin?' asked Brand.

'That I would burn Goldenborough, and
Herlun the steward within it, ere I die. I fear
I shall do it. I fear I must do it. Ten years
ago came Lammias Herlun bade light the pent-
stack under me, do you recollect?'

'And so he did, the brand!' quoth Brand.
'I had forgotten that.'

'Little Hereward never forgets foe or friend.
Ever since, on Lammias night, hold still, horse!
- I dream of fire and flame, and of Golden-
borough in the glare of it. If it is written in
the big book, happen it must, if not, so much
the better for Goldenborough, for it is a pretty
place, and honest Englishmen in it. Only see
that there be not too many Frenchmen crept in
when I come back, beside our French friend
Herlun, and see, too, that there be not a pent-
stack handy at the Bulldyke-gate—a word is
enough to wise men like you. Good-bye!'

'God help thee, thou sinful boy!' said the
abbot.

'Hereward, Hereward! come back,' cried Brand.
But the boy had spurred his horse through
the gateway, and was far down the road.

'Leofric, my friend,' said Brand sadly, 'this
is my sin, and no man's else. And heavy
penance will I do for it, till that lad returns in
peace.'

'You sin!'

'Minc, abbot. I persuaded his mother to
send him hither to be a monk. Alas! alas!
How long will men try to be wiser than He who
maketh men?'

'I do not understand thee,' quoth the abbot.
And no more he did.

It was four o'clock on a May morning when
Hereward set out to see the world, with good
armour on his back, good weapon by his side,
good horse between his knees, and—rare luxury
in those penniless, though otherwise plentiful
days—good money in his purse. What could a
lad of eighteen want more, who under the harsh
family rule of those times had known nothing
of a father's, and but too little of a mother's,
love? He rode away westward, avoiding, of
course, Kesteven and Bourne. Through Milton
woods he rode, and lingered but one moment,
as he crossed the King Street at Castor Haugh-

lands, to glance up the straight Roman road
which led toward his home. That led to the
old world. He was going to the new, and he
pricked his horse gaily on through Bainton
woods, struck the Ermine Street on Southorpe
Heath, and so on towards the Welland, little
dreaming that on those open volds a palace
would one day arise, beside which King Edward's
new Hall at Westminster would show but as a
tything-barn, and that the great patriot who
would build that palace would own as his birth-
place the very house from which Hereward fled
that day.

Over the Welland to Brig Casterton, where
Dick Tuppyn crossed in after times, like him
avoiding Stamford town, and then up the
Ermine Street, through princely glades of
mighty oak and ash, with holly and thorn
beneath, swarming with game, which was as
highly preserved then as now, under Canute's
severe forest laws. The yellow oaks stood and
stared at him knee deep in the young fern, the
pheasant called his hens out to feed in the dewy
grass, the blackbird and thrush sang out from
every bough, the wood-lark tilled above the
high oak tops, and sank down on them as his
song sank down. And Hereward rode on,
rejoicing in it all. It was a fine world in the
Brimeswald. What was it then outside? Not
to him, as to us, a world circular, round, circum-
scribed, mapped, botanised, zoologised, a tiny
planet about which everybody knows, or thinks
they know, everything, but a world infinite,
mystical, supernatural, because unknown, a vast
flat plain reaching no one knew whence or where,
save that the mountains stood on the four corners
thereof to keep it steady, and the four winds of
heaven blew out of them, and in the centre,
which was to him the Brimeswald, such things
as he saw but beyond, things unspeakable—
dragons, giants, rocs, orcs, witch whyles, griffins,
chimeras, satyrs, onchiders, Pygmies, Saracens,
towers and Sultans, Kaisers of Constantinople,
Kaisers of Ind and of Cathay, and beyond them
ignom of lands as yet unknown. At the very least
he could go to Brittany, to the forest of Broche-
saunde, where (so all men said) barres might be
seen bathing in the fountains, and possibly be
won and wedded by a bold and dexterous knight,
after the fashion of Sir Grucel. What was
there not to be seen and conquered? Where
would he go? Where would he not go? For
the spirit of Odin the Goer, the spirit which has
sent his children round the world, was strong
within him. He would go to Iceland, to the
Ostmen, or Irish Danes, at Dublin, Waterford,
or Cork, and marry some beautiful Irish princess
with gray eyes, and raven locks, and saffron
smock, and great gold bracelets from her native
hills. No, he would go off to the Orkneys,
and join Binn and Ranaid, and the Vikings of

1 Wace, author of the *Roman de Rou*, went to Brittany
a generation later, to see those same fairies, but had no
sport, and sang—

'Fol i alai, fol m'en revins,
Folle quia, por fol me tina.'

the northern seas, and all the hot blood which had found even Norway too hot to hold it, he would sail through witch-whales and icebergs to Iceland and Greenland, and the sunny lands which they said lay even beyond, across the all but unknown ocean. Or he would go up the Heltie to the Joinaburg Vikings, and fight against Lett and Esthoman heathen, and pierce inland, perhaps, through Puleyn and the bison forests, to the land from whence came the magic swords and the old Persian coins which he had seen so often in the halls of his forefathers. No, he would go south, to the land of sun and wine, and see the magicians of Cordova and Seville, and heard Mussulman hounds worshipping their Mahomets, and perhaps bring home an Emir's daughter,

'With more gay gold about her middle,
Than would buy half Northumberland'

Or he would go up the Straits, and on to Constantinople and the great Kaiser of the Greeks, and join the Varanger Guard, and perhaps, like Harold Hardraade in his own days, after being cast to the lion for carrying off a fair Greek lady, tear out the monster's tongue with his own hands, and show the Easterns what a Viking's son could do. And as he dreamed of the infinite world and its infinite wonders, the enchanters he might meet, the jewels he might find, the adventures he might essay, he held that he must succeed in all, with hope and wit, and a strong arm, and forgot altogether that, mixed up with the cosmogony of an infinite flat plain called the earth, there was joined also the belief in a flat roof above called heaven, on which (seen at times in visions through clouds and stars) sat saints, angels, and archangels, for evermore harping off their golden harps, and knowing neither vanity nor vexation of spirit, lust nor pride, murder nor war, and underneath a floor, the name whereof was hell, the months whereof (as all men knew) might be seen on Hecla, Etua, and Stromboli, and the fiends heard within, tormenting, amid fire, and smoke, and clanking chains, the souls of the endlessly lost.

As he rode on, slowly though cheerfully, as a man who will not tire his horse at the beginning of a long day's journey, and knows not where he shall pass the night, he was aware of a man on foot coming up behind him at a slow, steady, loping, wolf-like trot, which in spite of its slowness gained ground on him so fast, that he saw at once that the man could be no common runner.

The man came up, and behold, he was none other than Martin Lightfoot.

'What! art thou here?' asked Hereward suspiciously, and half cross at seeing any visitor from the old world which he had just cast off.

'How gottest thou out of St. Peter's last night?' Martin's tongue was hanging out of his mouth like a running hound's, but he seemed, like a hound, to perspire through his mouth, for he answered without the least sign of distress, without even pulling in his tongue

'Over the wall, the moment the prior's back was turned. I was not going to wait till I was chained up in some rat's hole with a half-hundred of iron on my leg, and flogged till I confessed that I was what I am not—a runaway monk.'

'And why art here?'

'Because I am going with you.'

'Going with me?' said Hereward. 'What can I do for thee?'

'I can do for you,' said Martin.

'What?'

'Groom your horse, wash your shirt, clean your weapons, find your inn, fight your enemies, cheat your friends—anything and everything. You are going to see the world. I am going with you.'

'Thou canst be my servant? A right slippery one, I expect,' said Hereward, looking down on him with some suspicion.

'Some are not the rogues they seem. I can keep my secrets and yours too.'

'Before I can trust thee with my secrets, I shall expect to know some of thine,' said Hereward.

Martin Lightfoot looked up with a cunning smile. 'A man can always know his master's secrets if he likes. But that is no reason a master should know his man's.'

'Thou shalt tell me things, man, or I shall ride off and leave thee.'

'Not so easy, my lord. Where that heavy horse can go, Martin Lightfoot can follow. But I will tell you one secret, which I never told to living man. I can read and write like any clerk.'

'Thou read and write?'

'Ay, good Latin enough, and French, and Irish too, what is more. And now because I love you, and because you I will serve, willy nilly, I will tell you all the secrets I have, as long as my breath lasts, for my tongue is rather still after that long story about the bell-wether. I was born in Ireland, in Waterford town. My mother was an English slave, one of those that Earl Godwin's wife—not this one that is now, Gyda, but the old one—used to sell out of England by the score, tied together with ropes, boys and girls from Bristol town.¹ Her master, my father that was (I shall know him again), got tired of her, and wanted to give her away to one of his kernes. She would not have that, so he hung her up hand and foot, and beat her that she died. There was an abbey hard by, and the Church laid on him a penance—all that they dared get out of him—that he should give me to the monks, being then a seven-years' boy. Well, I grew up in that abbey, they taught me my fa fa mi fa, but I liked better conning ballads and hearing stories of ghosts and enchanters, such as I used to tell you. I'll tell you plenty more whenever you're tired. Then they made me work, and that I never could abide at all. Then they beat me every day; and

¹ I adopt William of Malmesbury's old story, though there is no good authority for it. Even if a calumny, it fits the mouth of an adherent of the house of Leofric, and an English slave-trade certainly was carried on in those days.

that I could abide still less, but always I stoek to my book, for one thing I saw—that learning is power, my lord, and that the reason why the monks are masters of the land is, they are scholars, and you fighting men are none. Then I fell in love (as young blood will) with an Irish lass, when I was full seventeen years old, and when they found out that, they held me down on the floor and beat me till I was well-nigh dead. They put me in prison for a month, and between bread-and-water and darkness I went nigh foolish. They let me out, thinking I could do no more harm to man or law, and when I found out how profitable folly was, foolish I remained, at least as foolish as seemed good to me. But one night I got into the abbey church, stole therefrom that which I have with me now, and which shall serve you and me in good stead yet—out and away aboard a ship among the buscarles, and off into the Norway sea. But after a voyage or two, so it befell, I was wrecked in the Wash by Botulfston Deeps, and begging my way inland, met with your father, and took service with him, as I have taken service now with you.

'Now, what has made thee take service with me?'

'Because you are you.'

'Give me none of thy parables and dark sayings, but speak out like a man. What canst see in me that thou shouldst share an outlaw's fortune with me?'

'I had run away from a monastery, so had you. I hated the monks, so did you. I liked to tell stories—since I found good to shut my mouth I tell them to myself all day long, sometimes all night too. When I found out you liked to hear them, I loved you all the more. Then they told me not to speak to you, I held my tongue. I bided my time. I knew you would be outlawed some day. I knew you would turn Viking and kemperry-man, and kill giants and enchanters, and win yourself honour and glory, and I knew I should have my share in it. I knew you would need me some day, and you need me now, and here I am, and if you try to cut me down with your sword, I will dodge you, and follow you, and dodge you again, till I force you to let me be your man. I never loved you as I do now. You let me take that letter safe, like a true hero. You let yourself be outlawed like a true hero. You made up your mind to see the world like a true hero. You are the master for me, and with you I will live and die. And now I can talk no more.'

'And with me thou shalt live and die,' said Hereward, pulling up his horse, and frankly holding out his hand to his new friend.

Martin Lightfoot took his hand, kissed it, hoked it almost, as a dog would have done. 'I am your man,' he said, 'amon, and true man I will prove to you, if you will prove true to me.' And he dropped quietly back behind Hereward's horse, as if the business of his life was settled, and his mind utterly at rest.

'There is one more likeness between us,' said

Hereward, after a few minutes' thought. 'If I have robbed a church, thou hast robbed one too. What is this precious spoil which is to serve me and thee in such mighty stead?'

Martin drew from inside his shirt and under his waistband a small battle-axe and handed it up to Hereward. It was a tool the like of which in shape Hereward had seldom seen, and never its equal in beauty. The handle was some fifteen inches long, made of thick strips of black whalobone, curiously bound with silver, and buttied with narwhal ivory. This handle was evidently the work of some cunning Norseman of old. But who had been the maker of the blade? It was some eight inches long, with a sharp edge on one side, a sharp crooked pick on the other, of the finest steel, inlaid with strange characters in gold, the work probably of some Circassian, Tartar, or Persian, such a battle-axe as Rustinn or Zohrab may have wielded in fight on the banks of Oxus, one of those magic weapons, brought, men knew not how, out of the magic East, which were hereditary in many a Norse family, and sung of in many a Norse saga.

'Look at it,' said Martin Lightfoot. 'There is magic in it. It must bring us luck. Whoever holds that must kill his man. It will pick a lock of steel. It will crack a mail corselet as a nut-hatch cracks a nut. It will hew a lance in two at a single blow. Devils and spirits forged it—I know that, Virgilus the Enchanter, perhaps, or Solomon the Great, or whosoever's name is on it, graven there in letters of gold. Handle it, feel its balance, but no—do not handle it too much. There is a devil in it, who would make you kill me. Whenever I play with it I long to kill a man. It would be so easy—so easy. Give it me back, my lord, give it me back, lest the devil come through the handle into your palm, and possess you.'

Hereward laughed, and gave him back his battle-axe. But he had hardly less doubt of the magic virtues of such a blade than had Martin himself.

'Magical or not, thou wilt not have to hit a man twice with that, Martin, my lad. So we two outlaws are both well armed, and having neither wife nor child, land nor beeves to lose, ought to be a match for any six honest men who may have a grudge against us, and yet have sound reasons at home for running away.'

And so those two went northward through the green Buneswald, and northward through merry Sherwood, and were not seen in that land again for many a year.

CHAPTER II

HOW HERWARD SLEW THE BEAR¹

Of Hereward's doings for the next few months nought is known. He may very likely have

¹ This story of the bear is likely not to be a myth, but

joined Siward in the Scotch war. He may have looked, wondering, for the first time in his life, upon the bones of the old world, where they rise at Dunkeld out of the lowlands of the Tay, and have trembled lest the black crags of Binnam should topple on his head with all their pines. He may have marched down from that famous leaguer with the Gospatrics and Dolphines, and the rest of the kindred of Crinan, and of Siward, of the murdered Duncan, and the outraged Silalla. He may have helped himself to bring Binnam Wood to Dunmure on the day of the Seven Sleepers, and heard Siward, when his son Asbjorn's corpse was carried into camp, ask only, 'Has he all his wounds in front?' He may have seen old Siward, after Macbeth's defeat (not death, as Shakespeare relates the story), go back to Northumbria 'with such booty as no man had obtained before,' a proof—if the fact be true—that the Scotch lowlands were not, in the eleventh century, the poor and barbarous country which some have reported them to have been.

All this is not only possible, but probable enough, though the chroniclers, the chroniclers, however, are silent. They only say that Hereward was in those days beyond Northumberland with Gilbert of Ghent.

Gisbert, Gislebert, Gilbert, Guibert, Goslicht, of Ghent,¹ who afterwards won, by chance of war, many a fair maiden in Lincolnshire and elsewhere, was one of those valiant Flemings who settled along the east and north-east coast of Scotland in the eleventh century. They fought with the Celtic Macdonnells, and then married with their daughters, got to themselves lands by the title-deed of the sword, and so became—the famous Freskin the Fleming especially—the ancestors of the best aristocracy, both physically and intellectually, in the world. They had their connections, moreover, with the Norman court of Rouen, through the Duchesses

among the most authentic of Hereward's famous deeds. So likewise is the story of the Cornish princess, and of his deeds in Flanders. For Richard of Ely, if I understand him rightly, says that he got his information from the actual MSS. of Loufrie of Boucon, Hereward's missus priest, 'up to the place where he came home again; and more was than the average of monk writers, kept to the crude matter, too little compressed and ornate by the care of any English intellect, or by dialect and the like enigmas.' For 'always he was deluded by vain hope, or from the beginning, by folks saying that in this place and that is a great book about the same Cornish deeds,' which book never appearing, he seems to have finished his work from popular tradition, leaving, to do him justice, the dialect and rhetorical enigmas to be added by the author of the *Liber Hibernie*. But, like him, wandering sadly in his chronology, I have retained every detail, I believe, which he gives in the earlier part of his story, as valuable and all but unique sketches of the manners of the eleventh century.

¹ Shakespeare calls his son 'young Siward.' He, too, was slain in the battle, but he was old Siward's nephew.

² Our English genealogists make him son of Baldwin of Meos and Richilda of Hainsnit, which is a manifest error. Mr. Forster, in his learned notes to *Ordericus Vitalis*, says that he was son of Balf, the Lord of Alost, and confirms the story that his eldest son died prematurely. He may have been nevertheless a near relation of the Marquis Baldwin.

Matilda, daughter of their old Seigneur, Baldwin Marquis of Flanders, their connections, too, with the English Court, through Countess Judith, wife of Earl Tosti Godwinsson, another daughter of Baldwin's. Their friendship was sought, their enmity feared, far and wide throughout the north. They seem to have been, with the instinct of true Flemings, civilisers, and cultivators, and traders, as well as conquerors, they were in those very days bringing to order and tillage the rich lands of the north-east, from the Firth of Moray to that of Forth, and forming a rampart for Scotland against the invasions of Swayn, Harthraute, and all the wild Vikings of the northern seas.

Amongst them, in those days, Gilbert of Ghent seems to have been a notable personage, to judge from the great house which he kept, and the 'miles tyrannus,' or squires in training for the honour of knighthood, who fed at his table. Where he lived, the chroniclers report not. To them the country 'ultra Northumbriam,' beyond the Forth, was as Russia or Cathay, where

'Geographers in pathless dories
Pit ch plants for west of towns.'

As indeed it was to that French map-maker who, as late as the middle of the eighteenth century (not having learned Aberdeen or Elgin), left all the country north of the Tay a blank, with the inscription—'*Terra innotata scilicet, habite par les Highlanders*.'

Wherever Gilbert lived, however, he heard that Hereward was outlawed, and sent for him, says the story,¹ saying, it would seem, some connection with his father. And there he lived, doubtless happily enough, fighting Celts and hunting deer, so that as yet the pains and penalties of exile did not press very hardly upon him. The handsome, petulant, good-humoured lad had become in a few weeks the darling of Gilbert's ladies, and the envy of all his knights and gentlemen. Hereward the singer, harp-player, dancer, Hereward the rider and hunter, was in all mouths. But he himself was discontented at having as yet taken in with no adventure worthy of a man, and he looked enviously and longingly at the menagerie of wild beasts enclosed in strong wooden cages, which Gilbert kept in one corner of the great courtyard, not for any scientific purposes, but to try with them, at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, the mettle of the young gentlemen who were candidates for the honour of knighthood. But after looking over the bulls and stags, wolves and bears, Hereward settled it in his mind that there was none worthy of his steel, save one huge white bear, whom no man had yet dared to face, and whom Hereward, indeed, had never seen, hidden as he was all day within the old oven-shaped Pict's house of stone, which

¹ Richard of Ely gives as the reason—'pro illo uulfo: fides enim erat deitis illius.' 'Fides' may be presumed to mean gowden in the vocabulary of that good monk, but it is not clear of whom he speaks as 'dives ille.' Possibly Gilbert of Ghent was godson of Hereward's father.

had been turned into his den. There was a mystery about the uncanny brute which charmed Hereward. He was said to be half human, perhaps wholly human, to be a son of the Fairy Bear, near kinsman, if not brother, nephew, or cousin, of Siward Digre himself. He had, like his fairy father, iron claws, he had human intellect, and understood human speech, and the arts of war,—at least so all in the place believed, and not as absurdly as at first sight seems.

For the brown bear, and much more the white, was, among the Northern nations, in himself a creature magical and superhuman. 'He is God's dog,' whispered the Lapp, and called him, 'the old man in the fur cloak,' afraid to use his right name, even inside the tent, for fear of his overhearing and avenging the insult. 'He has twelve men's strength, and eleven men's wit,' sang the Norseman, and paraded himself accordingly, like a true Norseman, on outwitting and slaying the enchanted monster.

Terrible was the brown bear, but more terrible 'the white sea-leop,' as the Saxons called him, the horned Hyman, the whale's bane, the seal's dread, the rider of the neberg, the sailor of the floe, who ranged for his prey under the six months' night lighted by Snitir's fires, even to the gates of Musgillheim. To slay him was a feat worthy of Beowulf's self, and the greatest wonder, perhaps, among all the wealth of *Crowland*, was the twelve white bear skins which lay before the altars, the gift of the great Caunter. How Gilbert had obtained his white bear, and why he kept him there in durance vile, was a mystery over which men shook their heads. Again and again Hereward asked his host to let him try his strength against the monster of the North. Again and again the shrieks of the ladies, and Gilbert's own pity for the strapping youth, brought a refusal. But Hereward settled it in his heart, nevertheless, that somehow or other, when Christmas time came round, he would extract from Gilbert, drunk or sober, leave to fight that bear, and then either make himself a name, or die like a man.

Meanwhile Hereward made a friend. Among all the ladies of Gilbert's household, however kind they were inclined to be to him, he took a fancy only to one—a little girl of ten years old. Alfrida was her name. He liked to amuse himself with this child, without, as he feared, any danger of falling in love, for already his dreams of love were of the highest and most fantastic, and an *Emn's* daughter, or a Princess of Constantinople, were the very lowest game at which he meant to fly. Alfrida was beautiful, too, exceedingly, and precocious, and, it may be, vain enough to repay his attentions in good earnest. Moreover she was English, as he was, and royal likewise, a relation of *Elfgiva*, daughter of *Ethelred*, once King of England. She, as all know, married *Uelhtred*, Prince of Northumberland, the grandfather of *Gospatrik*, Earl of Northumberland, and ancestor of all the *Dunbars*.¹ Between the English lad, then, and

¹ See note at end of chapter.

the English maiden grew up in a few weeks an innocent friendship, which had almost become more than friendship, through the intervention of the Fairy Bear.

For as Hereward was coming in one afternoon from hunting, hawk on fist, with *Martin* Light-foot trutting behind, crane and heron, duck and hare, slung over his shoulder, on reaching the courtyard gates he was aware of screams and shouts within, tumult and terror among man and beast. Hereward tried to force his horse in at the gate. The beast stopped and turned, snorting with fear, and no wonder, for in the midst of the courtyard stood the Fairy Bear, his white mane bristled up till he seemed twice as big as any of the sober brown bears which Hereward yet had seen. His long snake neck and cruel visage wreathing about in search of prey. A dead horse, its back broken by a single blow of the paw, and two or three writhing dogs, showed that the beast had turned (like too many of his human kindred in those days) 'Baserker'. The courtyard was utterly empty, but from the ladies' bower came shrieks and shouts, not only of women but of men, and knocking at the bower door, adding her screams to those inside, was a little white figure, which Hereward recognised as Alfrida's. They had barricaded themselves inside, leaving the child out, and now dared not open the door, as the bear swung and rolled towards it, looking savagely right and left for a fresh victim.

Hereward leaped from his horse, and drawing his sword, rushed forward with a shout which made the bear turn round.

He looked once back at the child, then round again at Hereward, and making up his mind to take the largest morsel first, made straight at him with a growl which there was no mistaking.

He was within two paces, then he rose on his hind legs a head and shoulders taller than Hereward, and lifted the non talons high in air. Hereward knew that there was but one spot at which to strike, and he struck true and strong, before the iron paw could fall, right on the muzzle of the monster.

He heard the dull crash of the steel, he felt the sword jammed tight. He shut his eyes for an instant, fearing lest, as in dreams, his blow had come to nought, lest his sword had turned aside, or melted like water in his hand, and the next moment would find him crushed to earth, blinded and stunned. Something tugged at his sword. He opened his eyes, and saw the huge carcass bend, reel, roll slowly over to one side, dead, tearing out of his hand the sword, which was firmly fixed into the skull.

Hereward stood a while staring at the beast like a man astounded at what he himself had done. He had had his first adventure, and he had conquered. He was now a champion in his own right—a hero of the horses—one who might take rank, if he went on, beside Beowulf, Frotho, Ragnar Lodbrog, or Harold Hardraade. He had done this deed. What was there after this which he might not do? And he stood there

in the fulness of his pride, defiant of earth and heaven, while in his heart arose the thought of that old Viking who cried, in the pride of his godlessness, 'I never on earth met him whom I feared, and why should I fear him in heaven? If I met Odin I would fight with Odin. If Odin were the stronger he would slay me, if I were the stronger I would slay him.' There he stood, staring, and dreaming over renown to come, a true pattern of the half-savage hero of those rough times, capable of all vices except cowardice, and capable, too, of all virtues save humility.

'Do you not see,' said Martin Lightfoot's voice close by, 'that there is a fair lady trying to thank you, while you are so rude or so proud that you will not vouchsafe her one look?'

It was true. Little Alfruda had been clinging to him for five minutes past. He took the child up in his arms and kissed her with pure kisses, which for a moment softened his hard heart, then setting her down, he turned to Martin.

'I have done it, Martin.'

'Yes, you have done it, I spied you. What will the old folks at home say to this?'

'What care I?'

Martin Lightfoot shook his head, and drew out his knife.

'What is that for?' said Hereward.

'When the master kills the game, the knave can but skin it. We may sleep warm under this fur in many a cold night by sea and moor.'

'Nay,' said Hereward, laughing, 'when the master kills the game, he must first carry it home. Let us take him and set him up against the bower door there, to astonish the brave knights inside.' And stooping down, he attempted to lift the huge carcass—but in vain. At last, with Martin's help, he got it fairly on his shoulders, and the two dragged their burden to the bower, and dashed it against the door, shouting with all their might to those within to open it.

Windows, it must be remembered, were in those days so few and far between, that the folks inside had remained quite unaware of what was going on without.

The door was opened cautiously enough, and out looked, to the shame of knighthood, be it said, two or three knights who had taken shelter in the bower with the ladies. Whatever they were going to say the ladies forestalled, for, rushing out across the prostrate bear, they overwhelmed Hereward with prayers, thanks, and, after the straightforward custom of those days, with substantial kisses.

'You must be knighted at once,' cried they. 'You have knighted yourself by that single blow.'

'A pity then,' said one of the knights to the others, 'that he had not given that accolade to himself, instead of to the bear.'

'Unless some means are found,' said another, 'of taking down this boy's conceit, life will soon be not worth having here.'

'Either he must take ship,' said a third, 'and look for adventures elsewhere, or I must.'

Martin Lightfoot heard those words, and knowing that envy and hatred, like all other vices in those rough-hewn times, were apt to take very startling and unmistakable shapes, kept his eye accordingly on those three knights.

'He must be knighted—he shall be knighted, as soon as Sir Gilbert comes home,' said all the ladies in chorus.

'I should be sorry to think,' said Hereward, with the blundering mock humility of a self-conceited boy, 'that I had done anything worthy of such an honour. I hope to win my spurs by greater feats than these.'

A burst of laughter from the knights and gentlemen followed.

'How loud the young cockerel crows after his first scuffle!'

'Hark to him! What will he do next? Eat a dragon? Fly to the moon? Marry the Sophy of Egypt's daughter?'

The last touched Hereward to the quick, for it was just what he thought of doing, and his blood, heated enough already, beat quicker, as some one cried, with the evident intent of picking a quarrel.

'That was meant for us. If the man who killed the bear has not deserved knighthood, what must we have deserved, who have not killed him? You understand his meaning, gentlemen—do not forget it!'

Hereward looked down, and setting his foot on the bear's head, wrenched out of it the sword, which he had left till now, with pardonable pride, fast set in the skull.

Martin Lightfoot, for his part, drew stealthily from his bosom the little magic axe, keeping his eye on the brain-pan of the last speaker.

The lady of the house cried 'Shame!' and ordered the knights away with haughty words and gestures, which, because they were so well deserved, only made the quarrel more deadly.

Then she commanded Hereward to sheath his sword.

He did so, and, turning to the knights, said with all courtesy, 'You mistake me, sirs. You were where brave knights should be, within the beleaguered fortress, defending the ladies. Had you remained outside, and been eaten by the bear, what must have befallen them, had he burst open the door? As for this little lass, whom you left outside, she is too young to requite knight's prowess by lady's love, and therefore beneath your attention, and only fit for the care of a boy like me.' And taking up Alfruda in his arms, he carried her in and disappeared. Who now but Hereward was in all men's mouths? The minstrels made ballads on him, the lassos sang his praises (says the chronicler) as they danced upon the green. Gilbert's lady would need give him the seat, and all the honours, of a belted knight, though knight he was none. And daily and weekly the valiant lad grew and hardened into a valiant man, and a courteous one withal, giving no

offence himself, and not over ready to take offence at other men.

The knights were civil enough to him, the ladies more than civil, he hunted, he wrestled, he tilted, he was promised a chance of fighting for glory, as soon as a Highland chief should declare war against Gilbert or drive off his cattle—an event which (and small blame to the Highland chiefs) happened every six months.

No one was so well content with himself as Hereward, and therefore he fancied that the world must be equally content with him, and he was much disconcerted when Martin drew him aside one day, and whispered—

‘If I were my lord, I should wear a mail shirt under my coat to-morrow out hunting.’

‘What!’

‘The arrow that can go through a deer’s blade-bone can go through a man’s.’

‘Who should harm me?’

‘Any man of the dozen who eat at the same table.’

‘What have I done to them? If I had my laugh at them, they had their laugh at me, and we are quits.’

‘There is another score, my lord, which you have forgotten, and that is all on your side.’

‘Eh!’

‘You killed the bear. Do you expect them to forgive you that, till they have repaid you with interest?’

‘Fish!’

‘You do not want for wit, my lord. Use it, and think. What right has a little boy like you to come here, killing bears which grown men cannot kill? What can you expect but just punishment for your insolence—say, a lance between your shoulders while you stoop to drink, as Sigfrid had for daring to tame Brunhild!’ And more, what right have you to come here, and so win the hearts of the ladies, that the lady of all the ladies should say, “If aught happen to my poor boy—and he cannot live long—I would adopt Hereward for my own son, and show his mother what a fool some folks think her.” So, my lord, out on your mail shirt to-morrow, and take care of narrow ways and sharp corners. For to-morrow it will be tried, that I know, before my Lord Gilbert comes back from the Highlands—but by whom, I know not, and care little, seeing that there are half a dozen in the house who would be glad enough of the chance.’

Hereward took his advice, and rode out with three or four knights the next morning into the fir-forest, not afraid, but angry and sad. He was not yet old enough to estimate the virulence of envy, to take ingratitude and treachery for granted. He was to learn the lesson then, as a wholesome chastener to the pride of success. He was to learn it again in later years, as an additional bitterness in the humiliation of defeat, and find out that if a man once fall, or seem to fall, a hundred ours spring up to bark at him, who dared not open their mouths while he was on his legs.

So they rode into the forest, and parted, each with his footman and his dogs, in search of boar and deer, and each had his sport without meeting again for some two hours or more.

Hereward and Martin came at last to a narrow gully, a murderous place enough. Huge fir-trees roofed it in, and made a night of noon. High banks of earth and great boulders walled it in right and left for twenty feet above. The track, what with pack-horses’ feet, and what with the wear and tear of five hundred years’ rainfall, was a rut three feet deep and two feet broad, in which no horse could turn. Any other day Hereward would have cantered down it with merely a tightened rein. To-day he turned to Martin, and said—

‘A very fit and proper place for this same treason unless thou hast been drinking beer and thinking beer.’

But Martin was nowhere to be seen.

A pebble thrown from the right bank struck him, and he looked up. Martin’s face was peering through the heather overhead, his finger on his lips. Then he pointed cautiously, first up the pass, then down.

Hereward felt that his sword was loose in the sheath, and then gripped his lance, with a heart beating, but not with fear.

The next moment he heard the rattle of a horse’s hoofs behind him, looked back, and saw a knight charging desperately down the gully, his bow in hand, and arrow drawn to the head.

To turn was impossible. To stop, even to walk on, was to be ridden over and hurled to the ground helplessly. To gain the mouth of the gully, and then turn on his pursuer, was his only chance. For the first and almost the last time in his life, he struck spurs into his horse and ran away. As he went, an arrow struck him sharply in the back, piercing the corselet, but hardly entering the flesh. As he neared the mouth, two other knights crashed their horses through the brushwood from right and left, and stood awaiting him, their spears ready to strike. He was caught in a trap. A shield might have saved him, but he had none.

He did not flinch. Dropping his reins, and driving in the spurs once more, he met them in full shock. With his left hand he thrust aside the left-hand lance, with his right he hurled his own with all his force at the right-hand foe, and saw it pass clean through the felon’s chest, while his lance-point dropped, and passed harmlessly.

So much for lances in front. But the knight behind? Would not his sword the next moment be through his brain?

There was a clatter, a crash, and looking back, Hereward saw horse and man rolling in the rut, and rolling with them Martin Lightfoot. He had already pumed the knight’s head against the steep bank, and, with uplifted axe, was meditating a pick at his face which would have stopped alike his love-making, and his fighting.

‘Hold thy hand,’ shouted Hereward. ‘Let

us see who he is, and remember that he is at least a knight.'

'But one that will rule no more to-day I finished his horse going as I rolled down the bank'

It was true. He had broken the poor beast's leg with a blow of the axe, and they had to kill the horse out of pity ere they left.

Martin dragged his prisoner forward

'You?' said Hereward. 'And I saved your life three days ago.'

'The knight answered nothing

'You will have to walk home. Let that be punishment enough for you.' And he turned. 'He will have to ride in a woodman's cart, if he have the luck to find one.'

The third knight had fled, and after him the dead man's horse. Hereward and his men rode home in peace, and the wounded man, after trying vainly to walk a mile or two, fell and lay, and was fain to fulfil Martin's prophecy, and he brought home in a cart, to bury for years after, like Sir Lancelot, the nickname of the Chevalier de la Chasteté.

And so was Hereward avenged of his enemies, and began to win for himself the famous sobriquet of 'Wake', the Watcher whom no man ever took unawares. Judicial, even private inquiry into the matter there was none. That gentlemen should meet in the forest, try to commit murder on each other's bodies, was rather too common a mishap to stir up more than an extra gossiping among the women, and

an extra cursing among the men, and as the former were all on Hereward's side, his plain story was taken as it stood.

'And now, fair lady,' said Hereward to his hostess, 'I must thank you for your hospitality, and bid you farewell for ever and a day.'

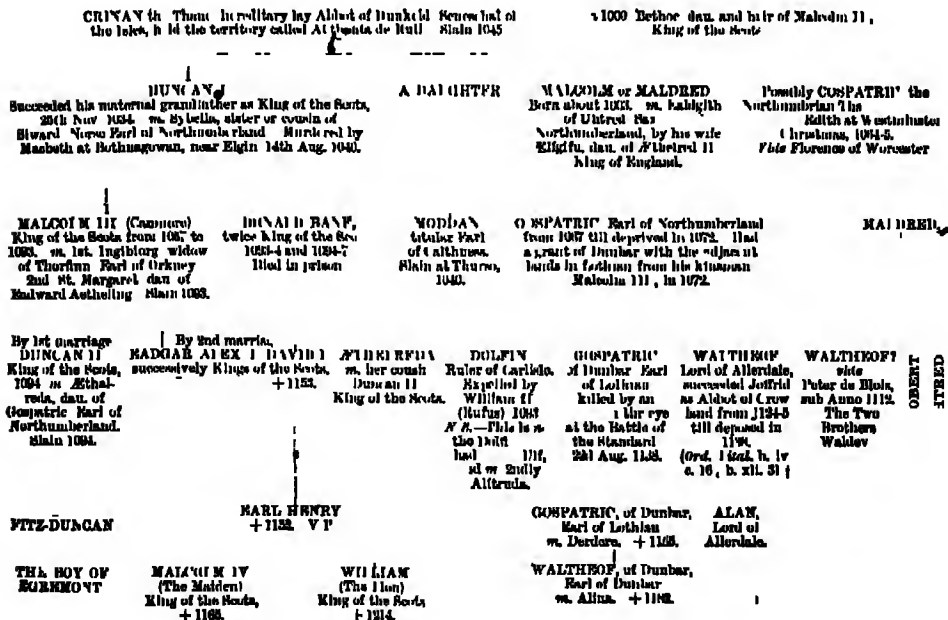
She wept, and entreated him only to stay till her lord came back, but Hereward was firm.

'You, lady, and your good lord will I ever love, and at your service my sword shall over be laid not here. Ill blood I will not make. Among traitors I will not dwell. I have killed two of them, and shall have to kill two of their kinsmen next, and then two more, till you have no knights left, and pity that would be. No, the world is wide, and there are plenty of good fellows in it who will welcome me without forcing me to wear mail under my coat out hunting.'

And he armed himself *cap-à-pié*, and rode away. Great was the weeping in the tower, and great the chuckling in the hall, but never saw they Hereward again upon the Scottish shore.

NOTE

I insert below the pedigree of Gospatric and the Dunbars, with many thanks to the gallant Dunbar to whom I owe the greater part thereof. It illustrates that connection between the royal houses of Scotland and of England which influenced so much the course of the Norman Conquest. The singular name Gospatric, or Gospatrick, is, it should be remembered, remarkable as perhaps the earliest instance of an hereditary name. I am sorry to say that Scottish antiquaries can as yet throw no light on its etymology.



CHAPTER III

HOW HEReward SUCCURED A PRINCESS OF CORNWALL.

THE next place in which Hereward appeared was far away on the south-west, upon the Cornish shore. He went into port on board a merchant ship carrying wine, and intending to bring back tin. The merchants had told him of one 'Alef,'¹ a valiant 'regulus,' or kinglet, living at Gweek, up the Helford river, who was indeed a distant connection of Hereward himself, having married, as did so many of the Celtic princes, the daughter of a Danish sea rover of Siward's blood. They told him also that the kinglet increased his wealth, not only by the sale of tin and of red cattle, but by a certain amount of 'summer leding' (i.e. journey between seed-time and harvest) in company with his Danish brothers-in-law from Dublin and Waterford and Hereward, who believed, with most Englishmen of the East Country, that Cornwall still produced a fair crop of giants, some of them with two and even three heads, had hopes that Alef might show him some adventure worthy of his sword. He sailed in, therefore, over a rolling bar, between jagged points of black rock, and up a tide river which wandered and branched away inland like a landlocked lake, between high green walls of oak and ash, till they saw at the head of the tide Alef's town, nestling in a glen which sloped towards the southern sun. They discovered, besides, two ships drawn up upon the beach, whose long lines and snake-heads, beside the stout carved on the beak-head of one, and the adler on that of the other, bore witness to the piratical habits of their owner. The merchants, it seemed, were well known to the Cornishmen on shore, and Hereward went up with them unopposed, past the ugly dykes and muddy leats, where Alef's slaves were gleaning the gravel for tin ore, through rich alluvial pastures spotted with red cattle, and up to Alef's town. Earthworks and stockades surrounded a little church of ancient stone, and a cluster of granite cabins thatched with turf, in which the slaves abode. In the centre of all a vast stone barn, with low walls and high sloping roof, contained Alef's family, treasures, housecarles, horses, cattle, and pigs. They entered at one end between the pigstyes, passed on through the cow-stalls, then through the stables; till they saw before them, dim through the reek of peat-smoke, a long oaken table, at which sat huge dark-haired Cornishmen, with here and there among them the yellow head of a Norseman, who were Alef's following or fighting men. Boiled meat was there in plenty, barley cakes and ale. At the head of the table, on a high-backed settle, was Alef himself, a jolly giant, who was just setting to work to drink

himself stupid with mead made from narcotic heather honey. By his side sat a lovely dark-haired girl, with great gold torcs upon her throat and wrists, and a great gold brooch fastening a shawl which had plainly come from the looms of Spain or of the East, and next to her again, feeding her with tit-bits cut off with his own dagger, and laid on barley cake instead of a plate, sat a more gigantic personage even than Alef, the biggest man that Hereward had ever seen, with high cheek-bones and small ferret eyes, looking out from a greasy mass of bright red hair and beard.

No questions were asked of the newcomers. They set themselves down in silence in empty places, and according to the laws of the good old Cornish hospitality, were allowed to eat and drink their fill before they spoke a word.

'Welcome here again, friend,' said Alef at last, in good enough Danish, calling the eldest merchant by name. 'Do you bring wine?'

The merchant nodded.

'And you want tin?'

The merchant nodded again, and lifting his cup drank Alef's health, following it up by a coarse joke in Cornish, which raised a laugh all round.

The Norse trader of those days, it must be remembered, was none of the cringing and effeminate chapmen who figure in the stories of the middle ages. A free Norse or Dane, himself often of noble blood, he fought as willingly as he bought, and held his own as an equal, whether at the court of a Cornish kinglet or at that of the great Kaiser of the Greeks.

'And you, fair sir,' said Alef, looking keenly at Hereward, 'by what name shall I call you, and what service can I do for you? You look more like an earl's son than a merchant, and are come here surely for other things besides tin.'

'Health to King Alef,' said Hereward, raising the cup. 'Who I am I will tell to none but Alef's self, but an earl's son I am, though an outlaw and a rover. My lands are the breadth of my boot sole. My plough is my sword. My treasure is my good right hand. Nothing I have, and nothing I need, save to serve noble kings and earls, and win me a champion's fame. If you have battles to fight, tell me, that I may fight them for you. If you have none, thank God for His peace, and let me eat and drink, and go in peace.'

'King Alef needs neither man nor boy to fight his battle as long as Ironhook¹ sits in his hall.'

It was the red-bearded giant who spoke, in a broken tongue, part Scotch, part Cornish, part Danish, which Hereward could hardly understand. But that the ogre intended to insult him he understood well enough.

Hereward had hoped to find giants in Cornwall, and behold he had found one at once; though rather, to judge from his looks, a Pictish than a Cornish giant, and true to his reckless

¹ Probably a corruption of the Norse name Olaf. There is much Norse blood in the seaports of Cornwall and Devon, as the surnames testify.

H. T. W.

¹ 'Ulcus Ferrus,' says Richard of Ely, surely a misreading for uncus. The hook was a not uncommon weapon among seamen.

determination to defy and fight every man and beast who was willing to defy and fight him, he turned on his elbow and stared at Ironhook in scorn, meditating some speech which might provoke the hoped for quarrel.

As he did so his eye happily caught that of the fair princess. She was watching him with a strange look, admiring, warning, imploring, and when she saw that he noticed her, she laid her finger on her lip in token of silence, crossed herself devoutly, and then laid her finger on her lip again, as if beseeching him to be patient and silent in the name of the heavenly powers.

Hereward, as is well seen, wanted not for quick wit or for chivalrous feeling. He had observed the rough devotion of the giant to the lady. He had observed, too, that she shrank from it, that she turned away with loathing when he offered her his own cup, while he answered by a dark and deadly scowl.

Was there an adventure here? Was she in duress either from this Ironhook, or from her father, or from both? Did she need Hereward's help? If so, she was so lovely that he could not refuse it. And on the chance, he swallowed down his high stomach, and answered blandly enough.

'One could see without eyes, noble sir, that you were worth any ten common men—but as every one has not like you the luck of so lovely a lady by your side, I thought that perchance you might hand over some of your lesser quarrels to one like me, who has not yet seen so much good fighting as yourself, and enjoy yourself in pleasant company at home, as I should surely do in your place.'

The princess shuddered and turned pale, then looked at Hereward and smiled her thanks. Ironhook laughed a savage laugh.

Hereward's jest being translated into Cornish for the benefit of the company, was highly approved by all, and good humour being restored, every man got drunk save Hereward, who found the meal too sweet and sickening.

After which those who could go to bed, went to bed, not as in England,¹ among the rushes on the floor, but in the bunks or berths of wattle which stood two or three tiers high along the wall.

The next morning, as Hereward went out to wash his face and hands in the brook below (he being the only man in the house who did so), Martin Lightfoot followed him.

'What is it, Martin? Hast thou had too much of that sweet mead last night that thou must come out to cool thy head too?'

'I came out for two reasons—first to see fair play, in case that Ironhook should come to wash his ugly visage, and find you on all fours over the brook—you understand? And next to tell you what I heard last night among the maids.'

'And what didst thou hear?'

'Fine adventures, if we can but compass them. You saw that lady with the carrot-headed fellow? I saw that you saw. Well, if

¹ Cornwall was not then considered part of England.

you will believe me, that man has no more gentle blood than I have. He is a No-man's son, a Pict from Galloway, who came down with a pirate crew, and has made himself the master of this drunken old prince, and the darling of all his housecarles, and now will needs be his son-in-law whether he will or not.'

'I thought as much,' said Hereward; 'but how didst thou find out this?'

'I went out and sat with the knaves and the maids, and listened to their harp-playing (and harp they can, these Cornish, like very elves), and then I too sang songs and told them stories, for I can talk their tongue somewhat, till they all blest me for a right good fellow. And then I fell to praising up Ironhook to the women.'

'Praising him up, man?'

'Ay, just because I suspected him, for the women are so contrary that if you speak evil of a man they will surely speak good of him, but if you will only speak good of him, then you will hear all the evil of him he ever has done, and more besides. And thus I heard, that the king's daughter cannot abide him, and would as lief marry a seal.'

'One did not need to be told that,' said Hereward, 'as long as one has eyes in one's head. I will kill the fellow and carry her off, ere four-and-twenty hours be past.'

'Softly, softly, my young master. You need to be told something that your eyes would not tell you, and that is that the poor lass is betrothed already to a son of old King Randal the Ostman, of Waterford, son of old King Sigtryg, who ruled there when I was a boy.'

'He is a kinsman of mine then,' said Hereward.

'All the more reason that I should kill this ruffian.'

'If you can,' said Martin Lightfoot.

'If I can?' retorted Hereward fiercely.

'Well, well, wilful heart must have its way, only take my counsel, speak to the poor young lady first, and see what she will tell you, lest you only make bad worse, and bring down her father and his men on her as well as you.'

Hereward agreed, and resolved to watch his opportunity of speaking to the princess.

As they went in to the morning meal they met Alef. He was in high good humour with Hereward, and all the more so when Hereward told him his name, and how he was the son of Leofric.

'I will warrant you are,' he said, 'by the gray head you carry on green shoulders. No discounter man, they say, in these isles than the old sail.'

'You speak truth, sir,' said Hereward, 'though he be no father of mine now, for of Leofric it is said in King Edward's Court, that if a man ask counsel of him, it is as though he had asked it of the oracles of God.'

'Then you are his true son, young man. I saw how you kept the peace with Ironhook, and I owe you thanks for it; for though he is my good friend, and will be my son-in-law ere long, yet a quarrel with him is more than I can abide.'

just now, and I should not like to have seen my guest and my kinsman slain in my house.'

Hereward would have said that he thought there was no fear of that—but he prudently held his tongue, and having an end to gain, listened instead of talking.

'Twenty years ago, of course, I could have thrashed him as easily as—' but now I am getting old and shaky, and the man has been a great help in need, six kings of these parts has he killed for me, who drove off my cattle, and stopped my tin works, and plundered my monks' cells too, which is worse, while I was away sailing the seas, and he is a right good fellow at heart, though he be a little rough. So be friends with him as long as you stay here, and if I can do you a service I will.'

They went into their morning meal, at which Hereward resolved to keep the peace which he longed to break, and therefore, as was to be expected, broke.

For during the meal the fair lady, with no worse intention perhaps than that of teasing her tyrant, fell to open praises of Hereward's fair face and golden hair, and being insulted therefore by the Ironhook, retaliated by observations about his personal appearance, which were more common in the eleventh century than they happily are now. He, to comfort himself, drank deep of the French wine which had just been brought and broached, and then went out into the courtyard, where in the midst of his admiring fellow-ruffians he enacted a scene as ludicrous as it was pitiable. All the childish vanity of the savage boiled over. He strutted, he shouted, he tossed about his huge limbs, he called for a harper, and challenged all around to dance, sing, leap, fight, do anything against him, meeting with nothing but admiring silence, he danced himself out of breath, and then began boasting once more of his fights, his cruelties, his butcheries, his impossible escapes and victories, till at last, as luck would have it, he espied Hereward, and poured out a stream of abuse against Englishmen and English courage.

'Englishmen,' he said, 'were nought. Had he not slain three of them himself with one blow!'

'Of your mouth, I suppose,' quoth Hereward, who saw that the quarrel must come, and was glad to have it done and over.

'Of my mouth!' roared Ironhook, 'of my sword, man!'

'Of your mouth,' said Hereward. 'Of your brain were they begotten, of the breath of your mouth they were born, and by the breath of your mouth you can slay them again as often as you choose.'

The joke, as it has been handed down to us by the old chroniclers, seems clumsy enough, but it sent the princess, say they, into shrieks of laughter.

'Were it not that my lord Alef was here,' shouted Ironhook, 'I would kill you out of hand.'

'Promise to fight fair, and do your worst.

The more fairly you fight, the more honour you will win,' said Hereward.

Whereupon the two were parted for the while.

Two hours afterwards Hereward, completely armed with helmet and mail shirt, sword and javelin, hurried across the great courtyard with Martin Lightfoot at his heels, towards the little church upon the knoll above. The two wild men entered into the cool darkness, and saw before them by the light of a tiny lamp the crucifix over the altar, and beneath it that which was then believed to be the body of Him who made heaven and earth. They stopped trembling for a moment, bowed themselves before that to them perpetual miracle, and then hurried on to a low doorway to the right, inside which dwelt Alef's chaplain, one of those good Celtic priests who were supposed to represent a Christianity more ancient than, and all but independent of, the then all-absorbing Church of Rome.

The cell was such an one as a convict would now disdain to inhabit. A low lean-to roof, the slates and rafters unciled, the stone walls and floor unplastered, ill lighted by a hand-laid window, unglazed, and closed with a shutter at night. A truss of straw and a rug, the priest's bed, lay in a corner. The only other furniture was a large oak chest, containing the holy vessels and vestments and a few old books. It stood directly under the window for the sake of light, for it served the good priest for both table and chair, and on it he was sitting reading in his book at that minute, the sunshine and the wind streaming in behind his head, doing no good to his rheumatism of thirty years' standing.

'Is there a priest here?' asked Hereward hurriedly.

The old man looked up, shook his head and answered in French.

'Speak to him in Latin, Martin may be he will understand that.'

Martin spoke. 'My lord here wants a priest to shrive him, and that quickly. He is going to fight the great tyrant Ironhook, as you call him.'

'Ironhook?' answered the priest in good Latin enough, 'And he so young! God help him, he is a dead man. What is this? A fresh soul sent to its account by the hands of that man of Belial? Cannot he entreat him, can he not make peace, and save his young life? He is but a stripling, and that man, like Goliath of old, a man of war from his youth up.'

'And my master,' said Martin Lightfoot proudly, 'is like young David—one that can slay a giant and kill him, for he has slain, like David, his lion and his bear ere now. At least, he is one that will neither make peace, nor entreat the face of living man. So shrive him quickly, master priest, and let him begone to his work.'

Poor Martin Lightfoot spoke thus bravely

only to keep up his spirits and his young lord's—for in spite of his confidence in Hereward's prowess, he had given him up for a lost man, and the tears ran down his rugged cheeks as the old priest, rising up and seizing Hereward's two hands in his, besought him, with the passionate and graceful eloquence of his race, to have mercy upon his own youth.

Hereward understood his meaning, though not his words.

'Tell him,' he said to Martin, 'that fight I must, and tell him that shrieve me he must and that quickly. Tell him how the fellow met me in the wood below just now, and would have slain me there, unarmed as I was, and how, when I told him it was a shame to strike a naked man, he told me he would give me but one hour's grace to go, back, on the faith of a gentleman, for my armour and weapons, and meet him there again to die by his hand. So shrieve me quick, sir priest.'

Hereward knelt down. Martin Lightfoot knelt down by him, and with a trembling voice began to interpret for him.

'What does he say?' asked Hereward, as the priest murmured something to himself.

'He said,' quoth Martin, now fairly dumbfounded, 'that, fair and young as you are, your shrift should be as short and as clean as David's.'

Hereward was touched. 'Anything but that,' said he, smiting on his breast, 'Mea culpa—mea culpa—mea maxima culpa.'

'Tell him how I robbed my father.'

The priest groaned as Martin did so.

'And how I mocked at my mother, and left her in a rage, without ever a kind word between us. And how I have slain I know not how many men in battle, though that, I trust, need not lie heavily on my soul, seeing that I killed them all in fair fight.'

Again the priest groaned.

'And how I robbed a certain priest of his money and gave it away to my horsecarles.'

Here the priest groaned more bitterly still.

'Oh, my son, my son, where hast thou found time to lay all these burdens on thy young soul!'

'It will take less time,' said Martin bluntly, 'for you to take the burdens off again.'

'But I dare not absolve him for robbing a priest. Heaven help him! He must go to the bishop for that. He is more fit to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem than to battle.'

'He has no time,' quoth Martin, 'for bishops or Jerusalem.'

'Tell him,' says Hereward, 'that in this purse is all I have, that in it he will find sixty silver pennies, besides two strange coins of gold.'

'Sir priest,' said Martin Lightfoot, taking the purse from Hereward, and keeping it in his own hand, 'there are in this bag monsigns.'

Martin had no mind to let the priest into the secret of the state of their finances.

'And tell him,' continued Hereward, 'that if I fall, in this battle I give him all that money, that he may part it among the poor for the good of my soul.'

'Pish!' said Martin to his lord; 'that is paying him for having you killed. You should pay him for keeping you alive.' And without waiting for the answer, he spoke in Latin.

'And if he comes back safe from this battle, he will give you ten pennies for yourself and your church, priest, and therefore expects you to pray your very loudest while he is gone.'

'I will pray, I will pray,' said the holy man. 'I will wrestle in prayer. Ah! that he could slay the wicked, and reward the proud according to his deservings. Ah! that he could rid me and my master, and my young lady, of this son of Belial—this devourer of widows and orphans—this slayer of the poor and needy, who fills this place with innocent blood—him of whom it is written, "They stretch forth their mouth unto the heaven, and then tongue goeth through the world. Therefore fall the people unto them, and thereout suck they no small advantage." I will shrieve him shrieve him of all save robbing the priest, and for that he must go to the bishop, if he live and, if not, the Lord have mercy on his soul.'

And so, weeping and trembling, the good old man pronounced the words of absolution.

Hereward rose, thanked him, and then hurried out in silence.

'You will pray your very loudest, priest,' said Martin, as he followed his young lord.

'I will, I will,' quoth he, and kneeling down began to chant that noble 73d Psalm, 'Quam bonus Israel,' which he had just so fitly quoted.

'Thou gavest him the bag, Martin!' said Hereward, as they hurried on.

'You are not dead yet. "No pay no play" is as good a rule for priest as for layman.'

'Now then, Martin Lightfoot, good-bye (come not with me. It must never be said, even slanderously, that I brought two into the field against one, and if I die, Martin—'

'You won't die!' said Lightfoot, shutting his teeth.

'If I die, go back to my people somehow, and tell them that I died like a true earl's son.'

Hereward held out his hand, Martin fell on his knees and kissed it, watched him with set teeth till he disappeared in the wood, and then started forward and entered the bushes at a different spot.

'I must be nigh at hand to see fair play,' he muttered to himself, 'in case any of his ruffians be hanging about. Fair play I'll see, and fair play I'll give, too, for the sake of my lord's honour, though I be bitterly loth to do it. So many times as I have been a villain when it was of no use, why mayn't I be one now, when it would serve the purpose indeed! Why did we ever come into this accursed place! But one thing I will do,' said he, as he ensconced himself under a thick holly, whence he could see the meeting of the combatants upon an open lawn some twenty yards away, 'if that bug bull calf kills my master, and I do not jump on his back and pick his brains out with this trusty steel of mine, may my right arm—'

And Martin Lightfoot swore a fearful oath, which need not here be written.

The priest had just finished his chant of the 73d Psalm, and had betaken himself in his spiritual warfare, as it was then called, to the equally apposite 52d, 'Quid gloriaris!'

'Why boastest thou thyself, thou tyrant, that thou canst do mischief, whereas the goodness of God endureth yet daily?'

'Father! father!' cried a soft voice in the doorway, 'where are you?'

And in hurried the princess.

'Hide this,' she said, breathless, drawing from beneath her mantle a huge sword, 'hide it, where no one dare touch it, under the altar behind the holy rood—no place too secret.'

'What is it?' asked the priest, rising from his knees.

'His sword—the Ogre's—his magic sword, which kills whomsoever it strikes. I coax'd him to let me have it last night when he was tipsy, for fear he should quarrel with the young stranger, and I have kept it from him ever since by one excuse or another, and now he has sent one of his ruffians in for it, saying that if I do not give it up at once he will come back and kill me.'

'He dare not do that,' said the priest.

'What is there that he dare not?' said she. 'Hide it at once, I know that he wants it to fight with this Hereward.'

'If he wants it for that,' said the priest, 'it is too late, for half an hour is past since Hereward went to meet him.'

'And you let him go? You did not persuade him, stop him? You let him go hence to his death?'

In vain the good man expostulated, and explained that it was no fault of his.

'You must come with me this instant to my father—to them, they must be parted. They shall be parted. If you dare not, I dare. I will throw myself between them, and he that strikes the other shall strike me.'

And she hurried the priest out of the house, down the knoll, and across the yard. There they found others on the same errand. The news that a battle was toward had soon spread, and the men-at-arms were hurrying down to the fight, kept back, however, by Alef, who strode along at their head.

Alef was sorely perplexed in mind. He had taken, as all honest men did, a great liking to Hereward. Moreover, he was his kinsman and his guest. Save him he would if he could, but how to save him without mortally offending his tyrant Ironhook he could not see. At least he would exert what little power he had, and prevent, if possible, his men-at-arms from helping their darling leader against the hapless lad.

Alef's perplexity was much increased when his daughter bounded towards him, seized him by the arm, and hurried him on, showing by look and word which of the combatants she favoured, so plainly that the ruffians behind broke into scornful murmurs. They burst

through the bushes. Martin Lightfoot happily heard them coming, and had just time to slip away noiselessly, like a rabbit, to the other part of the cover.

The combat seemed at the first glance to be one between a grown man and a child, so unequal was the size of the combatants. But the second look showed that the advantage was by no means with Ironhook. Stumbling to and fro with the broken shaft of a javelin sticking in his thigh, he vainly tried to seize Hereward with his long iron grapple. Hereward, bleeding, but still active and upright, broke away, and sprang round him, watching for an opportunity to strike a deadly blow. The housecarles rushed forward with yells. Alef shouted to the combatants to desist, but ere the party could reach them, Hereward's opportunity had come. Ironhook after a fruitless lunge stumbled forward. Hereward leapt aside, and spying an unguarded spot below the corselet, drove his sword deep into the giant's body, and rolled him over upon the sword. Then arose shouts of fury.

'Foul play!' cried one.

And others, taking up the cry, called out, 'Sorcery!' and 'Treason!'

Hereward stood over Ironhook as he lay writhing and foaming on the ground.

'Killed by a boy at last!' groaned he. 'If I had but had my sword—my brain luter which that witch stole from me but last night!—and amid foul curses and bitter tears of shame his mortal spirit fled to its doom.'

The housecarles rushed in on Hereward, who had enough to do to keep them at arm's length by long sweeps of his sword.

Alef entreated, threatened, promised a fair trial if the men would give fair play. When, to complete the confusion, the princess threw herself upon the corpse, shrieking and tearing her hair, and to Hereward's surprise and disgust, bewailed the prowess and the virtues of the dead calling upon all present to avenge his murder.

Hereward vowed inwardly that he would never again trust woman's fancy, or fight in woman's quarrel. He was now nigh at his wits' end, the housecarles had closed round him in a ring with the intention of seizing him, and however well he might defend his front, he might be crippled at any moment from behind. But in the very nick of time Martin Lightfoot burst through the crowd, set himself heel to heel with his master, and broke out, not with threats, but with a good-humoured laugh.

'Here is a pretty coil about a red-headed brute of a Pict! Danes, Ostmen,' he cried, 'are you not ashamed to call such a fellow your lord, when you have such a true earl's son as this to lead you if you will?'

The Ostmen in the company looked at each other. Martin Lightfoot saw that his appeal to the antipathies of race had told. He therefore followed it up by a string of witticisms upon the Pictish nation in general, of which the only two fit for modern ears to be set down were the

two old stories, that the Piets had feet so large that they used to lie upon their backs and hold up their legs to shelter themselves from the sun, and that when killed, they could not fall down, but died as they were, all standing.

'So that the only foul play I can see is that my master shoved the fellow over after he had stabbed him, instead of leaving him to stand upright there, like one of your Cornish Dolmen, till his flesh should fall off his bones.'

Hereward saw the effect of Martin's words, and burst out in Danish likewise, with a true Viking chant—

'Look at me, dread me!
I am the Hereward,
The watcher, the champion,
The Berserker, the Viking,
The land thief, the sea-thief,
Young summer pirate,
Famous land warrior,
Slayer of witch bears,
Queller of Ogres,
Fattener of ravens,
Darling of gray wolves,
Wild widow maker,
Touch me—to wail and
Raven I give you
Ship with me boldly,
Follow me gallily,
Over the swan's road,
Over the whale's bath,
Far to the southward,
Where sun and sea meet,
Where from the palm boughs
Apples of gold hang,
And freight there our long snake
With sandal and orfery,
Dark Moorish maidens,
And gold of Alger.'

'Hark to the Viking! Hark to the right earl's son!' shouted some of the Danes, whose blood had been stirred many a time before by such wild words, and on whom Hereward's youth and beauty had their due effect. And now the counsels of the ruffians being divided, the old priest gained courage to step in. Let them deliver Hereward and his serving-man into his custody. He would bring them forth on the morrow, and there should be full investigation and fair trial. And so Hereward and Martin, who both refused stantly to give up their arms, were marched back into the town, looked in the little church, and left to their meditations.

Hereward sat down on the pavement and cursed the princess. Martin Lightfoot took off his master's corselet, and, as well as the darkness would allow, bound up his wounds, which happily were not severe.

'Were I you,' said he at last, 'I should keep my curses till I saw the end of this adventure.'

'Has not the girl betrayed me shamefully?'

'Not she. I saw her warn you, as far as looks could do, not to quarrel with the man.'

'That was because she did not know me. Little she thought that I could—'

'Don't halloo till you are out of the wood. This is a night for praying rather than boasting.'

'She cannot really love that wretch,' said

1 'Guardian of the Army'

Hereward, after a pause. 'Thou saw'st how she mocked him.'

'Women are strange things, and often cease most where they love most.'

'But such a misbegotten savage.'

'Women are strange things, say I, and with some a lug fellow is a pretty fellow, be he uglier than seven Ironhooks. Still, just because women are strange things, have patience, say I.'

The lock creaked, and the old priest came in. Martin leapt to the open door, but it was slammed in his face by men outside with scornful laughter.

The priest took Hereward's head in his hands, wept over him, blest him for having slain Goliath like young David, and then set food and drink before the two, but he answered Martin's questions only with sighs and shakings of the head.

'Let us eat and drink then,' said Martin, 'and after that you, my lord, sleep off your wounds while I watch the door. I have no fancy for these fellows taking us unawares at night.'

Martin lay quietly across the door till the small hours, listening to every sound, till the key creaked once more in the lock. He started at the sound, and seeing the person who entered round the neck, whispered, 'One word, and you are dead.'

'Do not hurt me,' answered a stifled voice, and Martin Lightfoot, to his surprise, found that he had grasped an armed man, but the slight frame of a young girl.

'I am the princess,' she whispered, 'let me in.'

'A very pretty hostage for us,' thought Martin, and letting her go, seized the key, locking the door in the inside.

'Take me to your master,' she cried, and Martin led her up the church wondering, but half suspecting some further trap.

'You have a dagger in your hand,' said he, holding her wrist.

'I have. If I had meant to use it, it would have been used first on you. Take it, if you like.'

She hurried up to Hereward, who lay sleeping quietly on the altar-steps, knelt by him, wrung his hands, called him her champion, her deliverer.

'I am not well awake yet,' said he cockily, 'and do not know whether this may not be a dream, as more that I have seen and heard seems to be.'

'It is no dream. I am true. I was always true to you. Have I not put myself in your power? Am I not come here to deliver you, my deliverer?'

'The tears which you shed over your Ogres corpse seem to have dried quickly enough.'

'Cruel! What else could I do? You heard him accuse me to his rough followers of having stolen his sword. My life, my father's life, were not safe a moment, had I not dissembled, and done the thing I loathed. Ah!' she went

on bitterly 'You men, who rule the world and us by cruel steel, you forget that we poor women have but one weapon left wherewith to hold our own, and that is cunning; and are driven by you day after day to tell the lie which we detest.'

'Then you really stole his sword?'

'And hid it here, for your sake' And she drew the weapon from behind the altar

'Take it. It is yours now. It is magical. Whoever smites with it, need never smite again. Now, quik, you must be gone. But promise one thing before you go.'

'If I leave this land safe I will do it, be it what it may. Why not come with me, lady, and see it done?'

She laughed. 'Vain boy, do you think that I drew the weapon from behind that?'

'I have won you, and why should I not keep you?' said Hereward sullenly.

'Do you not know that I am betrothed to your kinsman? And—though that you cannot know—that I love your kinsman?'

'So I have all the blows and none of the spoil.'

'Tush, you have the glory - and the sword—and the chance, if you will do my bidding, of being called by all ladies a true and gentle knight, who cared not for his own pleasure but for deeds of chivalry. Go to my betrothed—to Waterford over the sea. Take him this ring, and tell him by that token to come and claim me soon, lest he run the danger of losing me a second time, and lose me then for ever, for I am in hard case here, and were it not for my father's sake, perhaps I might dare, in spite of what men might say, to flee with you to your kinsman across the sea.'

'Trust me and come,' said Hereward, whose young blood kindled with a sudden nobleness. 'Trust me and I will treat you like my sister, like my queen. By the holy rood above I will swear to be true to you.'

'I do trust you, but it cannot be. Here is money for you in plenty to hire a passage if you need it is no shame to take it from me. And now one thing more. Here is a cord—you must bind the hands and feet of the old priest inside, and then you must bind mine likewise.'

'Never,' quoth Hereward.

'It must be. How else can I explain your having got the key? I made them give me the key on the pretence that with one who had most cause to hate you it would be safe, and when they come and find us in the morning I shall tell them how I came here to stab you with my own hands—you must lay the dagger by me—and how you and your man fell upon us and bound us, and you escaped. Ah! Mary Mother,' continued the maiden with a sigh, 'when shall we poor weak women have no more need of lying?'

She lay down, and Hereward, in spite of himself, gently bound her hands and feet, kissing them as he bound them.

'I shall do well here upon the altar steps,'

said she. 'How can I spend my time better till the morning light than to lie here and pray?'

The old priest, who was plainly in the plot, submitted meekly to the same fate; and Hereward and Martin Lightfoot stole out, locking the door, but leaving the key in it outside. To scramble over the old earthwork was an easy matter, and in a few minutes they were hurrying down the valley to the sea, with a fresh breeze blowing behind them from the north.

'Did I not tell you, my lord,' said Martin Lightfoot, 'to keep your curses till you had seen the end of this adventure?'

Hereward was silent. His brain was still whirling from the adventures of the day, and his heart was very deeply touched. His shrift of the morning, hurried, and formal as it had been, had softened him. His danger—for he felt how he had been face to face with death—had softened him likewise, and he repented somewhat of his vainglorious and bloodthirsty boasting over a fallen foe, as he began to see that there was a purpose more noble in life than ranging land and sea, a Russian among Russians, seeking for glory amid blood and flame. The idea of chivalry, of succouring the weak and the oppressed, of keeping faith and honour not merely towards men who could avenge themselves, but towards women who could not, the dim dawn of purity, gentleness, and the conquest of his own fierce passions—all these had taken root in his heart during his adventure with the fair Cornish girl. The seed was sown. Would it be cut down again by the bitter blasts of the rough fighting world, or would it grow and bear the noble fruit of 'gentle, very perfect knight-hood'?

They reached the ship, clambered on board without ceremony, at the risk of being taken and killed as robbers, and told their case. The merchants had not completed their cargo of tin. Hereward offered to make up their loss to them, if they would set sail at once, and they, feeling that the place would be for some time to come too hot to hold them, and being also in high delight, like honest Ostmen, with Hereward's prowess, agreed to sail straight for Waterford, and complete their cargo there. But the tide was out. It was three full hours before the ship could float, and for three full hours they waited in fear and trembling, expecting the Cornishmen to be down upon them in a body every moment, under which wholesome fear some on board prayed fervently who had never been known to pray before.

CHAPTER IV

HOW HEReward TOOK SERVICE WITH RANALD, KING OF WATERFORD

THE coasts of Ireland were in a state of comparative peace in the middle of the eleventh century. The ships of Loughan, seen far out at sea, no

longer drove the population shrieking inland. Heathen Danes, whether fair-haired Fionngall from Norway, or brown-haired Dubhghall from Denmark proper, no longer burned convents, tortured monks for their gold, or (as at Clonmacnoise) set a heathen princess, Oda, wife of Thorkill, son of Harold Haarfagre, aloft on the high altar to receive the homage of the conquered. The Scandinavian invaders had become Christianised, and civilised also—owing to their continual intercourse with foreign nations—more highly than the Irish whom they had overcome. That was easy, for early Irish civilisation seems to have existed only in the convents and for the religious, and when they were crushed, mere barbarism was left behind. And now the same process went on in the east of Ireland, which went on a generation or two later in the east and north of Scotland. The Danes began to settle down into peaceful colonists and traders. Ireland was poor, and the convents plundered once could not be plundered again. The Irish were desperately brave. Ill-armed and almost naked, they were as perfect in the arts of forest warfare as those modern Maories whom they so much resembled, and though their black skenes and light darts were no match for the Danish swords and battle-axes which they adopted during the middle age, or their plaid trousers and felt capes for the Danish helmet and chain corselet, still an Irishman was so ugly a foe, that it was not worth while to fight with him unless he could be robbed afterwards. The Danes, who, like their descendants of Northumbria, Moray, and Sutherland, were canny common sense folk, with a shrewd eye to interest, found, somewhat to their regret, that there were trades even more profitable than robbery and murder. They therefore concentrated themselves round harbours and river mouths, and sent forth their ships to all the western seas, from Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, Cork, or Limerick. Every important seaport in Ireland owes its existence to those sturdy Vikings' sons. In each of these towns they had founded a petty kingdom, which endured until, and even in some cases after, the conquest of Ireland by Henry II. and Strongbow. They intermarried in the meanwhile with the native Irish. Brian Boru, for instance, was so connected with Danish royalty, that it is still a question whether he himself had not Danish blood in his veins. King Sigtryg Silkebeard, who fought against him at Clontarf, was actually his stepson—and so too, according to another Irish chronicler, was King Olaf Kvaran, who, even at the time of the battle of Clontarf, was married to Brian Boru's daughter—a marriage which (if a fact) was startlingly within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity. But the ancient Irish were sadly careless on such points, and as Giraldus Cambrensis says, 'followed the example of men of old in their vices more willingly than in their virtues.'

More than forty years had elapsed since that famous battle of Clontarf, and since Ragnvald,

Reginald, or Ragnald, son of Sigtryg the Norseman, had been slain therein by Brian Boru. On that one day, so the Irish sang, the northern invaders were exterminated, once and for all, by the Milesian hero, who had craftily used the strangers to fight his battles, and then the moment they became formidable to himself, crushed them till 'from Howth to Brandon in Kerry, there was not a threshing-floor without a Danish slave threshing thereon, or a quern without a Danish woman grinding thereat.'

Nevertheless, in spite of the total annihilation of the Danish power in the Emerald Isle, Ragnald seemed to the eyes of men to be still a hale old warrior, ruling constitutionally—that is, with a wholesome fear of being outlawed or murdered if he misbehaved—over the Danes in Waterford, with five hundred fair-haired warriors at his back, two-edged axe on shoulder, and two-edged sword on thigh. His ships drove a thriving trade with France and Spain in Irish fish, butter, honey, and furs. His workmen coined money in the old round tower of Dundory, built by his predecessor and namesake about the year 1003, which stands as Ragnald's tower to this day. He had fought many a bloody battle since his death at Clontarf, by the side of his old leader Sigtryg Silkebeard. He had been many a time to Dublin to visit his even more prosperous and formidable friend, and was so delighted with the new church of the Holy Trinity, which Sigtryg and his bishop Donatus had just built, not in the Danish or Ostian town, but in the heart of ancient Celtic Dublin (plain proof of the utter overthrow of the Danish power), that he had determined to build a like church in honour of the Holy Trinity, in Waterford itself. A thriving valiant old king he seemed, as he sat in his great house of pine logs under Ragnald's tower upon the quay, drinking French and Spanish wines out of horns of ivory and cups of gold, and over his head, hanging upon the wall, the huge double-edged axe with which, so his flatterers had whispered, Brian Boru had not slain him, but he Brian Boru.

Nevertheless, then as since, alas! the pleasant theory was preferred by the Milesian historians to the plain truth. And far away inland, monks wrote and harpers sang of the death of Ragnald the fair-haired Fionngall, and all his 'mailed swarms.'

One Teague MacMurrrough, indeed, a famous bard of those parts, composed unto his harp a song of Clontarf, the fame whereof reached Ragnald's ears, and so amused him that he rested not day or night till he had caught the hapless bard and brought him in triumph into Waterford. There he compelled him at sword's point to sing to him and his housecarles the Milesian version of the great historical event; and when the harper in fear and trembling came to the story of Ragnald's own death at Brian Boru's hands, then the jolly old Viking laughed till the tears ran down his face, and instead of cutting off Teague's head, gave him a cup of

goodly wine, made him his own harper thenceforth, and bade him send for his wife and children, and sung to him every day, especially the song of Clontarf and his own death, treating him very much, in fact, as English royalty during the last generation treated another Irish lord whose song was even more sweet, and his notions of Irish history even more grotesque than those of Teague MacMurrrough.

It was to this old king, or rather to his son Sigtryg, godson of Sigtryg Silkeard, and distant cousin of his own, that Hereward now took his way, and told his story, as the king sat in his hall, drinking across the fire after the old Norse fashion. The fire of pine logs was in the midst of the hall, and the smoke went out through a hole in the roof. On one side was a long bench, and in the middle of it the king's high arm-chair, right and left of him sat his kinsmen and the ladies, and his sea-captains and men of wealth. Opposite, on the other side of the fire, was another bench. In the middle of that sat his marshal, and right and left all his housecarles. There were other benches behind, on which sat more freemen, but of lesser rank.

And they were all drinking ale, which a servant poured out of a bucket into a great bull's horn, and the men bayded round to each other.

Then Hereward came in, and sat down on the end of the hindmost bench, and Martin stood behind him, till one of the ladies said—

'Who is that young stranger, who sits behind there so humbly, though he looks like an earl's son, more fit to sit here with us on the high bench?'

'So he does,' quoth King Ranald. 'Come forward hither, young sir, and drink.'

And when Hereward came forward, all the ladies agreed that he must be an earl's son, for he had a great gold tore round his neck, and gold rings on his wrists, and a new scarlet coat, bound with gold braid, and scarlet stockings, cross-laced with gold braid up to the knee, and his shoes trimmed with martin's fur, and a short blue silk cloak over all, trimmed with martin's fur likewise, and by his side in a broad belt with gold studs, was the Ogre's sword Brann-linter, with its ivory hilt and velvet sheath, and all agreed that if he had but been a head taller, they had never seen a properer man.

'Aha! such a gay young sea-cock does not come hither for nought. Drink first, man, and tell us thy business after,' and he reached the horn to Hereward.

Hereward took it, and sang—

'In this Bragg beaker, o
Brave Ranald I pledge,
In good liquor, which lightens
Long labour on our bench
Good liquor which sweetens
The song of the scull!'

'Thy voice is as fine as thy feathers, man. Nay, drink it all. We ourselves drink here by the peg at midday, but a stranger is welcome to fill his inside at all hours.'

Whereon Hereward finished the horn duly,

and, at Ranald's bidding, sat him down on the high settle. He did not remark that as he sat down, two handsome youths rose and stood behind him.

'Now, then, sir priest,' quoth the king, 'go on with your story.'

A priest, Irish by his face and dress, who sat on the high bench, rose, and renewed an oration which Hereward's entrance had interrupted.

'So, O great king, as says Homer, this wise king called his earls, knights, sea-captains, and housecarles, and said unto them, "Which of these two kings is in the right, who can tell? But mind you, that this king of the Enchanters lives far away in India, and we never heard of him more than his name—but this king Ulixes and his Greeks live hard by, and which of the two is it wiser to quarrel with, him that lives hard by or him that lives far off?" Therefore, King Ranald, says, by the mouth of my humility, the great Feargus, Lord of Ivar—"Take example by Alcimus, the wise king of Fairy, and listen not to the ambassadors of those lying villains, O'Dea Lord of Shevardagh, MacCarthy King of Cashel, and O'Sullivan Lord of Knock-riffin, who all three between them could not raise kerns enough to drive off one old widow's cow. Make friends with me, who live upon your borders, and you shall go peaceably through my lands to conquer and destroy them who live afar off, as they deserve, the sons of Bayhal and Julius.'

And the priest crossed himself, and sat down. At which speech Hereward was seen to laugh.

'Why do you laugh, young sir? The priest seems to talk like a wise man, and is my guest and an ambassador.'

Then rose up Hereward, and bowed to the king. 'King Ranald Sigtrygsson, it was not for rudeness that I laughed, for I learnt good manners long ere I came here, but because I find clerics alike all over the world.'

'How?'

'Quick at hiding false counsel under learned speech. I know nothing of Ulixes, king, nor of this Feargus either, and I am but a lad, as you see, but I heard a bird once in my own country who gave a very different counsel from the priest's.'

'Speak on, then. This lad is no fool, my merry men all.'

'There were three crows, king, in our country, and each crow stood on a hill. In the first there built an eagle, in the second there built a sparrowhawk, in the third there built a crow.'

'Now the sparrowhawk came to the eagle, and said, "Go shares with me, and we will kill the crow, and have her wood to ourselves."

"Humph!" says the eagle, "I could kill the crow without your help, however, I will think of it."

'When the crow heard that, she came to the eagle herself, "King Eagle," says she, "why do you want to kill me, who live ten miles from you, and never flew across your path in my life? Better kill that little rogue of a sparrowhawk who

lives between us, and is always ready to poach on your marches whenever your back is turned. So you will have her wood as well as your own.'

"You are a wise crow," said the eagle, and he went out and killed the sparrowhawk, and took his wood.

Laughed King Ranald and his Viking all. 'Well spoken, young man! We will take the sparrowhawk, and let the crow bide.'

'Nay but,' quoth Hereward, 'hear the end of the story. After a while the eagle finds the crow beating about the edge of the sparrowhawk's wood.

"Oho!" says he, "so you can poach as well as that little hook-nosed rogue!" and he killed her too.

"Ah!" says the crow, when she lay a-dying, "my blood is on my own head. If I had but left the sparrowhawk between me and this great tyrant!"

'And so the eagle got all three woods to himself.'

At which the Vikings laughed more loudly than ever, and King Ranald, chuckling at the notion of eating up the hapless Irish princes one by one, sent back the priest (not without a present for his church, for Ranald was a pious man) to tell the great Feargus, that unless he sent into Waterford by that day week, two hundred head of cattle, a hundred pigs, a hundredweight of clean honey, and as much of wax, Ranald would not leave so much as a sucking pig alive in Ivark.

The cause of quarrel, of course, was too unimportant to be mentioned. Each had robbed and cheated the other half a dozen times in the last twenty years. As for the morality of the transaction, Ranald had tithes salve for his conscience, that as he intended to do to Feargus, so would Feargus have gladly done to him, had he been living peaceably in Norway, and been strong enough to invade and rob him. Indeed, so had Feargus done already, ever since he wore beard, to every chieftain of his own race whom he was strong enough to ill-treat. Many a fair herd had he driven off, many a fair farm burnt, many a fair woman carried off a slave, after that inveterate fashion of lawless fends which makes the history of Celtic Ireland from the earliest times one dull and aimless catalogue of murder and devastation, followed by famine and disease, and now as he had done to others, so it was to be done to him.

'And now, young sir, who seem as witty as you are good-looking, you may, if you will, tell us your name and your business. As for the name, however, if you wish to keep it to yourself, Ranald Sigtrygsson is not the man to demand it of an honest guest.'

Hereward looked round, and saw Teague Mac-Murrough standing close to him, harp in hand. He took it from him courteously enough, put a silver penny into the minstrel's hand, and running his fingers over the strings, rose and began

'Outlaw and free thief
Lawless and lawless

Through the world fare I,
Thoughtless of life.
Soft is my beard, but
Hard my Brain-biter
Wake, men me call, whom
Warrior and warden
Find ever watchful.
Far in Northumberland
Slew I the witch bear,
Cleaving his brain-jaw,
At one stroke I felled him.'

And so forth, chanting all his doughty deeds, with such a voice and spirit, joined to that musical talent for which he was afterwards so famous, till the hearts of the wild Norsemen rejoiced, and 'Skall to the stranger! Skall to the young Viking!' rang through the hall.

Then showing proudly the fresh wounds on his bare arms, he sang of his fight with the Cornish ogre, and his adventure with the princess. But always, though he went into the most minute details, he concealed the name both of her and of her father, while he kept his eyes steadily fixed on Ranald's eldest son, Sigtryg, who sat at his father's right hand.

The young man grew uneasy, red, almost angry, till at last Hereward sang—

'A gold ring she gave me
Right royally I warf worked,
To none will I pass it
For prayer or for sword stroke,
Save to him who can claim it
By love and by truth plight,
Let that hero speak
If that hero be here.'

Young Sigtryg half started from his seat: but when Hereward smiled at him, and laid his finger on his lips, he sat down again. Hereward felt his shoulder touched from behind. One of the youths who had risen when he sat down bent over him, and whispered in his ear—

'Ah, Hereward, we know you. Do you not know us? We are the twins, the sons of your sister, Siward the White and Siward the Red, the orphans of Asbiorn Siwardsson, who fell at Drumkane.'

Hereward sprang up, struck the harp again, and sang—

'Outlaw and free thief
My kinsfolk have left me,
And no kinsfolk need I,
Till kinsfolk shall need me.
My sword is my father,
My shield is my mother,
My ship is my sister,
My horse is my brother.'

'Uncle, uncle,' whispered one of them sadly, 'listen now or never, for we have bad news for you and us. Your father is dead, and Earl Algar, your brother, here in Ireland, outlawed a second time.'

A flood of sorrow passed through Hereward's heart. He kept it down, and raving once more, harp in hand—

'Hereward, king, light I
Holy Leofric my father,
In Westminster wiser,
None walked with king Edward.
High ministers he builded,
Pale monks he maintained.

Dead is he, a bed-death,
A leech-death, a priest death,
A straw-death, a cow a-death
Such doom suits not me
To high heaven, all so softly,
The angels upland him,
In meads of May flowers
Mild Mary will meet him—
Me, happier, the Valkyrs
Shall wait from the war-leek,
Shall hail from the Ælhogang
Or helmet-straw noorlatel
And sword-strokes my skrift be,
Sharp spears be my leeches,
With herons' hot corpses
High heaped for my pillow'

'Skall to the Viking!' shouted the Danes once more, at this outburst of heathenism, common enough among their half-converted race, in times when monasterism made so utter a divorce between the life of the devotee and that of the worldling, that it seemed reasonable enough for either party to have their own heaven and their own hell. After all, Hereward was not original in his wish. He had but copied the death-song which Sward Digre had sung for himself some three years before.

All praised his poetry, and especially the quickness of his alliterations (then a note of the highest art), and the old king, filling not thus true the horn, but a golden goblet, bid him drain it and keep the goblet for his song.

Young Sigtryg leapt up, and took the cup to Hereward. 'Such a scald,' he said, 'ought to have no meaner cup-bearer than a king's son.'

Hereward drank it dry, and then fixing his eyes meaningly on the prince, dropt the princess' ring into the cup, and putting it back into Sigtryg's hand, sang—

'The beaker I reach back
More rich than I took it.
No gold will I grasp
Of the king's, the ring giver,
Till, by wit or by weapon,
I worthily win it.
When felled by my faith-blond
False Feargon bes-gory,
With over the wolf's meal
With w-lows are walling

'Does he refuse my gift?' gumbled Ranald. 'He has given a fair reason,' said the prince, as he hid the ring in his bosom, 'leave him to me, for my brother-in-arm he is henceforth.'

After which, as was the custom of those parts, most of them drank too much liquor. But neither Sigtryg nor Hereward drank, and the two Swards stood behind their young uncle's seat, watching him with that intense admiration which lads can feel for a young hero.

That night, when the warriors were asleep, Sigtryg and Hereward talked out their plans. They would equip two ships, they would fight all the kinglets of Cornwall at once, if need was, they would carry off the princess, and burn Alef's town over his head if he said nay. Nothing could be more simple than the tactics required in an age when might was right.

Then Hereward turned to his two nephews, who lingered near him, plainly lag with news.

'And what brings you here, lads?' He had

hardened his heart, and made up his mind to show no kindness to his own kin. The day might come when they might need him, then it would be his turn.

'Your father, as we told you, is dead.'

'So much the better for him and the worse for England. And Harold and the Godwinssons, of course, are lords and masters far and wide.'

'Tost has our grandfather Sward's earldom.'

'I know that. I know, too, that he will not keep it long, unless he learns that Northumbrians are free men, and not Wessex slaves.'

'And Algar our uncle is outlawed again, after King Edward had given him peaceably your father's earldom.'

'And why?'

'Why was he outlawed two years ago?'

'Because the Godwinssons hate him, as they will hate you in your turn.'

'And Algar is gone to Griffin, the Welshman, and from him on to Dublin, to get ships, just as he did two years ago, and has sent us here to get ships likewise.'

'And what will he do with them when he has got them? He learnt Harford last time he was outlawed, by way of a wise deed, minster and all, with St. Ethelbert's relics on board, and slew seven priests. But they were only honest canons with wives at home, and not shaveling monks, so I suppose that sin was easily shivered. Well, I robbed a priest of a few pence, and was outlawed, he plunders and burns a whole minster, and is made a great call for it. One law for the weak, and one for the strong, young lads, as you will know when you are as old as I. And now I suppose he will plunder and burn more minsters, and then patch up a peace with Harold again, which I advise him strongly to do, for I warn you, young lads, and you may carry that message from me to Dublin to my good brother your uncle, that Harold's little finger is thicker than his whole body, and that, false Godwinsson as he is, he is the only man with a head upon his shoulders left in England, now that his father and my father, and dear old Sward, whom I loved better than my father, are dead and gone.'

The lads stood silent, not a little awed, and indeed imposed on, by the cynical and worldly-wise tone which their renowned uncle had assumed.

At last one of them asked falteringly, 'Then you will do nothing for us?'

'For you nothing. Against you nothing. Why should I mix myself up in my brother's quarrels? Will he make that white-headed diveller at Westminster reverse my outlawry? And if he does, what shall I get thereby? A younger brother's portion, a dirty oxgang of land in Kesteven. Let him leave me alone as I leave him, and see if I do not come back to him some day, for or against him as he chooses, with such a host of Vikings' sons as Harold Hardrade himself would be proud of. By Thor's hammer, boys, I have been an outlaw but five years now, and I find it so cheery a life, that I do not care

if I am an outlaw for fifty mere. The world is a fine place and a wide place, and it is a very little corner of it that I have seen yet, and if you were of my mettle, you would come along with me and see it throughout to the four corners of heaven, instead of mixing yourselves up in these paltry little quarrels with which our two families are tearing England in pieces, and being murdered perchance like dogs at last by treachery, as Sweyn Godwinsson murdered Biorn Ulsson, his own cousin.

The boys listened, wide-eyed and wide-eared. Hereward knew to whom he was speaking, and he had not spoken in vain.

'What do you hope to get here?' he went on. 'Ranald will give you no ships: he will have enough to do to fight this Feargus, and he is too cunning to thrust his head into Algar's quarrels.'

'We hoped to find Vikings here who would go to any war in the hope of plunder.'

'If there be any, I want them more than you, and what is more, I will have them. They know that they will do finer deeds with me for their captain, than hurling a few English housesteads. And so may you. Come with me, lads. Once and for all, come. Help me to fight Feargus. Then help me to another little adventure which I have on hand—as pretty a one as ever you heard a minstrel sing—and then we will fit out a large ship or two, and go where fate leads—to Constantinople if you like. What can you do better? You never will get that earldom from Tosti. Lucky for young Waltheof, your uncle, if he gets it—if he, and you too, are not murdered within seven years, for I know Tosti's humour, when he lists rivals in his way—'

'Algar will protect us,' said one.

'I tell you Algar is no match for the Godwinssons. If the monk-king died to-morrow, neither his earldom nor his life would be safe. When I saw your father Asbjorn Bulax he dead at Dunsmere, I said, "There ends the glory of the house of the bear", and if you wish to make my words come false, then leave England to founder, and rot and fall to pieces—as all men say she is doing—without your helping to hasten her ruin, and seek glory and wealth too with me around the world! The white bear's blood is in your veins, lads. Take to the sea like your forefather, and come over the swan's bath with me!'

'That we will,' said the two lads. And well they kept their word.

CHAPTER V

HOW HEREWARD RESCUED THE PRINCESS OF CORNWALL A SECOND TIME

FAT was the feasting, and loud was the harping, in the halls of Alef, King of Gweek. Savoury was the smell of fried pilchard and

lake, more savoury still that of roast porpoise; most savoury of all that of fifty huge squab pies, built up of layers of apples, bacon, onions, and mutton, and at the bottom of each a squab, or young cormorant, which diffused both through the pie and through the ambient air, a delicate odour of mingled guano and polocot. And the occasion was worthy alike of the smell and of the noise, for King Alef, finding that after the Ogre's death the neighbouring kings were but too ready to make reprisals on him for his champion's murders and robberies, had made a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with Hannibal, the son of Gryll, King of Marazion, and had confirmed the same by bestowing on him the hand of his fair daughter. Whether she approved of the match or not, was asked neither by King Alef nor by King Hannibal.

To-night was the bridal feast. To-morrow morning the church was to hallow the union, and after that Hannibal Grylls was to lead home his bride, among a gallant company.

And as they ate and drank, and harped and piped, there came into that hall four shabbily dressed men—one of them a short, broad fellow, with black elf-looks and a red beard—and sat them down sneakingly at the very lowest end of all the benches.

In hospitable Cornwall, especially on such a day, every guest was welcome, and the strangers sat peaceably, but ate nothing, though there was both lake and pilchard within reach.

Next to them, by chance, sat a great lord of a Dane, as honest, brave, and stupid a fellow as ever tugged at oar, and after a while they fell talking, till the strangers had heard the reason of this great feast, and all the news of the country side.

'But whence did they come, not to know it already, for all Cornwall was talking thereof?'

'Oh—they came out of Devonshire, seeking service down west with some merchant or rover, being seafaring.'

The stranger with the black hair had been, meanwhile, earnestly watching the princess, who sat at the board's head. He saw her watching him in return, and with a face sad enough.

At last she burst into tears.

'What should the bride weep for, at such a merry wedding?' asked he of his companion.

'Oh—cause enough,' and he told bluntly enough the princess's story. 'And what is more,' said he, 'the King of Waterford sent a ship over last week, with forty proper lads on board, and two gallant Holders with them, to demand her, but for all answer, they were put into the strong house, and there they lie, chained to a log, at this minute. Pity it is, and shame, I hold, for I am a Dane myself, and pity, too, that such a bonny lass should go to an unkempt Welshman like this, instead of a tight smart Viking's son, like the Waterford lad.'

The stranger answered nothing, but kept his eyes upon the princess, till she looked at him steadfastly in return.

She turned pale and red again but after a while she spoke.

'There is a stranger there, and what his rank may be I know not but he has been thrust down to the lowest seat, in a house that used to honour strangers, instead of treating them like slaves. Let him take this dish from my hand, and eat joyfully, lest when he goes home he may speak scorn of bridegroom and bride, and our Cornish weddings.'

The servant brought the dish down; he gave a look at the stranger's shabby dress, turned up his nose, and pretending to mistake, put the dish into the hand of the Dane.

'Hold, lads,' quoth the stranger 'If I have ears, that was incant for me.'

He seized the platter with both hands, and therewith the hands both of the Cornishman and of the Dane. There was a struggle but so latter was the stranger's gripe, that (says the chronicler) the blood burst from the nails of both his opponents.

He was called a 'savage,' a 'devil in man's shape,' and other dainty names, but he was left to eat his squab pie in peace.

'Patience, lads,' quoth he, as he filled his mouth 'Before I take my pleasure at this wedding I will hand my own dish round as well as any of you.'

Whereat men wondered, but held their tongues.

And when the eating was over and the drinking began, the princess rose, and came round to drink the farewell health.

With her maids behind her, and her harper before her (so was the Cornish custom), she pledged one by one each of the guests, slave as well as free, while the harper played a tune.

She came down at last to the strangers. Her face was pale, and her eyes red with weeping.

She filled a cup of wine, and one of her maids offered it to the stranger.

He put it back courteously, but firmly 'Not from your hand,' said he.

A growl against his bad manners rose straightway, and the minstrel, who (as often happened in those days) was jester likewise, made merry at his expense, and advised the company to turn the wild beast out of the hall.

'Silence, fool!' said the princess. 'Why should he know our West country ways? He may take it from my hand, if not from hers.'

And she held out to him the cup herself.

He took it, looking her steadily in the face, and it seemed to the minstrel as if their hands lingered together round the cup-handle, and that he saw the glitter of a ring.

Like many another of his craft before and since, he was a vain, meddling vagabond, and must needs pry into a secret which certainly did not concern him.

So he could not leave the stranger in peace, and knowing that his privileged calling protected him from that formidable fist, he never passed him by without a sneer or a jest, as he wandered round the table, offering his harp, in

the Cornish fashion, to any one who wished to play and sing.

'But not to you, Sir Elf-locks: he that is rude to a pretty girl when she offers him wine, is too great a boor to understand my trade.'

'It is a fool's trick,' answered the stranger at last, 'to put off what you must do at last. If I had but the tune, I would pay you for your tune with a better one than you ever heard.'

'Take the harp, then, boor!' said the minstrel, with a laugh and a jest.

The stranger took it, and drew from it such music as made all heads turn toward him at once. Then he began to sing, sometimes by himself, and sometimes his comrades, '*more Girvorum tripliciter canentes*,' joined their voices in a Fenmen's three-man-glee.

In vain the minstrel, jealous for his own credit, tried to snatch the harp away. The stranger sang on, till all hearts were softened, and the princess, taking the rich shawl from her shoulders, threw it over those of the stranger, saying that it was a gift too poor for such a scald.

'Scald!' roared the bridegroom (now well in his cups) from the head of the table, 'ask what thou wilt, short of my bride and my kingdom, and it is thine.'

'Give me, then, Hannibal Grylls, King of Marazion, the Danes who came from Ranaid of Waterford.'

'You shall have them! Pity that you have asked for nothing better than such tarry ruffians.'

A few minutes after, the minstrel, bursting with jealousy and rage, was whispering in Hannibal's ear.

The hot old Punie's blood flushed up in his cheeks, and his thin Punie lips curved into a snaky smile. Perhaps the old Punie treachery in his heart, for all that Hannibal was heard to reply was, 'We must not disturb the good-fellowship of a Cornish wedding.'

The stranger, nevertheless, and the princess likewise, had seen that bitter smile.

Men drank hard and long that night and when daylight came, the strangers were gone.

In the morning the marriage ceremony was performed, and then began the pageant of leading home the bride. The minstrels went first, harping and piping; then king Hannibal, carrying his bride behind him on a pillow, and after them a string of servants and men-at-arms, leading country ponies laden with the bride's dower. Along with them, unarmed, sulky and suspicious, walked the forty Danes, who were informed that they should go to Marazion, and there be shipped off for Ireland.

Now, as all men know, those parts of Cornwall, flat and open furze-downs aloft, are cut, for many miles inland, by long branches of tide river, walled in by woods and rocks, and by crossing one or more of these, the bridal

¹ Hannibal, still a common name in Cornwall, is held—and not unlikely—to have been introduced there by ancient Phœnician colonists.

party would save many a mile on their road towards the west.

So they had timed their journey by the tides, lest, finding low water in the rivers, they should have to wade to the ferry-boats waist-deep in mud, and going down the steep hillside, through oak, and ash, and hazel-epsea, they entered, as many as could, a great flat-bottomed barge, and were rowed across some quarter of a mile, to land under a jutting crag, and go up again by a similar path into the woods.

So the first boat load went up, the minstrels in front, harping and piping till the greenwood rang, King Hannibal next, with his bride, and behind him spear-men and axe men, with a Dane between every two.

When they had risen some two hundred feet, and were in the heart of the forest, Hannibal turned, and made a sign to the men behind him.

Then each pair of them seized the Dane between them, and began to bind his hands behind his back.

'What will you do with us?'

'Send you back to Ireland,—a king never breaks his word,—but pick out your right eyes first, to show your master how much I care for him. Lucky for you that I leave you an eye apiece, to find your friend the harper, whom, if I catch, I slay alive.'

'You promised!' cried the princess.

'And so did you, traitress!' and he gripped her arm, which was round his waist, till she screamed. 'So did you promise but not to me. And you shall pass your bridal night in my dog-kennel, after my dog-whip has taught you not to give rings again to wandering harpers.'

The wretched princess shuddered, for she knew too well that such an atrocity was easy and common enough. She knew it well. Why should she not? The story of the Cid's Daughters and the knights of Carron, the far more authentic one of Robert of Belesme, and many another ugly tale of the early middle age, will prove but too certainly that, before the days of chivalry began, neither youth, beauty, nor the sacred ties of matrimony, could protect women from the most horrible outrages at the hands of those who should have been their protectors.

But the words had hardly passed the lips of Hannibal, ere he reeled in the saddle, and fell to the ground, with a javelin through his heart.

A strong arm caught the princess. A voice which she knew bade her have no fear.

'Bind your horse to a tree, for we shall want him, and wait.'

Three well-armed men rushed on the nearest Cornishmen, and hewed them down. A fourth unbound the Dane, and bade him catch up a weapon and fight for his life.

A second pair were despatched, a second Dane freed, ere a minute was over, the Cornishmen, struggling up the narrow path toward the shouts above, were overpowered in detail by continually

increasing numbers, and ere half an hour was over the whole party were freed, mounted on the ponies, and making their way over the downs toward the west.

'Noble, noble Hereward!—The Wake indeed!' said the princess, as she sat behind him on Hannibal's horse. 'I knew you from the first moment, and my nurse knew you too. Is she here? Is she safe?'

'I have taken care of that. She has done us too good service to be left here and be hanged.'

'I knew you, in spite of your hair, by your eyes.'

'Yes,' said Hereward. 'It is not every man who carries one gray eye and one blue. The more difficult for me to go mumming when I need.'

'But how came you hither, of all places in the world?'

'When you sent your nurse to me last night, to warn me that treason was abroad, it was easy for me to ask your road to Marazion, and easier too, when I found that you would go home the very way we came, to know that I must make my stand here or nowhere.'

'The way you came? Then where are we going now?'

'Beyond Marazion, to a little cove—I cannot tell its name. There he—Sigtryg your betrothed, and three good ships of war.'

'There? Why did he not come for me himself?'

'Why? Because we knew nothing of what was toward. We meant to have sailed straight up your river to your father's town, and taken you out with a high hand. We had sworn an oath—which, as you saw, I kept—neither to eat nor drink in your house, save out of your own hands. But the easterly wind would not let us round the Lizard, so we put into that cove, and there I and these two lads, my nephews, offered to go forward as spies, while Sigtryg threw up an earthwork, and made a stand against the Cornish. We meant merely to go back to him, and give him news. But when I found you as good as wedded, I had to do what I could, while I could, and I have done it, like a Wake as I am.'

'You have, my noble and true champion,' said she, kissing him.

'Mumple!' quoth Hereward, laughing. 'Do not tempt me by being too grateful! It is hard enough to gather honey, like the bees, for other folks to eat. What if I kept you myself, now I have got you?'

'Hereward!'

'Oh, there is no fear, pretty lady. I have other things to wake over than making love to you—and one is, how we are to get to our ships, and, moreover, past Marazion town.'

And hard work they had to get thither. The county was soon roused and up in arms, and it was only by wandering a three days' circuit, through bogs and moors, all the ponies were utterly tired out, and left behind (the bulkier part of the dowry being left with them).

that they made their appearance on the shore of Mount's Bay, Hereward leading the princess in triumph upon Hannibal's horse.

After which they all sailed away for Ireland, and there, like young Benches—

'Prepared another wedding,
With all their hearts so full of glee.'

And this is the episode of the Cornish princess, as told (the outlines of it at least) by Richard of Ely, after Leofric the mass-priest's manuscript.

CHAPTER VI

HOW HERWARD WAS WRECKED UPON THE FLANDERS SHORE

HERWARD had drunk his share at Sigtryg's wedding. He had helped to harry the lands of Feargus till (as King Ranaid had threatened) there was not a sucking pig left in Ivark, and the poor folk died of famine, as they did about every seven years, he had burst (says the chronicler) through the Irish camp with a chosen band of Berserkers, slain Feargus in his tent, brought off his war horn as a trophy, and cut his way back to the Danish army—a feat in which the two Swards were grievously wounded, and had in all things shown himself a daring and wakeful captain, as careless of his own life as of other folk's.

Then a great home-sickness had seized him. He would go back and see the old house, and the cattle pastures, and the mees and fens of his boyhood. He would see his widowed mother. Perhaps her heart was softened to him by now, as his was toward her, and if not, he could show her that he could do without her, that others thought him a fine fellow if she did not. Hereward knew that he had won honour and glory for himself, that the Wake's name was in the mouths of all warriors and sea-rovers round the coasts as the most likely young champion of the time, able to rival, if he had the opportunity, the prowess of Harold Harefoot himself. Yes, he would go and see his mother—he would be kind if she was kind, if she were not, he would boast and swagger, as he was but too apt to do. That he should go back at the risk of his life, that any one who found him on English ground might kill him, and that many would certainly try to kill him, he knew very well. But that only gave special zest to the adventure.

Martin Lightfoot heard this news with joy.

'I have no more to do here,' said he. 'I have searched and asked far and wide for the man I want, but he is not on the Irish shores. Some say he is gone to the Orkneys, some to Denmark. Never mind, I shall find him before I die.'

'And for whom art looking?'

'For one Thord Gunlansson, my father

'And what wantest thou with him?'

'To put this through his brain.' And he showed his axe.

'Thy father's brain?'

'Look you, lord. A man owes his father nought, and his mother all. At least, so hold I. "Man that is of woman born," say all the world, and they say right. Now, if any man hang up that mother by hands and feet, and fling her to death, is not he that is of that mother born bound to revenge her upon any man, and all the more if that man had first his wicked will of that poor mother? Considering that last, lord, I do not know but what I am bound to avenge my mother's shame upon the man, even if he had never killed her. No, lord, you need not try to talk this out of my head. It has been there nigh twenty years, and I say it over to myself every night before I sleep, lest I should forget the one thing which I must do before I die. Find him I will, and find him I shall, if there be justice in heaven above.'

So Hereward asked Ranaid for ships, and got at once two good vessels, as payment for his doughty deeds.

One he christened the *Garpik*, from her narrow build and long leak, and the other the *Ulf*, because, he said, whatever she grappled she would never let go till she heard the bones crack. They were excellent new 'knuckers,' nearly eighty feet long each, with double banks for twelve oars a side in the waist, which was open save a lighting gangway along the sides, with high poop and forecastle decks, and with one large sail apiece, embroidered by Sigtryg's princess and the other ladies with a huge white bear, which Hereward had chosen as his ensign.

As for men, there were fifty fellows as desperate as Hereward himself, to take service with him for that or any other quest. So they ballasted their ships with great pebbles, stowed under the thwarts, to be used as ammunition in case of boarding, and over them the barrels of ale, and pork, and meal, well covered with tarpaulins. They stowed in the cabins fore and aft their weapons—swords, spears, axes, bows, chests of arrow heads, leather bags of bowstrings, mail-shirts and helmets, and fine clothes for holidays and fighting-days. They hung their shields, after the old fashion, outboard along the gunnel, and a right gay show they made, and so rowed out of Waterford harbour amid the tears of the ladies and the cheers of the men.

But, as it befell, the voyage did not prosper. Hereward found his vessels under-manned, and had to sail northward for fresh hands. He got none in Dublin, for they were all gone to the Welsh marches to help Earl Algar and King Grifin. So he went on through the Hebrides, intending, of course, to plunder as he went, but there he got but little booty, and lost several men. So he went on again to the Orkneys to try for fresh hands from the Norse earls thereof, but there befell a fresh mishap. They were followed by a whale, which they made sure was a witch-whale, and boded more ill luck, and accordingly they were struck by a storm in the Pentland Frith, and the poor

Garpiks went on shore on *Hoy*, and was left there for over and a day, her crew being hardly saved, and very little of her cargo.

However, the *Otter* was now not only manned, but over-manned, and Hereward had to leave a dozen stout fellows with *Karl Bruce* in *Kirkwal*, and sailed southward again, singing cheerily to his men—

'Lightly the long-snake
Leaps after tempests,
Gaily the sun gleam
Glow after rain
In labour and daring
Lies luck for all mortals,
Foul winds and foul witch wives
Fray women alone.'

But their mishaps were not over yet. They were hardly out of *Stronsay Firth* when they saw the witch-whale again, following them up, rolling, and spouting, and breaching, in most uncannily wise. Some said that they saw a gray woman on his back, and they knew, possibly from the look of the sky, but certainly from the whale's behaviour, that there was more heavy weather yet coming from the northward.

From that day forward the whale never left them, nor the wild weather either. They were beaten out of all reckoning. Once they thought they saw low land to the eastward, but what or where, who could tell? and as for making it, the wind, which had blown hard from north-east, backed against the sun and blew from west, from which, as well as from the witch-whale, they expected another gale from north and round to north-east.

The men grew sulky and fearful. Some were for trying to run the witch down and break her back, as did *Frithof* in like case, when hunted by a whale with two hags upon his back—an excellent recipe in such cases, but somewhat difficult in a heavy sea. Others said that there was a doomed man on board, and proposed to cast lots till they found him out, and cast him into the sea, as a sacrifice to *Agir* the wave-god. But Hereward scouted that as unmanly and cowardly, and sang—

'With blood of my bold-ones
With hale of my comrades,
Thinks *Agir*, brine thirsty,
His throat he can slake?
Though salt spray, shrill-sounding,
Sweep round in swan's flight,
True hearts, troth-plighted,
Together we'll die.'

At last, after many days, their strength was all but worn out. They had long since given over rowing, and contented themselves with running under a close-reefed canvas whithersoever the storm should choose. At night a sea broke over them, and would have swamped the *Otter*, had she not been the best of sea-boats. But she only rolled the lee shields into the water and out again, shook herself, and went on. Nevertheless, there were three men on the poop when the sea came in, who were not there when it went out.

Wet and wild dawned that morning, showing

naught but gray sea and gray air. Then sang Hereward—

'Cheerily, my sea-cocks,
Grow for the day-dawn
Weary and wet are we,
Water beladen
Wester our comrades,
Whelmed by the witch-whales
Us *Agir* granted
Grudging, to Gondul,
Doomed to die dry-shod,
During the foe.'

Whereat the hearts of the men were much cheered.

All of a sudden, as is the wont of gales at dawn, the clouds rose, tore up into ribands, and with a fierce black shower or two, blew clean away, disclosing a bright blue sky, a green rolling sea, and a few miles off to leeward a pale yellow line, seen only as they topped a wave, but seen only too well. To keep the ship off shore was impossible, and as they drifted nearer and nearer, the line of sand-hills rose, uglier and more formidable, through the gray spray of the surf.

'We shall die on shore, but not dry-shod,' said Martin. 'Do any of you knights of the far brush know whether we are going to be drowned in Christian waters? I should like a mass or two for my soul, and shall die the happier within sight of a church tower.'

'One dune is as like another as one pea, we may be anywhere between the *Taxel* and *Cap Gris Nez*, but I think nearer the latter than the former.'

'So much the worse for us,' said another. 'If we had gone ashore among these *Frieslanders*, we should have been only knocked on the head outright, but if we fall among the *Frenchmen*, we shall be clapt in prison strong, and tortured till we find ransom.'

'I don't see that,' said Martin. 'We can all be drowned if we like, I suppose.'

'Drowned we need not be, if we be men,' said the old sailing-master to Hereward. 'The tide is full high, and that gives us one chance for our lives. Keep her head straight, and row like fiends when we are once in the surf, and then beach her up high and dry and take what befalls after.'

And what was likely to befall was ugly enough. Then, as centuries after, all wrecks and wrecked men were public prey, shipwrecked mariners were liable to be sold as slaves; and the petty counts of the French and Flemish shores were but too likely to extract ransom by prison and torture, as *Guy, Earl of Ponthieu*, would have done (so at least *William, Duke of Normandy*, hunted by *Harold Godwinsson*, had not *William*, for his own politic ends, begged the release of the shipwrecked earl).

Already they had been seen from the beach. The country folk, who were prowling about the shore after the waifs of the storm, deserted jetsom and legend, and crowded to meet the richer prize which was coming in flotsom, to become jetsom in its turn.

'Axemen and bowmen, put on your harness, and be ready, but nether strike nor shoot till I give the word. We must land peaceably if we can; if not, we will die fighting.'

So said Hereward, and took the rudder into his own hand. 'Now then,' as she rushed into the breakers, 'pull together, rowers all, and with a will!'

The men yolled, and sprang from the thwarts as they tugged at the oars. The sea boiled past them, surged into the waist, blinded them with spray. The *Otter* graved the sand once, twice, thrice, leaping forward gallantly each time, and then, pressed by a huge wave, drove high and dry upon the beach, as the oars snapped right and left, and the men tumbled over each other in heaps.

The peasants swarmed down like flies to a carcass, but they recoiled as there rose over the fore-castle bulwarks, not the broad hats of peaceful buscarles, but peaked helmets, round red shields, and glittering axes. They drew back, and one or two arrows flew from the crowd into the ship. But at Hereward's command no arrows were shot in answer.

'Bale her out quietly, and let us show these fellows that we are not afraid of them. That is the best chance of peace.'

At this moment a mounted party came down between the sand-hills; it might be, some twenty strong. Before their rode a boy on a jennet, and by him a clerk, as he seemed, upon a mule. They stopped to talk with the peasants, and then to consult among themselves.

Suddenly the boy turned from his party, and galloping down the shore, while the clerk called after him in vain, reined up his horse fetlock deep in water, within ten yards of the ship's bows.

'Yield yourselves!' he shouted in French, as he brandished a hunting spear. 'Yield yourselves, or die!'

Hereward looked at him smiling, as he sat tight, keeping the head of his frightened horse toward the ship with hand and heel, his long locks streaming in the wind, his face full of courage and command, and of honesty and sweetness withal, and thought that he had never seen so fair a lad.

'And who art thou, thou pretty bold boy?'

'I,' said he, haughtily enough, as resenting Hereward's familiar 'thou,' 'am Arnoul,' grandson and heir of Haldwin, Marquis of Flanders, and lord of this land. And to his grace I call on you to surrender yourselves.'

Hereward looked, not only with interest, but respect, upon the grandson of one of the most

famous and prosperous of northern potentates, the descendant of the mighty Charlemagne himself. He turned and told the men who the boy was.

'It would be a good trick,' quoth one, 'to catch that young whelp, and keep him as a hostage.'

'Here is what will have him on board before he can turn,' said another, as he made a running noose in a rope.

'Quiet, men! Am I master in this ship, or you?'

Hereward saluted the lad courteously. 'Verily the blood of Haldwin of the Iron Arm has not degenerated. I am happy to behold so noble a son, of so noble a race.'

'And who are you, who speak French so well, and yet by your dress are neither French nor Fleming?'

'I am Harold Næmanson, the Viking, and these my men. I am here, sailing peaceably for England, as for yielding mine yield to no living man, but die as we are, weapon in hand. I have heard of your grandfather, that he is a just man and a bountiful, therefore take this message to him, young sir. If he have wars toward, I and my men will fight for him with all our might, and earn hospitality and ransom with our only treasure, which is our sword. But if he be at peace, then let him bid us go in peace, for we are Vikings, and must fight, or rot and die.'

'You are Vikings?' cried the boy, pressing his horse into the foam so eagerly, that the men, mistaking his intent, had to be repressed again by Hereward. 'You are Vikings.' Then came on shore, and welcome. You shall be my friends. You shall be my brothers. I will answer to my grandfather. I have longed to see Vikings. I long to be a Viking myself.'

'By the hammer of Thor,' cried the old master, 'and thou wouldst make a bonny one, my lad.'

Hereward hesitated, delighted with the boy, but by no means sure of his power to protect them.

But the boy rode back to his companions, and talked and gesticulated eagerly.

Then the clerk rode down, and talked with Hereward.

'Are you Christians?' shouted he, before he would adventure himself near the ship.

'Christians we are, sir clerk, and dare do no harm to a man of God.'

The clerk rode nearer, his handsome palfrey, furred cloak, rich gloves and boots, moreover his air of command, showed that he was no common man.

'I,' said he, 'am the albot of St. Bertin of Sithin, and tutor of your prince. I can bring down, at a word, against you, the chatelem of St. Omer with all his knights, beside knights and men-at-arms of my own. But I am a man of peace, and not of war; and would have no blood shed if I can help it.'

'Then make peace,' said Hereward. 'Your

¹ The French language was at this epoch taking the place of the Teutonic in Southern Flanders, and the boy would call himself Arnoul, while old men would persist in calling him Arnulf, after the fashion of that Count of Guines, who, when upon his death bed, heard his nephew speak to him in French, and told him that he had no more time for trifles and jests—*Nugis et jocis se non posse vacare*. Lamb. Ard. in Kervyn de Lettenhoven *Hist. de Flandre*.

lord may kill us if he will, or have us for his guests if he will. If he does the first, we shall kill, each of us, a few of his men before we die, if the latter, we shall kill a few of his foes. If you be a man of God, you will counsel him accordingly.'

'Alas! alas!' said the abbot with a shudder, 'that, ever since Adam's fall, sinful man should talk of nothing but slaying and being slain, not knowing that his soul is slain already by sin, and that a worse death awaits him hereafter than that death of the body, of which he makes so light!'

'A very good sermon, my lord abbot, to listen to next Sunday morning out we are hungry, and wot, and desperate just now, and if you do not settle this matter for us, our blood will be on your head—and maybe your own likewise.'

The abbot rode out of the water faster than he had ridden in, and a fresh consultation ensued, after which the boy, with a warning gesture to his companions, turned and galloped away through the sand-hills.

'He is gone to his grandfather himself, I verily believe,' quoth Hereward.

They waited for some two hours unprovoked, and, true to their policy of seeming recklessness, shifted and dried themselves as well as they could, ate what provisions were unspoiled by the salt water, and, bracing the last barrel of ale, drank healths to each other and to the Flemings on shore.

At last down rode with the boy a noble-looking man, and behind him knights and men-at-arms. He announced himself as the chatelain of St. Omer,¹ and repeated the demand to surrender.

'There is no need for it,' said Hereward. 'We are already that young prince's guests. He has said that we shall be his friends and brothers. He has said that he will answer to his grandfather, the great marquis, whom I and mine shall be proud to serve. I claim the word of a descendant of Charlemagne.'

'And you shall have it!' cried the boy. 'Chatelain! Abbot! these men are mine. They shall come with me, and lodge in St. Bertin.'

'Heaven forfend!' murmured the abbot.

'They will be safe, at least, within your ramparts,' whispered the chatelain.

'And they shall tell me about the sea. Have I not told you how I longed for Vikings, how I will have Vikings of my own, and sail the seas with them, like my uncle Robert, and go to Spain and fight the Moors, and to Constantinople and marry the Kaiser's daughter? Come,' he cried to Hereward, 'come on shore, and he that touches you or your ship, touches me!'

¹ The chronicler says, 'Manasse Count of that land.' But I can find no such person in history. There was a Manasses, Count of Guisnes, about that time, but, as will be seen, it could not have been he who received Hereward. I have supposed, therefore, an insect probable, that the act was that of the chatelain of St. Omer. One Walere held that post in 1072.

'Sir Chatelain and my Lord Abbot,' said Hereward, 'you see that, ~~Viking~~ though I be, I am no barbarous heathen, but a French-speaking gentleman like yourselves. It had been easy for me, had I not been a man of honour, to have cast a rope, as my sailors would have had me do, over that young boy's fair head, and haled him on board, to answer for my life with his own. But I loved him at first sight, and trusted him, as I would an angel out of heaven; and I trust him still. To him, and him only, will I yield myself, on condition that I and my men shall keep all our arms and treasure, and enter his service, to fight his foes and his grandfather's, wheresoever they will, by land or sea.'

'Fair sir,' said the abbot, 'pirate though you call yourself, you speak so courtly and clerkly that I, too, am inclined to trust you, and if my young lord will have it so, into St. Bertin I will receive you, till our lord the marquis shall give orders about you and yours.'

So promises were given all round, and Hereward explained the matter to the men, without whose advice (for they were all as free as himself) he could not act.

'Needs must,' grunted they, as they packed up each his little valuables.

Then Hereward sheathed his sword, and leaping from the bow, came up to the boy.

'Put your hands between his fair air,' said the chatelain.

'That is not the manner of Vikings.'

And he took the boy's right hand, and grasped it in the plain English fashion.

'There is the hand of an honest man. Come down, men, if you be wise, and take this young lord's hand, and serve him in the wars, as I shall do.'

One by one the men came down, and each took Arnoul's hand, and shook it till the lad's face grew red. But none of them bowed or made obeisance. They looked the boy full in the face, and as they stepped back, stared round upon the ring of armed men with a smile and something of a swagger.

'These are they who bow to no man, and call no man master,' whispered the abbot.

And so they were, and so are their descendants of Scotland and Northumbria unto this very day.

The boy sprang from his horse, and walked among them and round them in delight. He admired and handled their double axes; their short sea-bows of horn and deer-sinew; their red Danish coats, their black sea-cloaks, fastened on the shoulder with rich brooches, and the gold and silver bracelets on their wrists. He wondered at their long shaggy beards, and still more at the blue patterns with which the English among them, Hereward especially, were tattooed on throat, and arm, and knee.

'Yes, you are Vikings—just such as my uncle Robert tells me of.'

Hereward knew well the exploits of Robert le Frison in Spain and Greece. 'I trust that your noble uncle,' he asked, 'is well? He was one

of us poor sea-cooks, and sailed the swan's path gallantly, till he became a mighty prince. Here is a man here who was with your noble uncle in Spain.'

And he thrust forward the old master.

The boy's delight knew no bounds. He should tell him all about that in St. Bertin.

Then he rode back to the ship, and round and round her (for the tide by that time had left her high and dry), and wondered at her long snake-like lines, and carven stem and stern.

'Tell me about this ship. Let me go on board of her. I have never seen a ship inland at Mons there, and even here there are only heavy ugly busses, and little fishing-boats. No. You must be all hungry and tired. We will go to St. Bertin at once, and you shall be feasted royally. Hearken, villains!' shouted he to the peasants. 'This ship belongs to the fair air here—my guest and friend, and if any man dares to steal from her a stove or a nail I will have his thief's hand cut off.'

'The ship, fair lord,' said Hereward, 'is yours, not mine. You should build twenty more after her pattern, and man them with such lads as these, and then go down to

"Miklagard and Spanieland,
That lie so far on the lee, O!"

as did your noble uncle before you.'

And so they marched inland, after the boy had dismounted one of his men and put Hereward on the horse.

'You gentlemen of the sea can ride as well as sail,' said the chatelain, as he remarked with some surprise Hereward's perfect seat and hand.

'We should soon learn to fly likewise,' laughed Hereward, 'if there were any booty to be picked up in the clouds there overhead', and he rode on by Arnoul's side, as the lad questioned him about the sea, and nothing else.

'Ah, my fair boy,' said Hereward at last, 'look there, and let those be Vikings who must.'

And he pointed to the rich pastures, broken by strips of corn-land and snug farms, which stretched between the sea and the great forest of Flanders.

'What do you mean?'

But Hereward was silent. It was so like his own native fens. For a moment there came over him the longing for a home. To settle down in such a fair fat land, and call good acres his own, and marry; and beget stalwart sons, to till the old estate when he could till no more. Might not that be a better life—at least a happier one—than restless, homeless, aimless adventure? And now—just as he had had a hope of peace—a hope of seeing his own land, his own folk, perhaps of making peace with his mother and his king, the very waves would not let him rest, but sped him forth, a storm-tossed walf, to begin life anew, fighting, he cared not whom or why, in a strange land.

So he was silent and sad withal.

'What does he mean?' asked the boy of the abbot.

'He seems a wise man: let him answer for himself.'

The boy asked once more.

'Lad! lad!' said Hereward, waking as from a dream. 'If you be heir to such a fair land as that, thank God there, and pray to Him that you may rule it justly, and keep it in peace, as they say your grandfather and your father do, and leave glory, and fame, and the Vikings' bloody trade, to those who have neither father nor mother, wife nor land, but live like the wolf of the wood, from one meal to the next.'

'I thank you for those words, Sieur Heraud,' said the good abbot, while the boy went on abashed, and Hereward himself was startled at his own saying, and rode silent till they crossed the drawbridge of St. Bertin, and entered that ancient fortress, so strong that it was the hiding-place in war time for all the treasures of the country, and so sacred withal that no woman, dead or alive, was allowed to defile it by her presence, so that the wife of Baldwin the Bold, ancestor of Arnoul, wishing to be buried by the side of her husband, had to remove his corpse from St. Bertin to the abbey of Blandigny, where the Counts of Flanders lay in glory for many a generation.

The pirates entered, not without gloomy distrust, the gates of that consecrated fortress, while the monks in their turn were (and with some reason) considerably frightened when they were asked to entertain as guests forty Norse rovers. Loudly did the elder among them bewail (in Latin, lest their guests should understand too much) the present weakness of their monastery, where St. Bertin and St. Omer were left to defend themselves and their monks against the wicked world outside. Far different had been their case some hundred and seventy years before. Then St. Valeri and St. Riquier of Pontlieu, transported thither from their own resting-places in France for fear of the invading Northmen, had joined their suffrages and merits to those of St. Bertin and his winelove servants, with such success that the abbey had never been defiled by the foot of the heathen. But alas! the saints (that is, their bodies) after a while became home-sick, and St. Valeri, appearing in a dream to Hugh Capet, bade him bring them back to France in spite of Arnulf, count of those parts, who wished much to retain so valuable an addition to his household gods.

But in vain. Hugh Capet was a man who took few denials. With knights and men-at-arms he came, and Count Arnulf had to send home the holy corpses with all humility, and leave St. Bertin and St. Omer to themselves.

Whereon St. Valeri appeared in a dream to Hugh Capet, and said unto him, 'Because thou hast zealously done what I commanded, thou and thy successors shall reign in the kingdom of France to everlasting generations.'

However, there was no refusing the grandson

¹ *Histoire des Comtes de Flandre, par E. le Glay. N° 66 des SS. Richart et Waleric.*

and heir of Count Baldwin, and the hearts of the monks were comforted by hearing that Hereward was a good Christian, and that most of his crew had been at least baptized. The abbot therefore took courage, and admitted them into the hospice, with solemn warnings as to the doom which they might expect if they took the value of a horse-nail from the patrimony of the blessed saint. Was he less powerful or less careful of his own honour than St. Lioven of Holthem, who, not more than fifty years before, had struck stone-blind four soldiers of the Emperor Henry's, who had dared, after warning, to plunder the altar?¹ Let them remember, too, the fate of their own forefathers, the heathens of the North, and the check which, one hundred and seventy years before, they had received under those very walls. They had exterminated the people of Walcheren, they had taken prisoner Count Regnier, they had burnt Ghent, Bruges, and St. Omer itself, close by; they had left nought between the Scheldt and the Somme save stark corpses and blackened ruins. What could withstand them till they dared to lift audacious hands against the heavenly lord who sleeps there in Sithu? Then they poured down in vain over the Heilig-Veld, unnumbered as the locusts. Poor monks, strong in the protection of the holy Bertin, sallied out and smote them hip and thigh, singing their psalms the while. The ditches of the fortress were filled with unbaptized corpses, the piles of vine-twigs which they lighted to burn down the gates, turned their flames into the Norsemen's faces at the bidding of St. Bertin, and they fled from that temporal fire to descend into that which is eternal, while the gates of the pit were too narrow for the multitude of their miscreant souls.²

So the Norsemen heard, and feared, and only cast longing eyes at the gold and tapestries of the altars, when they went in to mass.

For the good abbot, gaining courage still further, had pointed out to Hereward and his men that it had been surely by the merits and suffrages of the blessed St. Bertin that they had escaped a watery grave.

Hereward and his men, for their part, were not inclined to deny the theory. That they had miraculously escaped, from the accident of the tide being high, they knew full well, and that St. Bertin should have done them the service was probable enough. He, of course, was lord and master in his own country, and very probably a few miles out to sea likewise.

So Hereward assured the abbot that he had no mind to eat St. Bertin's bread, or accept his favours, without paying honestly for them, and after mass he took from his shoulders a handsome silk cloak (the only one he had), with a great Scotch Cairngorm brooch, and bade them buckle it on the shoulders of the great image of St. Bertin.

¹ *Histoire des Comtes de Flandre*, par E. le Glay. Extrait des *SS. Richart et Walteriel*.

² This gallant feat was performed in A.D. 801.

At which St. Bertin was so pleased (being, like many saints, male and female, somewhat proud after their death of the finery which they despised during life), that he appeared that night to a certain monk, and told him that if Hereward would continue duly to honour him, the blessed St. Bertin, and his monks of that place, he would, in his turn, ensure him victory in all his battles by land and sea.

After which Hereward stayed quietly in the abbey certain days, and young Arnoul, in spite of all remonstrances from the abbot, would never leave his side till he had heard from him and from his men as much of their adventures as they thought it prudent to relate.

CHAPTER VII

HOW HERWARD WENT TO THE WAR AT GUINNES

THE dominion of Baldwin of Lille—Baldwin the Debonair—Marquis of Flanders, and just then the greatest potentate in Europe after the Kaiser of Germany and the Kaiser of Constantinople, extended from the Somme to the Scheldt, including thus much territory which now belongs to France. His forefathers had ruled there ever since the days of the 'Foresters' of Charlemagne, who held the vast forests against the heathens of the fens, and of that famous Baldwin Bras-de-fer, who, when the foul fiend rose out of the Scheldt, and tried to drag him down, tried cold steel upon him (being a practical man), and made his ghostly adversary feel so sorely the weight of the 'iron arm,' that he retired into his native mud—or even lower still.

He, like a daring knight as he was, ran off with his (so some say) early love, Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald of France, a descendant of Charlemagne himself. Married up to Ethelwulf of England, and thus stepmother of Alfred the Great—after her husband's death behaving, alas for her! not over wisely or well, she had verified the saying,

'Nous revenons toujours
A nos premiers amours.'

and ran away with Baldwin.

Charles, very wroth that one of his earls, a mere lieutenant and creature, should dare to marry a daughter of Charlemagne's house, would have attacked him with horse and foot, fire and sword, had not Baldwin been the only man who could defend his northern frontier against the heathen Norsemen.

The Pope, as Charles was his good friend, fulminated against Baldwin the excommunication destined for him who stole a widow for his wife, and all his accomplices.

Baldwin and Judith went straight to Rome, and told their story to the Pope.

He, honest man, wrote to Charles the Bald

a letter which still remains,—alike merciful, sentimental, and politic, with its usual ingrained element of what we now call (from the old monastic word 'cantare') cant. Of Baldwin's horrible wickedness there is no doubt. Of his repentance (in all matters short of amendment of life, by giving up the fair Judith), still less. But the Pope has 'another motive for so acting. He fears lest Baldwin, under the weight of Charles's wrath and indignation, should make alliance with the Normans, enemies of God and the holy Church, and thus an occasion arise of peril and scandal for the people of God, whom Charles ought to rule,' etc etc, which if it happened, it would be worse for them and for Charles's own soul.

To which very sensible and humanemissive (times and erecks being considered), Charles answered, after pouting and sulking, by making Baldwin *bond fide* king of all between Somme and Scheldt, and leaving him in peace with Judith, the wicked and the fair.

Thus all happened about A.D. 863. Two hundred years after, there ruled over that same land Baldwin the Debonair, as 'Marquis of the Flamands.'

Baldwin had had his troubles. He had fought the Count of Holland. He had fought the Emperor of Germany, during which war he had burnt the cathedral of Nimeguen, and did other unrighteous and unwise things, and had been beaten after all.

Baldwin had had his troubles, and had deserved them. But he had had his glories, and had deserved them likewise. He had cut the Fosse Neuf, or new dyke, which parted Artois from Flanders. He had so beautified the cathedral of Lille, that he was called Baldwin of Lille to his dying day. He had married Adela, the queen countess, daughter of the king of France. He had become tutor of Philip, the young king, and more or less thereby regent of the north of France, and had fulfilled his office wisely and well. He had married his eldest son, Baldwin the Good, to the terrible sorceress Riobulda, heiress of Hainault, wherefore the bridegroom was named Baldwin of Mons. He had married one of his daughters, Matilda, to William of Normandy, afterwards the Conqueror, and another, Judith, to Toesi Godwinsson, the son of the great Earl Godwin of England. She afterwards married Wolf, Duke of Bavaria, whereby, it may be, the blood of Baldwin of Flanders runs in the veins of Queen Victoria.

And thus there were few potentates of the north more feared and respected than Baldwin, the good-natured Earl of Flanders.

But one sore thorn in the side he had, which other despots after him shared with him, and had even worse success in extracting,—namely, the valiant men of Scaldmarland, which we now call Holland. Of them hereafter. At the moment of Hereward's arrival he was troubled with a lesser thorn, the Count of Guisnes (seemingly that Manasse whom Richard of Ely confounds with the chatelain, or other lawful

commander, of St. Omer), who would not pay him up certain dues, and otherwise acknowledge his sovereignty.

Therefore when the chatelain of St. Omer sent him word to Bruges that a strange Viking had landed with his crew, calling himself Harold Naeniansson, and offering to take service with him, he returned for answer that the said Harold might make proof of his faith and prowess upon the said count, in which, if he acquitted himself like a good knight, Baldwin would have further dealings with him.

So the chatelain of St. Omer, with all his knights and men-at-arms, and Hereward with his sea-cocks, marched north-west up to Guisnes, with little Arnoul cantering alongside in high glee, for it was the first war he had ever seen.

And they came to the castle of Guisnes, and summoned the count, by trumpet and herald, to pay or fight.

Whereon, the count preferring the latter, certain knights of his came forth and challenged the knights of St. Omer to fight them man to man. Whereon there was the usual splintering of lances and slipping up of horses, and hewing at heads and shoulders so well defenced in mail that no one was much hurt. The archers and arbalesters, meanwhile, amused themselves by shooting at the castle walls, out of which they clipped several small pieces of stone. And when they were all tired they drew off on both sides, and went in to dinner.

At which Hereward's men, who were accustomed to a more serious fashion of fighting, stood by, mightily amused, and vowing it was as pretty a play as ever they saw in their lives.

The next day the same comedy was repeated. 'Let me go in against those knights, sir chatelain,' asked Hereward, who felt the lust of battle tingling in him from head to heel, 'and try if I cannot do somewhat towards deciding all this. If we fight no faster than we did yesterday our beards will be grown down to our knees before we take Guisnes.'

'Let my Viking go!' cried Arnoul. 'Let me see him fight!' as if he had been a pet gamecock or bull dog.

'You can break a lance, fine sir, if it please you,' said the chatelain.

'I break more than lances,' quoth Hereward, as he cantered off.

'You,' said he to his men, 'draw round hither to the left, and when I drive the Frenchmen to the right, make a run for it, and get between them and the castle gate, and we will try the Danish axe against their horses' legs.'

Then Hereward spurred his horse, shouting 'A Wake! A Wake!' and dashed into the press, and therein did mightily, like any Turpin or Roland, till he saw lie on the ground, close to the castle gate, one of the chatelain's knights with four Guisnes knights around him. At them he rode, and slew them every one; and mounted the wounded Fleming on his own horse and led him across the field, though the archers

shot sore at him from the wall. And when the press rode at him, his Danish men got between them and the castle, and made a stand to cover him. Then the Guisnes knights rode at them scornfully, crying—

'What footpad-ohurls have we here, who fancy they can face horsed knights!'

But they did not know the stuff of the Danish men, who all shouted 'A Wake! A Wake!' and turned the lances' points with their targets, and hewed off the horses' heads, and would have hewed off the riders' likewise, had not Hereward bidden them give quarter, according to the civilized fashion of France and Flanders. Whereon all the knights who were not taken rode right and left, and let them pass through in peace, with several prisoners, and him whom Hereward had rescued.

At which little Arnoul was as proud as if he had done it himself, and the chatelain sent word to Baldwin that the newcomer was a prudhomme of no common merit, while the heart of the Count of Guisnes became as water, and his knights, both those who were captives and those who were not, complained indignantly of the unchivalrous trick of the Danes. How villainous for 'men on foot, not only to face knights, but to bring them down to their own standing ground by basely outting off their horses' heads!

To which Hereward answered, that he knew the rules of chivalry as well as any of them, but he was lured, not to joust at a tournament, but to make the Count of Guisnes pay his lord Baldwin, and make him pay he would.

The next day he bade his men sit still and look on, and leave him to himself. And when the usual 'monomachy' began, he singled out the burliest and boldest knight whom he saw, rode up to him lance point in air, and courteously asked him to come and be killed in fair fight. The knight being, says the chronicler, 'magnificent in valour of soul and council of war, and held to be as a lion in fortitude throughout the army,' and seeing that Hereward was by no means a large or a heavy man, replied as courteously, that he should have great pleasure in trying to kill Hereward. On which they rode some hundred yards out of the press, calling out that they were to be left alone by both sides, for it was an honourable duel, and turning their horses, charged.

After which act they found themselves and their horses all four in a row, sitting on their hind-quarters on the ground, amid the fragments of their lances.

'Well ridden!' shouted they both at once, as they leaped up laughing, and drew their swords.

After which they hammered away at each other merrily in the devil's smithy. The sparks flew, the iron rang; and all men stood still to see that gallant fight.

So they watched and cheered, till Hereward struck his man such a blow under the ear, that he dropped, and lay like a log.

'I think I can carry you,' quoth Hereward, and picking him up, he threw him over his shoulder, and walked towards his men.

'Bear and bullock!' shouted they in de'light, laughing at the likeness between Hereward's attitude and that of a bear waddling off on his hind legs with his prey in his arms.

'He should have killed his bullock outright before he went to carry him. Look there!'

And the knight, awakening from his swoon, struggled violently (says the chronicler) to escape.

But Hereward, though the smaller, was the stronger man, and crushing him in his arms, walked on steadily.

'Knights to the rescue! Hoibricht is taken!' shouted they of Guisnes, galloping towards him.

'A Wake! a Wake! To me Vikings all!' shouted Hereward. And the Danes leapt up, and ran towards him, axe in hand.

The chatelain's knights rode up likewise, and so it befell that Hereward carried his prisoner safe into camp.

'And who are you, gallant knight?' asked he of his prisoner.

'Hoibricht, nephew of Eustace, Count of Guisnes.'

'So I suppose you will be ransomed. Till then—Armourer!'

And the hapless Hoibricht found himself chained and fettered, and sent off to Hereward's tent, under the custody of Martin Lightfoot.

'The next day,' says the chronicler, 'the Count of Guisnes, stupefied with grief at the loss of his nephew, sent the due honour and service to his prince, besides gifts and hostages.'

And so ended the troubles of Baldwin and Eustace of Guisnes.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW A FAIR LADY EXERCISED THE MECHANICAL ART TO WIN HEReward's LOVE

In an upper room of her mother's house in St. Omer sat the fair Torfrida, alternately looking out of the window and at a book of mechanics. In the garden outside, the wryneck (as it is his fashion in May) was calling Pi-pi-pi among the gooseberry bushes, till the cob-walls rang again. In the book was a Latin recipe for drying the poor wryneck, and using him as a philtre which should compel the love of any person desired. Mechanics, it must be understood, in those days were considered as identical with mathematics, and those again with astrology and magic; so that the old chronicler, who says that Torfrida was skilled in the 'mechanic art,' uses the word in the same sense as does the author of the *History of Ramsey*, who tells us how a certain holy bishop of St. Dunstan's party, riding down to Corfe through the forest, saw the wicked queen-mother Elfrida (her who had St. Edward stabbed at Corfe Gate) exercising her

'mechanic art' under a great tree, in plain English, performing heathen incantations, and how, when she saw that she was discovered, she tempted him to deadly sin, but when she found him proof against allurements, she had him into her bower; and there the enchantress and her ladies slew him by thrusting red-hot bodkins under his arms, so that the blessed man was martyred without any sign of wound. Of all which let every man believe as much as he list.

Torfrida had had peculiar opportunities of learning mechanics. The fairest and richest damsel in St. Omer, she had been left early by her father an orphan, to the care of a superstitious mother, and of a learned uncle, the Abbot of St. Bertin. Her mother was a Provençale, one of those Arlescunes whose dark Greek beauty still shines, like diamonds set in jet, in the doorways of the quaint old city. Gay enough in her youth, she had, like a true southern woman, taken to superstition in her old age, and spent her days in the churches, leaving her daughter to do and learn what she would. Torfrida's nurse, moreover, was a Lapp woman, carried off in some jangling foray, and skilled in all the sorceries for which the Lapps were famed throughout the North. Her uncle, partly from good-nature, partly from a pious hope that she might enter religion, and leave her wealth to the Church, had made her his pupil, and taught her the mysteries of books, and she had proved to be a strangely apt scholar. Grammar, rhetoric, Latin prose and poetry, such as were taught in those days, she mastered ere she was grown up. Then she fell upon romance, and Charlemagne and his Paladins, the heroes of Troy, Alexander and his generals, peopled her imagination. She had heard, too, of the great necromancer Virgilius (for into such the middle age transformed the poet), and, her fancy already excited by her Lapp nurse's occult science, she began eagerly to court forbidden lore.

Forbidden, indeed, was magic by the Church, but as a reality, not as an imposture. Those whose consciences were tough and their faith weak, had little scruple in applying to a witch, and asking help from the powers below, when the saints above were slack to hear them. Churchmen, even, were bold enough to learn the mysteries of nature, algebra, judicial astrology, and the occult powers of herbs, stones, and animals, from the Mussulman doctors of Cordova and Seville; and, like Pope Gerbert, mingle science and magic, in a fashion excusable enough in days when true inductive science did not exist.

Nature had her marvellous powers—how far good, how far evil, who could tell? The belief that God was the sole maker and ruler of the universe was confused and darkened by the cross-belief that the material world had fallen under the dominion of Satan and his demons, that millions of spirits, good and evil in every degree, exercised continually powers over crops

and cattle, mines and wells, storms and lightning, health and disease. Riches, honours, and royalties, too, were under the command of the powers of darkness. For that generation, which was but too apt to take its Bible in hand upside down, had somehow a firm faith in the word of the devil, and believed devoutly his somewhat startling assertion, that the kingdoms of the world were his, and the glory of them, for to him they were delivered, and to whomsoever he would he gave them while it had a proportionally weak faith in our Lord's answer, that they were to worship and serve the Lord God alone. How far these powers extended, how far they might be counteracted, how far lawfully employed, were questions which exercised the minds of men, and produced a voluminous literature for several centuries, till the search died out, for very weariness of failure, at the end of the seventeenth century.

The Abbot of St. Bertin, therefore, did not hesitate to keep in his private library more than one volume which he would not have willingly lent to the simple monks under his charge, nor to Torfrida either, had she not acquired so complete a command over the good old man, that he could deny her nothing.

So she read of Gerbert, Pope Sylvester II., who had died only a generation back, how (to quote William of Malmesbury) 'he learned at Seville till he surpassed Ptolemy with the astrolabe, Alcaudrus in astronomy, and Julius Firmicus in judicial astrology; how he learned what the singing and flight of birds portended, and acquired the art of calling up spirits from hell, and, in short, whatever—hurtful or healthful—human curiosity had discovered, besides the lawful sciences of arithmetic and astronomy, music and geometry,' how he acquired from the Saracens the abacus (a counting table), how he escaped from the Moslem magician, his tutor, by making a compact with the foul fiend, and putting himself beyond the power of magic, by hanging himself under a wooden bridge, so as to touch neither earth nor water, how he taught Robert King of France, and Kaiser Otto III., surnamed 'The wonder of the world', how he made an hydraulic organ which played tunes by steam, standing even then in the cathedral of Rheims, how he discovered in the Campus Martius at Rome wondrous treasures, and a golden king and queen, golden courtiers and guards, all lighted by a single carbuncle, and guarded by a boy with a bent bow, who, when Gerbert's servant stole a golden knife, shot an arrow at that carbuncle, and all was darkness, and yells of demons.

All this Torfrida had read, and read, too, how Gerbert's brazen head had told him that he should be pope, and not die till he had sung mass at Jerusalem, and how both had come true—the latter in mockery, for he was stricken with deadly sickness in Rome, as he sang mass at the church called Jerusalem, and died horribly, tearing himself in pieces.

Which terrible warning had as little effect on

Torfrida as other terrible warnings have on young folk, who are minded to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

So Torfrida beguiled her lonely life in that dull town, looking out over dreary flats and muddy dykes, by a whole dream-world of fantastic imaginations, and was ripe and ready for any wild deed which her wild brain might suggest.

Pure she was all the while, generous and noble-hearted, with a deep and sincere longing—as one soul in ten thousand has—after knowledge for its own sake, but ambitious exceedingly, and that not of monastic sanctity. She laughed to scorn the notion of a nunery, and laughed to scorn equally the notion of marrying any knight, however much of a prudhomme, whom she had yet seen. Her uncle and Marquis Baldwin could have between them compelled her, as an orphan heiress, to marry whom they liked. But Torfrida had as yet managed both the abbot and the marquis successfully. Lances had been splintered, helmets split, and more than one life lost in her honour, but she had only, as the best safeguard she could devise, given some hint of encouragement to one Ascelin, a tall knight of St. Valeri, the most renowned and courtly bully of those parts, by bestowing on him a scrap of ribbon, and bidding him keep it against all comers. By this means she ensured the personal chastisement of all other youths who dared to lift their eyes to her, while she by no means bound herself to her spadassin of St. Valeri. The method was rough, but so was the time, and what better could a poor lady do in days when no man's life, or woman's honour, was safe, unless (as too many were forced to do) she retired into a cloister, and got from the Church that peace which this world certainly could not give, and, happily, dared not take away!

The arrival of Hereward and his men had, of course, stirred the great current of her life, and, indeed, that of St. Omer, usually as stagnant as the dykes round its wall. Who the unknown champion was (for his name of Naemans-son showed that he was concealing something at least)—whence he had come, and what had been his previous exploits, bustled all the gossips of the town. Would he and his men rise and plunder the abbey? Was not the chatelain mad in leaving young Arnoul with him all day? Maddier still, in taking him out to battle against the Count of Guines? He might be a spy, the avant-courier of some great invading force. He was come to spy out the nakedness of the land, and would shortly vanish, to return with Harold Hardrade of Norway, or Sweyn of Denmark, and all their hosts. Nay, was he not Harold Hardrade himself in disguise? And so forth. All which Torfrida heard, and thought within herself that, be he who he might, she should like to look on him again.

Then came the news how, the very first day that he had gone out against the Count of Guines, he had gallantly rescued a wounded

man. A day or two after came fresh news of some doughty deed, and then another and another. And when Hereward returned, after a week's victorious fighting, all St. Omer was in the street to stare at him.

Then Torfrida heard enough, and, had it been possible, more than enough, of Hereward and his prowess.

And when they came riding in, the great marquis at the head of them all, with Robert le Frison on one side of him, and on the other Hereward, as fresh as flowers in May, Torfrida looked down on him out of her little lattice in the gable, and loved him, once and for all, with all her heart and soul.

And Hereward looked up at her and her dark blue eyes and dark raven locks; and thought her the fairest thing that he had ever seen, and asked who she might be, and heard, and as he heard, he forgot all about the Sultan's daughter, and the princess of Constantinople, and the fairy of Brochehaunde, and all the other pretty birds which were still in the bush about the wide world, and thought for many a day of nought but the pretty bird which he held (so concerted was he of his own powers of winning her) there safe in hand in St. Omer.

So he cast about to see her, and to win her love. And she cast about to see him, and to win his love. But neither saw the other for a while, and it might have been better for one of them had they never seen each other again.

If Torfrida could have foreseen, and foreseen, and foreseen—why, if she were true woman, she would have done exactly what she did, and taken the bitter with the sweet, the unknown with the known, as we all must do in life, unless we wish to live and die alone.

CHAPTER IX

HOW HERWARD WENT TO THE WAR IN SCALDMARILAND

It has been shown how the Count of Guines had been a thorn in the side of Baldwin of Lille, and how that thorn was drawn out by Hereward. But far sharper thorns in his side, which had troubled many a count before, and were destined to trouble others afterwards, were those unruly Zealanders, or Frisians, who dwelt in Scaldmariland, 'the land of the meres of the Scheldt.' Beyond the vast forests of Flanders, in morasses and alluvial islands whose names it is impossible now to verify, so much has the land changed, both by inundations and by embankments, by the brute forces of nature and the noble triumphs of art, dwelt a folk, poor and savage; living mostly, as in Cesar's time, in huts raised above the sea, on piles or mounds of earth; often without cattle or seed-field; half savage, half heathen but free. Free, with the divine instinct of freedom, and all the self-help and energy which spring thereout.

They were a mongrel race; and, as most mongrel races are (when sprung from parents not too far apart in blood), a strong race, the remnant of those old Frisians and Batavians, who had defied, and all but successfully resisted, the power of Rome, mingled with fresh crosses of Teutonic blood from Frank, Sueve, Saxon, and the other German tribes, who, after the fall of the Roman Empire, had swept across the land.

Their able modern historian has well likened their first struggle—that between Civilis and the Romans, to their last—that between William the Silent and the Spaniard. It was, without doubt, the foreshadow of their whole history. They were distinguished, above most European races, for sturdy independence, and for what generally accompanies it—sturdy common sense. They could not understand why they should obey foreign Frank rulers, whether set over them by Dagobert or by Charlemagne. They could not understand why they were to pay tithes to foreign Frank priests, who had forced on them, at the sword's point, a religion which they only half believed and only half understood. Many a truly holy man preached to them to the best of his powers, but the cross of St. Boniface had too often to follow the sword of Charles Martel, and for every Frisian who was converted another was killed.

'Frog Frisians,' nevertheless, they remained, at least in name and in their statute book, 'as long as the wind blows out of the clouds and the world stands.' The feudal system never took root in their soil. If a Frank count was to govern them, he must govern according to their own laws. Again and again they rebelled, even against that seemingly light rule. Again and again they brought down on themselves the wrath of their nominal sovereigns, the counts of Flanders, then of the kaisers of Germany, and, in the thirteenth century, of the Inquisition itself. Then a crusade was preached against them as 'Stadings,' heretics who paid no tithes, ill used monks and nuns, and worshipped (or were said to worship) a black cat and the foul hound among the meres and fens. Conrad of Marburg, the brutal Director of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, burnt them at his wicked will, extirpating, it may be, heresy, but not the spirit of the race. That spirit, crushed down and seemingly enslaved during the middle age, under Count Dirk and his descendants, still lived, destined at last to conquer. They were a people who had determined to see for themselves and act for themselves in the universe in which they found themselves, and, moreover (a necessary corollary of such a resolution), to fight to the death against any one who interfered with them in so doing.

Again and again, therefore, the indomitable spirit rose, founding free towns with charters and guilds; embanking the streams, draining the meres; fighting each other and the neighbouring princes; till, in their last great struggle

¹ Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*.

against the Pope and Spain, they rose once and for all,

'Heated hot with burning fears,
And bathed in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the strokes of doom
To shape and use,'

as the great Protestant Dutch Republic.

A noble errand it had been for such a man as Hereward to help those men toward freedom, instead of helping Frank counts to enslave them,—men of his own blood, with laws and customs like those of his own Anglo-Danes, living in a land so exactly like his own that every mere and fen and wood reminded him of the scenes of his boyhood. The very names of the two lands were alike—'Holland,' the hollow land—the one of England, the other of Flanders.

But all this was hidden from Hereward. To do as he would be done by was a lesson which he had never been taught. If men had invaded his land, he would have cried, like the Frisians whom he was going to enslave, 'I am free as long as the wind blows out of the clouds!' and died where he stood. But that was not the least reason why he should not invade any other man's land, and try whether or not he, too, would die where he stood. To him these Frislanders were simply savages, probably heathens, who would not obey their lawful lord, a gentleman and a Christian, besides, renowned, and possibly a little plunder, might be got by beating them into obedience. He knew not what he did, and knew not, likewise, that as he had done to others, so would it be done to him.

Baldwin had at that time made over his troublesome Hollanders* to his younger son Robert, the Viking whom little Arnoul longed to imitate.

Florent, Count of Holland, and vassal of the great marquis, had just died, leaving a pretty young widow, to whom the Hollanders had no mind to pay one stiver more than they were forced. All the isles of Zeeland, and the counties of Eonham and Alost, were doing that which was right in the sight of their own eyes, and finding themselves none the worse therefor, though the Countess Gertrude, doubtless, could buy fewer silks of Greece or gems of Italy. But to such a distressed lady a champion could not long be wanting. Robert had been driven out of Spain by the Moors with fearful loss, and, in a second attempt, wrecked with all his fleet as soon as he got out of port. He then, it would seem, started in palmer's guise, nominally for Jerusalem, but really for Byzant. For, according to Lambert of Aschaffenburg, certain Norman Vikings had offered to make him Kaiser of Greece, and more than rival of Robert Guiscard in his new Italian kingdom. But the existing Greek kaiser, hearing of the plot, commanded him to be slain as soon as he set foot on shore. To avoid which end the disappointed palmer wended homeward once more, and resolved to change thenceforth the salt water for the fresh,

and leave the swan's path for that of the humble ducks and geese of Holland.

So he rushed to avenge the wrongs of the Countess Gertrude, and his father, whose good sense foresaw that the fiery Robert would raise storms upon his path—happily for his old age he did not foresee the worst—let him go, with his blessing.

Then Robert gathered to him valiant ruffians, as many as he could find, and when he heard of the Viking who had brought Eustace of Guisnes to reason, it seemed to him that he was a man who would do his work. And when the great marquis came down to St. Omer to receive the homage of Count Eustace of Guisnes, Robert came thither too, and saw Hereward.

'You have done us good service, Harold Naemansson, as it pleases you to be called,' said Baldwin, smiling. 'But some man's son you are, if ever I saw a gallant knight, earl-born by his looks as well as his deeds.'

Hereward bowed.

'And for me,' said Robert, 'Naemansson or earl's son, here is my Viking's welcome to all Vikings like myself.' And he held out his hand.

Hereward took it.

'You failed in Galicia, beansire, only because your foes were a hundred to one. You will not fail here where you are going, if (as I hear) they are but ten to one.'

Robert laughed, vain and gratified.

'Then you know where I have been, and where I am going!'

'Why not? As you know well, we Vikings are all brothers, and all know each other's counsel, from ship to ship, and port to port.'

Then the two young men looked each other in the face, and each saw that the other was a man who would suit him.

'Skall to the Viking!' cried Robert, spring, as was his fancy, the Norse rovers' slang. 'Will you come with me to Holland?'

'You must ask my young lord there,' and he pointed to Arnoul. 'I am his man now, by all laws of honour.'

A flush of jealousy passed over Robert's face. He, haplessly for himself, thought that he had a grievance.

The rights of primogeniture—*droits d'aînesse*—were not respected in the family of the Baldwins as they should have been, had prudence and common sense had their way.

No sacred or divine right was held to be conferred by the fact of a man's being the first-born son. As among the Jews of old, the 'Lord's anointed' was usually rather a younger son of talent and virtue; one born, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, like David and Solomon. And so it was in other realms besides Flanders during the middle age. The father handed on the work—for ruling was hard work in those days—to the son most able to do it. Therefore we can believe Lambert of Aschaffenburg when he says that in Count Baldwin's family for many ages the son who pleased his father most took his father's name,

and was hereditary prince of all Flanders; while the other brothers led an inglorious life of vassalage to him.

But we can conceive, likewise, that such a method would give rise to intrigues, envyings, calumnies, murders, fratricidal civil wars, and all the train of miseries which for some years after this history made infamous the house of Baldwin; as they did many another royal house, till they were stopped by the gradual adoption of the rational rule of primogeniture.

So Robert, who might have been a daring and useful friend to his brother, had he been forced to take for granted from birth that he was nothing, and his brother all in all—as do all younger sons of English noblemen, to their infinite benefit—held himself to be an injured man for life, because his father called his first-born Baldwin, and promised him the succession—which indeed he had worthily deserved, according to the laws of Mammon and this world, by bringing into the family such an heiress as Richilda, and such a dowry as Mona.

But Robert, who thought himself as good as his brother (though he was not such, save in valour), nursed black envy in his heart. Hard it was to him to hear his elder brother called Baldwin of Mona, when he himself had not a foot of land of his own. Harder still to hear him called Baldwin the Good, when he felt in himself no title whatsoever to that epithet. Hardest of all to see a beautiful boy grow up as heir both of Flanders and of Hainault.

Had he foreseen whither that envy would have led him, had he foreseen the hideous and fratricidal day of February 22, 1071, and that fair boy's golden locks rolling in dust and blood—the wild Viking would have crushed the growing snake within his bosom, for he was a knight and a gentleman. But it was hidden from his eyes. He had to 'dree his weird', to commit great sins, do great deeds, and die in his bed, mighty and honoured, having children to his heart's desire, and leaving the rest of his substance to his babes. Heaven help him and the like of him!

He turned to young Arnoul—

'Give me your man, boy!'

Arnoul pouted. He wanted to keep his Viking for himself, and said so.

'He is to teach me to go leding, as the Norsemen call it, like you.'

Robert laughed. A hint at his puratorial attempts pleased his vanity, all the more because they had been signal failures.

'Lend him me, then, my pretty nephew, for a month or two, till he has conquered these Zealand frogs for me, and then, if you will go leding with him—'

'I hope you may never come back,' thought Robert to himself; but he did not say it.

'Let the knight go,' quoth Baldwin.

'Let me go with him, then.'

'No, by all saints!' quoth the marquis, 'I cannot have you poked through with a Zealand pike, or rotted with a Zealand ague.'

Arnoul pouted still.

'Abbot, what hast thou been at with the boy? He thinks of nought but blood and wounds, instead of books and prayers. He is gone mad after this—this knight.'

'The abbot,' said Hereward, 'knows by hearing of his ears, that I bid him bide at home, and try to govern lands in peace, like his father and you, lord marquis.'

'Eh!'

The abbot told honestly what had passed between Hereward and the lad, as they rode to St. Bertin.

Baldwin was silent, thinking, and smiling jollyly, as was the wont of the Debonair.

'You are a man of sense, because Como with me,' said he at last.

And Baldwin, Hereward, and Robert went into an inner room.

'Sit down on the settle by me.'

'It is too great an honour.'

'Nonsense, man! If I be who I am, I know enough of men to know that I need not be ashamed of having you as bench-fellow. Sit down.'

Hereward obeyed, of course.

'Tell me who you are.'

Hereward looked out of the corners of his eyes, smiling and perplexed.

'Tell me and Robert who you are, man, and be done with it. I believe I know already. I have asked far and wide of chapmen, and merchants, and wandering knights, and pirate rascals—like yourself.'

'And you found that I was a pirate rascal?'

'I found a pirate rascal who met you in Ireland, three years since, and will swear that if you have one gray eye and one blue—'

'As he has,' quoth Robert.

'That I am a wolf's head, and a robber of priests, and an Esau on the face of the earth, every man's hand against me and mine—for I never take but what I give—against every man.'

'That you are the son of my old friend Leofric of Chester, and the hottest-hearted, shrewdest-headed, hardest-handed Berserker in the North Seas. You killed Gilbert of Ghent's bear, Siward Dugre's cousin. Don't deny it.'

'Don't hang me, or send me to the Westminster miracle-worker to be hanged, and I will confess.'

'I! Every man is welcome who comes hither with a bold hand and a strong heart. "The Refuge of Outlaws" they call Flanders, I suppose because I am too good-natured to turn rogues out. So do no harm to mine, and mine shall do no harm to you.'

Baldwin's words were true. He found house-room for everybody, helped everybody against

¹ *Elfrida Emma*, between Ethelred's ruin and her marriage with Canute, Swayn Godwinson when outlawed by Edward the Confessor, and after them, as will be seen, every one who, however fallen, seemed strong enough to rise again some day, took refuge one after another with Baldwin. See for the history of him and his times, *M. Kervyn de Lettenhoven*.

everybody else (as will be seen), and yet quarrelled with nobody—at least in his old age—by the mere virtue of good-nature.

So Hereward went off to exterminate the wicked Hollanders, and revenge the wrongs of the Countess Gertrude.

CHAPTER X

HOW HEReward WON THE MAGIC ARMOUR

TORFRIDA had special opportunities of hearing about Hereward, for young Arnoul was to her a pet and almost a foster-brother, and gladly escaped from the convent to tell her the news.

He had now had his first taste of the royal game of war. He had seen Hereward fight by day, and heard him tell stories over the camp fire by night. Hereward's beauty, Hereward's prowess, Hereward's songs, Hereward's strange adventures and wanderings, were for ever in the young boy's mouth, and he spent hours in helping Torfrida to guess who the great unknown might be, and then went back to Hereward, and artlessly told him of his beautiful friend, and how they had talked of him, and of nothing else, and in a week or two Hereward knew all about Torfrida, and Torfrida knew—what filled her heart with joy—that Hereward was bound to no lady-love, and owned (so he had told Arnoul) no mistress save the sword on his thigh.

Whereby there had grown up in the hearts of both of them a mutual interest, which easily became the parent of love.

When Baldwin the great marquis came to St. Omer, to receive the homage of Eustace of Guisnes, young Arnoul ran into Torfrida's chamber in great anxiety. Would his grandfather approve of what he had done? Would he allow his new friendship with the unknown?

'What care I!' said Torfrida. 'But if your friend wishes to have the marquis's favour he would be wise to trust him, at least so far as to tell his name.'

'I have told him so. I have told him that you would tell him so.'

'I! Have you been talking to him about me?'

'Why not?'

'That is not well done, Arnoul, to talk of ladies to men whom they do not know.'

Arnoul looked up, puzzled and pained, for she spoke haughtily.

'I know nought of your new friend. He may be a low-born man, for anything that I can tell.'

'He is not! He is as noble as I am. Everything he says and does—every look—shows his birth.'

'You are young—as you have shown by talking of me to him. But I have given you my advice;' and she moved listlessly away. 'Let him tell your grandfather who he is, or remain suspected.'

The boy went away sadly.

Early the next morning he burst into Torfrida's room as she was dressing her hair.

'How now! Are those manners for the heir of Flanders!'

'He has told all!'

'He has!' and she started and dropt her comb.

'Pick up that comb, girl. You need not go away. I have no secrets with young gentlemen.'

'I thought you would be glad to hear,' said Arnoul.

'I? What can I want in the matter, save that your grandfather should be satisfied that you are entertaining a man worthy to be your guest?'

'And he is worthy. He has told my grandfather who he is.'

'But not you?'

'No. They say I must not know yet. But thus I know, that they welcomed him, when he told them, as if he had been an earl's son, and that he is going with my uncle Robert against the Zealanders.'

'And if he be an earl's son, how comes he here, wandering with rough seamen, and hiding his honest name? He must have done something of which he is ashamed.'

'I shall tell you nothing more.'

'What care I? I can find out by art magic if I like.'

'I don't believe all that. Can you find out, for instance, what he has on his throat?'

'A beard.'

'But what is under that beard?'

'A goitre.'

'You are laughing at me.'

'I shall laugh at any one who challenges me to find out anything so silly, and so unfit.'

'I shall go.'

'Go then.' For she knew very well that he would come back again.

'Nurse,' said Torfrida to the old Lapp woman, when they were alone, 'find out for me what is the name of this strange champion, and what he has beneath his beard.'

'Beneath his beard?'

'Some scar, I suppose, or secret mark. I must know. You will find out for your Torfrida, will you not, nurse?'

'I will make a charm that will bring him to you, were all the icebergs of Greenland between you and him, and then you can see for yourself.'

'No, no, no! not yet, nurse!' and Torfrida smiled. 'Only find me out that one thing that I must know.'

And yet why she wanted to know she could not tell herself.

The old woman came back to her ere she went to bed.

'I have found it out, all and more. I know where to get scarlet toadstools, and I put the juice in his men's ale, they are laughing and roaring now, merry-mad every one of them.'

'But not he?'

'No, no. He is with the marquis. But in

madness comes out truth, and that long hook-nosed body-varlet of his has told us all.'

And she told Torfrida who Hereward was, and the secret mark.

'There is a cross upon his throat, beneath his chin, pricked in after their English fashion.'

Torfrida started.

'Then—then the spell will not work upon him, the Holy Cross will turn it off.'

'It must be a great cross and a holy one that will turn off my charms,' said the old hag, with a sneer, 'whatever it may do against yours. But on the back of his hand—that will be a mark to know him by—there is pricked a bear—a white bear that he slew.' And she told the story of the fairy beast, which Torfrida duly stored up in her heart.

'So he has the cross on his throat,' thought Torfrida to herself. 'Well, if it keep off my charm, it will keep off others—that is one comfort, and one knows not what fairies, or witches, or evil creatures, he may meet with in the forests and the fens.'

The discovery of Hereward's rank did not, doubtless, lessen Torfrida's fancy for him. She was ambitious enough, and proud enough of her own lineage, to be full glad that her heart had strayed away—as it must needs stray somewhere—to the son of the third greatest man in England. As for his being an outlaw, that mattered little. He might be outlawed, and rich and powerful, any day in those uncertain topsy-turvy times, and for the present, his being a wolf's head only made him the more interesting to her. Women like to pity their lovers. Sometimes—may all good beings reward them for it—they love merely because they pity. And Torfrida found it pleasant to pity the insolent young coxcomb, who certainly never dreamed of pitying himself.

When Hereward went home that night, he found the abbey of St Bertin in horrible confusion. His men were grouped outside the gate, chattering like monkeys, the porter and the monks from inside entreating them vainly to come in and go to bed quietly.

But they would not. They vowed and swore that a great gulf had opened all down the road, and that one step more would tumble them in headlong. They manifested the most affectionate solicitude for the monks, warning them, on their lives, not to step across the threshold, or they would be swallowed (as Martin, who was the maddest of the lot, phrased it) with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. In vain Hereward stormed, assured them that the supposed abyss was nothing but the gutter, proved the fact by kicking Martin over it. The men determined to believe their own eyes, and after awhile fell asleep in heaps in the roadside, and lay there till morning, when they woke, declaring, as did the monks, that they had been all bewitched. They knew not—and happily the lower orders both in England and on the Continent do not yet know—the potent virtues of that strange fungus, with which Lapps and Samoides have,

it is said, practised wonders for centuries past.

The worst of the matter was, that Martin Lightfoot, who had drunk most of the poison, and had always been dreamy and uncanny, in spite of his shrewdness and humour, had from that day forward something very like a bee in his bonnet.

But before Count Robert and Hereward could collect sufficient troops for the invasion of Holland, another chance of being slain in fight arose, too tempting to be overlooked, namely, the annual tournaments at Pons and Portiers,¹ where all the noblest knights of France would assemble, to win their honour and ladies' love by hewing at each other's sinful bodies. Thither, too, over three hundred and fifty miles of bad road, the best knights of Flanders must needs go, and with them Hereward. Though no knight, he was allowed in Flanders, as he had been in Scotland, to take his place among that honourable company. For though he still refused the honour of knighthood, on the ground that he had as yet done no deed deserving thereof, he was held to have deserved it again and again, and all the more from his modesty in declining it.

So away they all went to Portiers, a right gallant meue, while Torfrida watched them go from the lattice window.

And when they had passed down the street, tramping and gingham and caracoling, young Arnoul ran into the house with eyes full of tears, because he was not allowed to go likewise, and with a message for Torfrida from no other than Hereward.

'I was to tell you this and no more that if he meets your favour in the field, he that wears it will have hard work to keep it.'

Torfrida turned pale as ashes, first with wild delight, and then with wild fear.

'He—does he know who—Sir Ascelin?'

'He knows well enough. Why not? Every one knows. Are you afraid that he is not a match for that great ox?'

'Afraid? Who said I was afraid? Sir Ascelin is no ox either, but a courteous and gallant knight.'

'You are as pale as death, and Sir—'

'Never mind what I am,' said she, putting her hands over the boy's eyes, and kissing him again and again, as a vent for her joy.

The next few days seemed years for length, but she could wait. She was sure of him now. She needed no charms. 'Perhaps,' thought she, as she looked in the glass, 'I was my own charm.' And indeed she had a fair right to say so.

At last news came.

Torfrida was sitting over her books, her mother, as usual, was praying in the church, when the old Lepp nurse came in. A knight was at the door. He said his name was Siward the White, and he came from Hereward.

From Hereward! He was at least alive, he

¹ 'Apud Pontes et Pistavium.'—Pons in Saintonge.

might be wounded, though; and she rushed out of the chamber into the hall, looking more beautiful than ever, her colour heightened by the quick beating of her heart, her dark hair, worn loose and long, after the fashion of those days, streaming around her and behind her.

A handsome young man stood in the doorway, armed from head to foot.

'You are Siward, Hereward's nephew?'

He bowed assent. She took him by the hands, and, after the fashion of those days, kissed him on the small space on either cheek which was left bare between the nose-piece and the chain-mail.

'You are welcome. Hereward is—alive?'

'Alive and gay, and all the more gay at being able to send to the Lady Torfrida by me something which was once hers, and now is hers once more.'

And he drew from his bosom the ribbon of the knight of St. Valeri.

She almost snatched it from his hand, in her delight at recovering her favour.

'How—where—did he get this?'

'He saw it, in the thick of the tournament, on the helm of a knight who, he knew, had vowed to gain him or take his life, and, wishing to give him a chance of fulfilling his vow, rode him down, horse and man. The knight's French friends attacked us in force, and we Flemings, with Hereward at our head, beat them off, and overthrew so many, that we are almost all horsed at the Frenchman's expense. Three more knights, with their horses, fell before Hereward's lance.'

'And what of this favour?'

'He sends it to his owner. Let her say what shall be done with it.'

Torfrida was on the point of saying, 'He has won it, let him wear it for my sake.' But she paused. She longed to see Hereward face to face, to speak to him, if but one word. If she allowed him to wear the favour, she must at least have the pleasure of giving it with her own hands. And she paused.

'And he is killed?'

'Who? Hereward?'

'Sir Ascelin.'

'Only bruised, but he shall be killed, if you will.'

'God forbid!'

'Then,' said the knight, mistaking her meaning, 'all I have to tell Hereward is, it seems, that he has wasted his blow. He will return, therefore, to the knight of St. Valeri his horse, and, if the Lady Torfrida chooses, the favour which he has taken by mistake from its rightful owner.' And he set his teeth, and could not prevent stamping on the ground, in evident passion. There was a tone, too, of deep disappointment in his voice, which made Torfrida look keenly at him. Why should Hereward's nephew feel so deeply about that favour? And as she looked—could that man be the youth Siward? Young he was, but surely thirty years old at least. His face could hardly be seen,

hidden by helmet and nose-piece above, and mailed up to the mouth below. But his long moustache was that of a grown man, his vast breadth of shoulder, his hard hand, his sturdy limbs—these surely belonged not to the slim youth whom she had seen from her lattice riding at Hereward's side. And as she looked, she saw upon his hand the bear of which her nurse had told her.

'You are deceiving me!' and she turned first deadly pale, and then crimson. 'You—you are Hereward himself!'

'I! Pardon me, my lady. Ten minutes ago I should have been glad enough to have been Hereward. Now I am thankful enough that I am only Siward, and not Hereward, who wins for himself contempt by overthrowing a knight more fortunate than he.' And he bowed, and turned away to go.

'Hereward! Hereward!' and in her passion she seized him by both his hands. 'I knew you! I know that device upon your hand. At last! at last! My hero, my Paladin! How I have longed for this moment! How I have toiled for it, and not in vain! Alas, alas!—what am I saying!' And she tried, in her turn, to escape from Hereward's mailed arm.

'Then you do not care for that man!'

'For him? Here, take my favour, wear it before all the world, and guard it as you only can, and let all know that Torfrida is your love.'

And with hands trembling with passion she bound the ribbon round his helm.

'Yes! I am Hereward,' he almost shouted, 'the Berserker, the brain-bewer, the land-thief, the sea-thief, the feeder of wolf and raven—Aoi! Ere my beard was grown, I was a match for giants. How much more now that I am a man whom ladies love! Many a champion has quailed before my very glance. How much more now that I wear Torfrida's gift! Aoi!'

Torfrida had often heard that wild battle-cry of Aoi! of which the early minstrels were so fond—with which the great poet who wrote the Song of Roland ends every paragraph, which has now fallen (displaced by our modern Hurrah) to be merely a sailor's call or hunter's cry. But she shuddered as she heard it close to her ears, and saw, from the flashing eye and dilated nostril, the temper of the man on whom she had thrown herself so utterly. She laid her hand upon his lip.

'Silence! silence for pity's sake. Remember that you are in a maiden's house, and think of her good fame.'

Hereward collected himself instantly, and then, holding her at arm's length, gazed upon her. 'I was mad a moment. But is it not enough to make me mad to look at you?'

'Do not look at me so, I cannot bear it,' said she, hanging down her head. 'You forget that I am a poor weak girl.'

'Ah! we are rough wooers, we sea-rovers. We cannot pay glowing French compliments like your knights here, who fawn on a damsel with

soft words in the hall, and will kiss the dust off their queen's feet, and die for a hair of their goddess's eyebrow, and then if they find her alone in the forest, show themselves as very ruffians as if they were Paynim Moors. We are rough, lady, we English, but those who trust us find us true.'

'And I can trust you?' she asked, still trembling.

'On God's cross there round your neck,' and he took her crucifix and kissed it. 'You only I love, you only I will love, and you will I love in all honesty, before the angels of heaven, till we be wedded man and wife. Who but a fool would soil the flower which he means to wear before all the world!'

'I knew Hereward was noble! I knew I had not trusted him in vain!'

'I kept faith and honour with the princess of Cornwall, when I had her at my will, and shall I not keep faith and honour with you?'

'The princess of Cornwall?' asked Torfrida.

'Do not be jealous, fair queen. I brought her safe to her betrothed, and wedded she is, long ago. I will tell you that story some day. And now—I must go.'

'Not yet! not yet! I have something to—show you.'

She motioned him to go up the narrow stairs, or rather ladder, which led to the upper floor, and then led him into her chamber.

A lady's chamber was then, in days when privacy was little cared for, her usual reception-room, and the bed, which stood in an alcove, served as a common seat for her and her guests. But Torfrida did not ask him to sit down. She led the way onward towards a door beyond.

Hereward followed, glancing with awe at the books, parchments, and strange instruments which lay on the table and the floor.

The old Lapp nurse sat in the window, sewing busily. She looked up, and smiled meaningly. But as she saw Torfrida unlock the farther door with one of the keys which hung at her girdle, she croaked out:

'Too fast! Too fast! Trust lightly, and repent heavily.'

'Trust at once, or trust never,' said Torfrida, as she opened the door.

Hereward saw within rich dresses hung on perches round the wall, and chests barred and padlocked.

'These are treasures,' said she, 'which many a knight and nobleman has coveted. By cunning, by flattery, by threats of force even, have they tried to win what lies here—and Torfrida herself, too, for the sake of her wealth. But thanks to the abbot, my uncle, Torfrida is still her own mistress, and mistress of the wealth which her forefathers won by sea and land far away in the East. All here is mine—and if you be but true to me, all mine is yours. Lift the lid for me, it is too heavy for my arms.'

Hereward did so, and saw within golden cups and bracelets, horns of ivory and silver, bags of coin, and among them a mail shirt and helmet,

on which he fixed at once silent and greedy eyes.

She looked at his face askance, and smiled. 'Yes, these are more to Hereward's taste than gold and jewels. And he shall have them. He shall have them as a proof that if Torfrida has set her love upon a worthy knight, she is at least worthy of him, and does not demand without being able to give in return.'

And she took out the armour and held it up to him.

'This is the work of dwarfs or enchanters! This was not forged by mortal man! It must have come out of some old cavern, or dragon's hoard!' said Hereward, in astonishment at the extreme delicacy and slightness of the mail-rings, and the richness of the gold and silver with which both hauberk and helm were inlaid.

'Enchanted it is, they say, but its maker, who can tell? My ancestor won it, and by the side of Charles Martel. Listen, and I will tell you how.

'You have heard of fair Provence, where I spent my youth, the land of the sunny south, the land of the fig and the olive, the mulberry and the rose, the tulip and the anemone, and all rich fruits and fair flowers,—the land where every city is piled with temples, and theatres, and towers as high as heaven, which the old Romans built with their enchantments, and tormented the blessed martyrs therein.'

'Sun in heaven! How beautiful you are!' cried Hereward, as her voice shaped itself into a song, and her eyes flashed, at the remembrance of her southern home.

Torfrida was not altogether angry at finding that he was thinking of her, and not of her words.

'Peace, and listen. You know how the Paynim held that land—the Saracens, to whom Mahound taught all the wisdom of Solomon—as they teach us in turn,' she added in a lower voice.

'And how Charles and his Paladins' [Charles Martel and Charlemagne were perpetually confounded in the legends of the time] 'drove them out, and conquered the country again for God and His Mother.'

'I have heard——' but he did not take his eyes off her face.

'They were in the amphitheatre at Arles, the Saracens, where the blessed martyr St. Trophimus had died in torments, they had set up their idol of Mahound, and turned the place into a fortress. Charles burned it over their heads: you see—I have seen—the blackened walls, the bloodstained marbles, to this day. Then they fled into the plain, and there they turned and fought. Under Montmajour, by the hermit's cell, they fought a summer's day, till they were all slain.' There was an Emir among

¹ I have followed the old legends, as Torfrida would have heard them, and they are not altogether to be disbelieved. The Church of the Holy Cross, perhaps the most beautiful Romanesque building in Europe, is said to date not from the year 730, but from 1019 and from Pons de Marignan, Bishop of Arles. But the rock graves round—some of them very old, though not those of

them, black as a raven, clad in magic armour. All lances turned from it, all swords shivered on it. He rode through the press without a wound, while every stroke of his scimitar shore off a head of horse or man. Charles himself rode at him, and smote him with his hammer. They heard the blow in Avignon, full thirty miles away. The flame flashed out from the magic armour a fathom's length, blinding all around, and when they recovered their sight, the enchanter was far away in the battle, killing as he went.

'Then Charles cried, "Who will stop that devil, whom no steel can wound? Help us, O blessed martyr St. Trophimus, and save the soldiers of the cross from shame!"'

'Then cried Torfrid my forefather—"What use in crying to St. Trophimus? He could not help himself when the Paynim burnt him and how can he help us? A tough arm is worth a score of martyrs here."

'And he rode at that Emir, and gript him in his arms. They both fell, and rolled together on the ground—but Torfrid never loosed his hold till he had crushed out his unbaptized soul, and sent it to join Mahound in hell.

'Then he took his armour, and brought it home in triumph. But after a while he fell sick of a fever, and the blessed St. Trophimus appeared to him, and told him that it was a punishment for his blasphemy in the battle. So he repented, and vowed to serve the saint all his life. On which he was healed instantly, and fell to religion, and went back to Montmajour, and there he was a hermit in the cave under the rock, and tended the graves hewn in the living stone, where his old comrades, the Paladins who were slain, sleep side by side round the Church of the Holy Cross. But the armour he left here, and he laid a curse upon it, that whosoever of his descendants should lose that armour in fight, should die childless, without a son to wield a sword. And therefore it is that none of my ancestors, valiant as they have been, have dared to put this harness on their backs.'

And so ended a story, which Torfrida believed utterly, and Hereward likewise.

'And now, Hereward mine, dare you wear that magic armour, and face old Torfrid's curse?'

'What dare I not?'

'Think. If you lose it, in your race must end.'

'Let it end. I accept the curse.'

And he put the armour on.

But he trembled as he did it. Atheism and superstition go too often hand-in-hand; and

'primitive Christians'—indicate a religio loci, which must have been the cause, not the consequence, of the church. Probably an older building had existed on the site. And certainly if the monks of Montmajour had invented both legend and place, they would have rather chosen for the latter St. Trophimus's cave in the hill above, which is surely, deducting the Romanesque additions, one of the earliest of Christian monuments. Moreover, the very name Montmajour, the 'Mayor's Mount,' points to Charles Martel as the hero of the isolated hill forming so strong a military position in the wide plain.

godless as he was, sceptical of Providence itself, and much more of the help of saint or angel, still the curse of the old warrior, like the malice of a witch or a demon, was to him a thing possible, probable, and formidable.

Torfrida looked at him in pride and exultation.

'It is yours—the invulnerable harness! Wear it in the forefront of the battle! And if weapon wound you through it, may I, as punishment for my lie, suffer the same upon my tender body—a wound for every wound of yours, my knight!'¹

And after that they sat side by side, and talked of love with all honour and honesty, never heeding the old hag, who crooned to herself in her barbarian tongue—

Quick thaw, long frost,
Quick joy, long pain,
Moon found, soon lost,
You will take your gift again.

CHAPTER XI

HOW THE HOLLANDERS TOOK HERWARD FOR A MAGICIAN

OF this weary Holland war which dragged itself on, campaign after campaign, for several years, what need to tell? There was, doubtless, the due amount of murder, plunder, burning, and worse and the final event was certain from the beginning. It was a struggle between civilised and disciplined men, armed to the teeth, and well furnished with ships and military engines, against poor simple folk in 'coat' stiffened with tar and rosin, or in very short jackets of ludo' (says the chronicle), 'who fought by threes, two with a hooked lance and three darts each, and between them a man with a sword or an axe, who held his shield before those two—a very great multitude, but in composition utterly undisciplined,' who came down to the sea-coast, with carts and waggons, to carry off the spoils of the Flemings, and bade them all surrender at discretion, and go home again after giving up Count Robert and Hereward, with the 'tribunes of the brigades,' to be put to death—as valiant South Sea islanders might have done—and then found themselves as sheep to the slaughter before the cunning Hereward, whom they esteemed a magician on account of his craft and his invulnerable armour.

So at least says Richard of Ely, who tells long confused stories of battles and campaigns, some of them without due regard to chronology, for it is certain that the brave Zealanders could not on Robert's first landing have 'feared lest they should be conquered by foreigners, as they had heard the English were by the French,' inasmuch as that event had not then happened.

And this much of the war among the meres of Scheldt.

¹ 'Volo enim in meo tale quid nunc perpeti corpore semel, quicquid eas ferret vel e metallo excederet.'

CHAPTER XII

HOW HERWARD TURNED BERSERKER

TORFRIDA'S heart misgave her that first night as to the effects of her exceeding frankness. Her pride in the first place was somewhat wounded, she had dreamed of a knight who would worship her as his queen, hang on her smile, die at her frown, and she had meant to bring Hereward to her feet as such a slave, in boundless gratitude, but had he not rather held his own, and brought her to his feet, by assuming her devotion as his right? And if he assumed that, how far could she trust him not to abuse his claim? Was he quite as perfect, seen close, as seen afar off? And now that the intoxication of that meeting had passed off she began to remember more than one little fault which she would have gladly seen mended—Certain roughnesses of manner which contrasted unfavourably with the polish (morely external though it was) of the Flemish and Norman knights, a boastful self-sufficiency, too, which bordered on the ludicrous at times even in her partial eyes, which would be a matter of open laughter to the knights of the court. Besides, if they laughed at him they would laugh at her for choosing him. And then wounded vanity came in to help wounded pride, and she sat over the cold embers till almost dawn of day, her head between her hands, musing sadly, and half wishing that the irrevocable yesterday had never come.

But when, after a few months, Hereward returned from his first campaign in Holland, covered with glory and renown, all smiles, and beauty, and health, and good-humour, and gratitude for the magic armour which had preserved him unhurt, then Torfrida forgot all her fears, and thought herself the happiest maid alive for four and twenty hours at least.

And then came back, and after that again and again, the old fears. Gradually she found out that the sneers which she had heard at English barbarians were not altogether without ground.

Not only had her lover's life been passed among half-brutal and wild adventurers, but, like the rest of his nation, he had never felt the influence of that classic civilisation without which good manners seem, even to this day, almost beyond the reach of the Western races. Those among whom she had been brought up, whether soldiers or clerks, were probably no nobler or purer at heart—she would gladly have believed them far less so—than Hereward; but the inmost varnish of Roman culture had given a charm to their manners, a wideness of range to their thoughts, which Hereward had not.

Especially when he had taken too much to drink—which he did, after the Danish fashion, far oftener than the rest of Robert's men—he grew rude, boastful, quarrelsome. He would obant his own doughty deeds; and gab (as the Norman word was) in painful earnest, while they gabbed

only in sport, and outvied each other in impossible fanfarronades, simply to laugh down a fashion which was held inconsistent with the modesty of a true knight. Bitter it was to her to hear him announce to the company, not for the first or second time, how he had slain the Cornish giant, whose height increased by a foot at least every time he was mentioned, and then to hear him answered by some smart, smooth-shaven youth, who, with as much mimicry of his manner as he dared to assume, boasted of having slain in Araby a giant with two heads, and taken out of his two mouths the two halves of the princess whom he was devouring, which being joined together afterwards by the prayers of a holy hermit, were delivered back safe and sound to her father the King of Antioch. And more bitter still was it to hear Hereward angrily dispute the story, unaware (it least at first) that he was being laughed at.

Then she grew sometimes cold, sometimes contemptuous, sometimes altogether fierce, and shed bitter tears in secret, when she was complimented on the modesty of her young savage.

But Torfrida was a brave maiden and what was more, she loved him with all her heart. Else why endure bitter words for his sake? And she set herself to teach and train the wild outlaw into her ideal of a very perfect knight.

She talked to him of modesty and humility, the root of all virtues, of chivalry and self-sacrifice, of respect to the weak, and mercy to the fallen, of devotion to God, and awe of His commandments. She set before him the example of ancient heroes and philosophers, of saints and martyrs, and as much awed him by her learning as by the new world of higher and purer morality which was opened for the first time to the wandering Viking.

He, for his part, drank it all in. Taught by a woman who loved him, he could listen to humiliating truths, which he would have sneered at, had they come from the lips of a hermit or a priest. Often he rebelled, often he broke loose, and made her angry, and himself whined, but the spell was on him—a far surer, as well as purer spell than any love-potion of which foolish Torfrida had ever dreamed—the only spell which can really civilise man—that of woman's tact and woman's purity.

Nevertheless there were relapses, as was natural. The wine at Robert the Frison's table was often too good, and then Hereward's tongue was loosed, and Torfrida justly indignant. And one evening there came a very serious relapse out of which arose a strange adventure.

It befell that the great marquis sent for his son to Bruges, ere he set out for another campaign in Holland, and made him a great feast, to which he invited Torfrida and her mother. For Adela of France, the queen countess, had heard so much of Torfrida's beauty, that she must needs have her as one of her bower-maidens, and her mother, who was an old

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friend of Adela's, of course was highly honoured by such a promotion for her daughter.

So they went to Bruges, and Hereward and his men went with them, and they feasted, and harped, and sang, and the saying was fulfilled—

'Tis merry in the hall
When beards wag all.'

But the only beard which wagged in that hall was Hereward's, for the Flemings, like the Normans, prided themselves on their civilised and smooth-shaven chins, and laughed (behind his back) at Hereward, who prided himself on keeping his beautiful English beard, with locks of gold which, like his long golden hair, were combed and curled daily, after the fashion of the Anglo Danes.

After a while Hereward's beard began to wag somewhat too fast, as he sat by Torfrida's side. For some knight near began to tell of a wonderful mare called Swallow, which was to be found in one of the islands of the Scheldt, and was famous through all the country round, and unsaddled, moreover, that Hereward might as well have brought that mare home with him as a trophy.

To which Hereward answered, in his boasting vein, that he would bring home that mare, or aught else that he had a liking to.

'You will find it not so easy. Her owner, they say, is a mighty strong churl of a horse-breeder, Dirk Hammerhand by name, and as for cutting his throat, that you must not do, for he has been loyal to Countess Gertrude, and sent her horses whenever she needed.'

'One may pick a fair quarrel with him nevertheless.'

'Then you must bide such a buffet as you never abode before. They say his arm has seven men's strength, and whosoever visits him, he challenges to give and take a blow, but no man that has taken a blow as yet, has ever needed another.'

'Hereward will have need of his magic head-piece, if he tries that adventure,' quoth another.

'Ay,' retorted the first speaker, 'but the helmet may stand the rap well enough, and yet the brains inside be the worse.'

'Not a doubt. I knew a man once, who was so strong that he would shake a nut till the kernel went to powder, and yet never break the shell.'

'That is a lie!' quoth Hereward. And so it was, and told purposely to make him expose himself.

Whereon high words followed, which Torfrida tried in vain to stop. Hereward was flushed with ire and scorn.

'Magic armour, forsooth?' cried he at last. 'What care I for armour or for magic? I will wager to you—'my armour,' he was on the point of saying, but he checked himself in time—'any horse in my stable, that I go in my shirt to Scaldmarland, and bring back that mare single-handed.'

'Hark to the Englishman! He has turned

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Berserker at last, like his forefathers. You will surely start in a pair of hose as well, or the ladies will be shamed!

And so forth, till Torfrida was purple with shame, and wished herself fathoms deep, and Ailela of France called sternly from the head of the table to ask what the wrangling meant.

'It is only the English Berserker, the Lady Torfrida's champion,' said some one in his most courteous tone, 'who is not yet as well acquainted with the customs of knighthood as that fair Lady hopes to make him hereafter.'

'Torfrida's champion?' asked Ailela, in a tone of surprise, if not scorn.

'If any knight quarrels with my Hereward, he quarrels with Robert himself!' thundered Count Robert. 'Silence!'

And so the matter was hushed up.

The banquet ended, and they walked out into the garden to cool their heads, and play at games, and dance.

Torfrida avoided Hereward, but he, with the foolish pertinacity of a man who knows he has had too much wine, and yet pretends to himself that he has not, would follow her, and speak to her.

She turned away more than once. At last she was forced to speak to him.

'So! You have made me a laughing-stock to these knights. You have scorned at my gifts. You have said—and before these men, too—that you need neither helm nor hauberk. Give me them back, then, Berserker as you are, and go sleep off your wine.'

'That will I,' laughed Hereward boisterously.

'You are tipsy,' said she, 'and do not know what you say.'

'You are angry, and do not know what you say. Harken, proud lass. I will take care of one thing, and that is, that you shall speak the truth.'

'Did I not say that you were tipsy?'

'Pish! You say that I was a Berserker. And truth you shall speak, for to-morrow to the war, and hark I will thither, or die.'

'That will be very fit for you.'

And the two turned brightly from each other.

Ere Torfrida went to bed that night, there was a violent knocking. Angry as she was, she was yet anxious enough to hurry out of her chamber, and open the door herself.

Martin Lightfoot stood there with a large leather mail, which he hung at her feet somewhat unceremoniously.

'There is some gear of yours,' said he, as it clanged and rattled on the floor.

'What do you mean, man?'

'Only that my master bid me say that he cares as little for his own life as you do.' And he turned away.

She caught him by the arm—

'What is the meaning of this? What is in this mail?'

'You should know best. If young folks

cannot be content when they are well off, they will go farther and far worse,' says Martin Lightfoot. And he slipped from her grasp and fled into the night.

She took the mail to her room and opened it. It contained the magic armour.

All her anger was melted away. She cried, she blamed herself. He would be killed, his blood would be on her head. She would have carried it back to him with her own hands, she would have entreated him on her knees to take it back. But how face the courtiers? and how find him? Very probably, too, he was by that time hopelessly drunk. And at that thought she drew herself into herself, tried to harden her heart again, and went to bed, but not to sleep. Bitterly she cried as she thought over the old hag's croon—

'Quick joy, long pain,
You will take your gift again.'

It might have been five o'clock the next morning when the claron rang down the street. She sprang up and dressed herself quickly, but never more carefully or truly. She heard the tramp of horse-hoofs. He was moving a-field early, indeed. Should she go to the window to bid him farewell? Should she hide herself in just anger?

She looked out steadily through the blind of the little window in the gable. There rode down the street Robert le Frison in full armour, and behind him, knight after knight, a wall of shining steel. But by his side rode one bare-headed, his long yellow curls floating over his shoulders. His boots had golden spurs, a gilt belt held up his sword, but his only dress was a silk shirt and silk hose. He laughed and sang, and made his horse carrol, and tossed his lance in the air, and caught it by the point, like Taillefer at Hastings, as he passed under the window.

She threw open the blind, careless of all appearances. She would have called to him, but the words choked her, and what should she say?

He looked up boldly, and smiled.

'Farewell, fair lady mine. Drunk I was last night, but not so drunk as to forget a promise.'

And he rode on, while Torfrida rushed away and broke into wild weeping.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW HEREWARD WON MARE SWALLOW

ON a bench at the door of his highroofed wooden house sat Dirk Hammerhand, the richest man in Walcheren. From within the house sounded the pleasant noise of slave-women, grinding and chattering at the handquern, from without, the pleasant noise of geese and swans without number. And as he sat and drank his ale, and watched the herd of horses in the fen, he thought

himself a happy man, and thanked his Odin and Thor that, owing to his princely supplies of horses to Countess Gertrude, Robert the Frisian and his Christian Franks had not yet harried him to the bare walls, as they would probably do ere all was over.

As he looked at the horses, some half mile off, he saw a strange stir among them. They began whinnying and pawing round a four-footed thing in the midst, which might be a bulger, or a wolf—though both were very uncommon in that pleasant isle of Walcheren, but which plainly had no business there. Whereon he took up a mighty staff, and strode over the fen to see.

He found neither wolf nor bulger, but to his exceeding surprise a long lean man, clothed in ragged horse skins, whinnying and neighing exactly like a horse, and then stooping to eat grass like one. He advanced to do the first thing that came into his head, namely, to break the man's back with his staff, and ask him afterwards who he might be. But ere he could strike, the man or horse kicked up with its hind legs in his face, and then springing on to the said hind legs ran away with extraordinary swiftness some fifty yards, after which it went down on all fours and began grazing again.

'Beest thou man or Neval?' cried Dirk, somewhat frightened.

The thing looked up. The face at least was human.

'Art thou a Christian man?' asked it in bad Frisian, intermixed with suorts and neighs.

'What's that to thee?' growled Dirk, and began to wish a little that he was one, having heard that the sign of the cross was of great virtue in driving away devils.

'Thou art not Christian. Thou believest in Thor and Odin? Then there is hope.'

'Hope of what?' Dirk was growing more and more frightened.

'Of her, my sister! Ah, my sister, can it be that I shall find thee at last, after ten thousand miles, and seven years of woful wandering?'

'I have no man's sister here. At least, my wife's brother was killed—'

'I speak not of a sister in woman's shape. Mine, alas!—O woful prince, O more woful princess—eats the herb of the field somewhere in the shape of a mare, as ugly as she was once beautiful, but swifter than the swallow on the wing.'

'I've none such here,' quoth Dirk, thoroughly frightened, and glancing uneasily at mare Swallow.

'You have not? Alas, wretched me! It was prophesied to me by the witch that I should find her in the field of one who worshipped the old gods, for had she come across a holy priest, she had been a woman again, long ago. Whether must I wander abroad!' And the thing began weeping bitterly, and then ate more grass.

'I—that is—thou poor miserable creature,' said Dirk, half pitying, half wishing to turn the

subject, 'leave off making a beast of thyself awhile, and tell me who thou art.'

'I have made no beast of myself, most noble earl of the Frisians, for so you doubtless are. I was made a beast of—a horse of, by an enchantment of a certain land, and my sister a mare.'

'Thou dost not say so!' quoth Dirk, who considered such an event quite possible.

'I was a prince of the county of Althorona, which lies between Cathay and the Mountains of the Moon, as far once as I am laid now, and only less far than my lost sister, and by the enchantments of a cruel magician we became what we are.'

'But thou art not a horse, at all events?'

'Am I not? Thou knowest, then, more of me than I do of myself,' and it ate more grass. 'But hear the rest of my story. My hapless sister was sold away with me to a merchant, but I, breaking loose from him, fled until I lathered in a magic fountain. At once I recovered my man's shape, and was rejoicing therein, when out of the fountain rose a lady more beautiful than an elf, and smiled upon me with love.'

'She asked me my story, and I told it. And when it was told—"Wretch!" she cried, "and coward, who hast deserted thy sister in her need. I would have loved thee, and made thee immortal as myself, but now thou shalt wander ugly and eating grass, clothed in the horse hide which has just dropped from thy limbs, till thou shalt find thy sister, and bring her to bathe, like thee, in this magic well."

'All good spirits help us! And you are really a jamp?'

'As surely,' and the thing with a voice of sudden rapture, 'as that mare is my sister,' and he rushed at mare Swallow. 'I see, I see, my mother's eyes, my father's nose.'

'He must have been a chuckle-headed knave that, then,' grinned Dirk to himself. 'The mare's nose is as big as a buck-basket. But how can she be a princess, man—prince, I mean, she has a foal running by her side.'

'A foal?' said the thing solemnly. 'I, me behold it! Alas, alas, my sister! The tyrant's threat has come true, that thou shouldst be his bride whether thou wouldst or not. I see I see in the features of thy son his hated humiments.'

'Why he must be as like a horse, then, as your father. But this will not do, Master Horse-man, I know that foal's pedigree better than I do my own.'

'Man, man, simple though honest!—Hast thou never heard of the skill of the enchanters of the East? How they transform their victims at night back again into human shape, and by day into the shape of beasts again?'

'Yes—well—I know that—'

'And do you not see how you are deluded? Every night, doubt not, that mare and foal take their human shape again, and every night, perhaps, that foal enchanter visits in your pen, perhaps in your very stable, his wretched bride

restored (alas, only for an hour!) into her human shape.

'An enchanter in my stable! That is an ugly guest. But no, I've been into the stables fifty times, to see if that mare was safe. Mare was mare, and colt was colt, Mr. Prince, if I have eyes to see.'

'And what are eyes against enchantments? The moment you opened the door the spell was cast over them again. You ought to thank your stars that no worse has happened yet, that the enchanter, in fleeing, has not wrung your neck as he went out, or cast a spell on you, which will fire your barns, lame your geese, give your fowls the pnp, your horses the glanders, your cattle the murrain, your children St. Vitus's dance, your wife the creeping palsy, and yourself the chalkstones in all your fingers.'

'All saints have mercy on me! If the half of this be true, I will turn Christian. I will send for a priest, and be baptized to-morrow.'

'O my sister, my sister! Dost thou not know me! Dost thou answer my caresses with kicks? Or is thy heart, as well as thy body, so enchained by that cruel necromancer, that thou preferrest to be his, and scornest thine own salvation, leaving me to eat grass till I die!'

'I say, prince—I say—what would you have a man to do? I bought the mare honestly, and I have kept her well. She can't say aught against me on that score. And whether she be princess or not, I'm loth to part with her.'

'Keep her then, and keep with her the curse of all the saints and angels. Look down, ye holy saints' (and the thing poured out a long string of saints' names) 'and avenge this catholic princess, kept in vile durance by an unbaptized heathen! May his—'

'Don't, don't!', roared Dirk. 'And don't look at me like that' (for he feared the evil eye), 'or I'll brain you with my staff!'

'Fool! If I have lost a horse's figure I have not lost his swiftness. Ere thou couldst strike, I should have run a mile and back, to curse thee afresh.' And the thing ran round him, and fell on all fours again, and ate grass.

'Mercy, mercy! And that is more than I over asked yet of man. But it is hard,' growled he, 'that a man should lose his money, because a rogue sells him a princess in disguise.'

'Then sell her again, sell her, as thou valuest thy life, to the first Christian man thou meetest. And yet no. What matters! Ere a month be over, the seven years' enchantment will have passed, and she will return to her own shape, with her son, and vanish from thy farm, leaving thee to vain repentance, whereby thou wilt both lose thy money and get her curse. Farewell, and my malice abide with thee!'

And the thing, without another word, ran right away, neighing as it went, leaving Dirk in a state of abject terror.

He went home. He cursed the mare, he cursed the man who sold her, he cursed the day he saw her, he cursed the day he was born. He told his story with exaggerations and confusions

in plenty to all in the house, and terror fell on them likewise. No one, that evening, dared go down into the fen to drive the horses up, while Dirk got very drunk, went to bed, and troubled there all night (as did the rest of the household), expecting the enchanter to enter on a flaming fire-diako at every howl of the wind.

The next morning, as Dirk was going about his business with a doleful face, casting stealthy glances at the fen, to see if the mysterious mare was still there, and a chance of his money still left, a man rode up to the door.

He was poorly clothed, with a long rusty sword by his side. A broad felt hat, long boots, and a haversack behind his saddle, showed him to be a traveller, seemingly a horse dealer, for there followed him, tied head and tail, a brace of sorry nags.

'Heaven save all here,' quoth he, making the sign of the cross. 'Can any good Christian give me a drink of milk?'

'Alo, if thou wilt,' said Dirk. 'But what art thou, and whence?'

On any other day he would have tried to coax his guest into trying a buffet with him for his horse and clothes. But this morning his heart was heavy with the thought of the enchanted mare, and he welcomed the chance of selling her to the stranger.

'We are not very fond of strangers about here, since these Flemings have been harrying our borders. If thou art a spy, it will be worse for thee.'

'I am neither spy nor Fleming, but a poor servant of the Lord Bishop of Utrecht's buying a garron or two for his lordship's priests. As for these Flemings, may St. John Baptist save from them both me and you. Do you know of any man who has horses to sell herabouts?'

'There are horses in the fen yonder,' quoth Dirk, who knew that churchmen were likely to give a liberal price, and pay in good silver.

'I saw them as I rode up. And a fine lot they are. But of too good a stamp for my short juries, or for my holy master's riding—a fat priest likes a quiet nag, my master.

'Humph. Well, if quietness is what you need, there is a mare down there, that a child might ride with a thread of wool. But as for price—And she has a colt, too, running by her.'

'Ah!' quoth the horseman. 'Well, your Walcheren folk make good milk, that's certain. A colt by her? That's awkward. My lord does not like young horses' and it would be troublesome, too, to take the thing along with me.'

The less anxious the dealer seemed to buy the more anxious grew Dirk to sell, but he concealed his anxiety, and let the stranger turn away thanking him for his drink.

'I say!' he called after him. 'You might look at her, as you ride past the herd.'

The stranger assented; and they went down into the fen, and looked over the precious mare, whose feats were afterwards sung by many an English fireside, or in the forest beneath the

hollins green, by such as Robin Hood and his merry men. The ugliest as well as the swiftest of mares she was, say the old chroniclers, and it was not till the stranger had looked twice at her, that he forgot her great chuckle-head, greyhound flanks, and drooping hindquarters, and began to see the great length of those same quarters, the thighs let down into the hooks, the compact loins, the extraordinary girth through the saddle, the sloping shoulder, the long arms, the flat knees, the large well-set hoofs, and all the other points which showed her strength and speed, and justified her fame.

'She might carry a big man like you through the mud,' said he carelessly, 'but as for pace, one cannot expect that with such a chuckle-head. And if one rode her through a town, the boys would call after one, "All head and no tail." Why, I can't see her tail for her croup, it is so ill set on.'

'I'll set on, or none,' said Dirk testily, 'don't go to speak against her pace till you have seen it. Here, lass!'

Dirk was in his heart rather afraid of the princess, but he was comforted when she came up to him like a dog.

'She's as sensible as a woman,' said he, and then grumbled to himself, 'may be she knows I mean to part with her.'

'Lend me your saddle,' said he to the stranger.

The stranger did so, and Dirk, mounting, galloped her in a ring. There was no doubt of her powers as soon as she began to move.

'I hope you won't remember this against me, madam,' said Dirk, as soon as he got out of the stranger's hearing. 'I can't do less than sell you to a Christian. And certainly I have been as good a master to you as if I'd known who you were, but if you wish to stay with me, you've only to kick me off, and say so, and I'm yours to command.'

'Well, she can gallop a bit,' said the stranger, as Dirk pulled her up and dismounted, 'but, an ugly brute she is, nevertheless, and such an omelette as I should not care to ride, for I am a gay man among the ladies. However, what is your price?'

Dirk named twice as much as he would have taken.

'Half that, you mean.' And the usual haggle began.

'Tell thee what,' said Dirk at last. 'I am a man who has his fancies, and this shall be her price—half thy bid, and a box on the ear.'

The demon of covetousness had entered Dirk's heart. What if he got the money, branded, or at least disabled the stranger, and so had a chance of selling the mare a second time to some fresh comer?

'Thou art a strange fellow,' quoth the horse-dealer. 'But so be it.'

Dirk chuckled. 'He does not know,' thought he, 'that he has to do with Dirk Hammerhand,' and he clenched his fist in anticipation of his rough joke.

'There,' quoth the stranger, counting out the money carefully, 'is thy coin. And there—is thy box on the ear.'

And with a blow which rattled over the fen, he felled Dirk Hammerhand to the ground.

He lay senseless for a moment, and then looked wildly round.

'Villain!' groaned he. 'It was I who was to give the buffet, not thou!'

'Art mad?' asked the stranger, as he coolly picked up the coins, which Dirk had scattered in his fall. It is the seller's business to take, and the buyer's to give.'

And while Dirk roared in vain for help he leapt on Swallow, and rode off shouting—

'Aha! Dirk Hammerhand! So you thought to knock a hole in my skull, as you have done to many a better man than yourself! He must be a luckier man than you who catches The Wake asleep. I shall give your love to the enchanted prince, my faithful serving-man, whom they call Martin Lightfoot.'

Dirk cursed the day he was born. Instead of the mare and colt he had got the two wretched garçons which the stranger had left, and a face, which made him so tender of his own teeth, that he never again offered to try a buffet with a stranger.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW HEReward RODE INTO BRUGES LIKE A BEGGARMAN

THE spring and summer had passed, and the autumn was almost over, when great news came to the court of Bruges, where Torfrida was now a bower maiden.

The Zealanders had been beaten till they submitted, at least for the present. There was peace, at least for the present, through all the isles of Scheldt, and more than all, the lovely Countess Gertrude had resolved to reward her champion by giving him her hand, and the guardianship of her lands and her infant son.

And Hereward?

From him, or of him, there was no word. That he was alive and fighting was all the messenger could say.

Then Robert came back to Bruges, with a gallant retinue, leading home his bride. And there met him his father and mother, and his brother of Mons, and Richilda the beautiful and terrible sorceress—who had not yet stained her soul with those crimes which she expiated by fearful penances in after years, when young Arnoul, the son for whom she had sold her soul, lay dead upon the battlefield which was to have made him a mighty prince. And Torfrida went out with the nobles to meet Count Robert, and looked for Hereward, till her eyes were ready to fall out of her head. But Hereward was not with them.

'He must be left behind, commanding the

army,' thought she. 'But he might have sent one word!'

There was a great feast that day, of course, and Torfrida sat thereat but she could not eat. Nevertheless she was too proud to let the knights know what was in her heart, so she chatted and laughed as gaily as the rest, watching always for any word of Hereward. But none mentioned his name.

The feast was long, the ladies did not rise till high bedtime, and then the men drank on.

They went up to the queen-countess's chamber, where a solemn undressing of that royal lady usually took place.

The etiquette was this. The queen-countess sat in her chair of state in the midst, till her shoes were taken off, and her hair dressed for the night. Right and left of her, according to their degrees, sat the other great ladies, and behind each of them, where they could find places, the maidens.

It was Torfrida's turn to take off the royal shoes, and she advanced into the middle of the semicircle, slippers in hand.

'Stop there!' said the countess-queen.

Whereat Torfrida stopped, very much frightened.

'Countesses and ladies,' said the mistress, 'there are in Provence and the South, what I wish there were here in Flanders—courts of love, at which all offenders against the sacred laws of Venus and Cupid are tried by an assembly of their peers, and punished according to their deserts.'

Torfrida turned scarlet.

'I know not why we, countesses and ladies, should have less knowledge of the laws of love than those gayer dames of the South, whose blood runs—to judge by her dark hair—in the veins of yon fair maid.'

There was a silence. Torfrida was the most beautiful woman in the room, more beautiful than even Richilda the terrible, and therefore there were few but were glad to see her—as it seemed—in trouble.

Torfrida's mother began whimpering, and praying to six or seven saints at once. But nobody marked her—possibly not even the saints, being preoccupied with Torfrida.

'I hear, fair maid—for that you are that I will do you the justice to confess—that you are old enough to be married this four years since.'

Torfrida stood like a stone, frightened out of her wits, plentiful as they were.

'Why are you not married?'

There was, of course, no answer.

'I hear that knights have fought for you, lost their lives for you.'

'I did not bid them,' gasped Torfrida, long-
ing that the floor would open and swallow up the queen-countess and all her kin and followers, as it did for the enemies of the blessed Saint Dunstan while he was arguing with them in an upper room at Calne.

And that the knight of St. Valeri, to whom

you gave your favour, now lies languishing of wounds got in your cause.'

'I—I did not bid him fight,' gasped Torfrida, wishing that the floor would open and swallow up herself.

'And that he who overthrew the knight of St. Valeri—to whom you gave that favour, and more—'

'I gave him nothing a maiden might not give,' cried Torfrida so fiercely that the queen-countess recoiled somewhat.

'I never said that you did, girl. Your love you gave him. Can you deny that?'

Torfrida laughed bitterly. Her Southern blood was rising.

'I put my love out to nurse, instead of wearing it, as many a maiden has done before me, and thought no harm. When my love cried for hunger and cold, I took it back again to my own bosom, and whether it has lived or died there is no one's matter but my own.'

'Hunger and cold? I hear that him to whom you gave your love, you drove out to the cold, bidding him go fight in his bare shirt if he wished to win your love.'

'I did not. He angered me—He —' and Torfrida found herself in the act of accusing Hereward.

She stopped instantly.

'What more, your highness? If this be true, what more may not be true of such an one as I? I submit myself to your royal grace.'

'She has confessed. What punishment, ladies, does she deserve? Or, rather, what punishment would her cousins of Provence inflict, did we send her southward, to be judged by their courts of love?'

One lady said one thing, one another. Some spoke cruelly, some worse than cruelly, for they were coarse ages, the ages of faith, and ladies said things then in open company which gentle men would be ashamed to say in private now.

'Marry her to a fool,' said Richilda at last, bitterly.

'That is too common a misfortune,' answered the lady of France. 'If we did no more to her, she might grow as proud as her betters.'

Adela knew that her daughter-in-law considered her husband a fool, and was somewhat of the same opinion, though she hated Richilda.

'No,' said she, 'we will do more. We will marry her to the first man who enters the castle.'

Torfrida looked at her mistress to see if she were mad. But the countess-queen was serene and sane. Then Torfrida's Southern heat and northern courage burst forth.

'You? marry? me? to? —' said she slowly, with eyes so fierce and lips so livid that Adela herself quailed.

There was a noise of shouting and laughing in the court below, which made all turn and listen.

The next moment a serving-man came in, puzzled, and inclined to laugh.

'May it please your highness, here is the strangest adventure. There is ridden into the

castle-yard a beggarman with scarce a shirt to his back, on a great ugly mare with a foal running by her, and a fool behind him carrying lance and shield. And he says that he is come to fight any knight of the court, ragged as he stands, for the fairest lady in the court, be she who she may, if she have not a wedded husband already.

'And what says my lord margrave?'

'That it is a fair challenge and a good adventure, and that fight he shall, if any man will answer his defiance.'

'And I say, tell my lord margrave that fight he shall not, for he shall have the fairest maiden in this court for the trouble of carrying her away, and that I, Adela of France, will give her to him. So let that beggar dismount, and be brought up hither to me.'

There was silence again. Torfrida looked round her once more to see whether or not she was dreaming, and whether there was one human being to whom she could appeal. Her mother sat praying and weeping in a corner. Torfrida looked at her with one glance of scorn, which she confessed and repented, with bitter tears, many a year after, in a foreign land, and then turned to bay with the spirit of her old Philadri ancestor, who choked the Emir at Montmajour.

Mated to a beggar! It was a strange accident, and an ugly one, and a great cruelty and wrong. But it was not impossible, hardly improbable, in days when the caprice of the strong created accidents, and when cruelty and wrong went for nothing, even with very kindly honest folk. So Torfrida faced the danger, as she would have faced that of a kicking horse or a flooded ford, and, like the nut-brown bride,

'She pulled out a little penknife,
That was both keen and sharp,

and considered that the beggarman could wear no armour, and that she wore none either. For if she succeeded in slaying that beggarman, she might need to slay herself after, to avoid being - according to the fashion of those days - burnt alive.

So when the arras was drawn back, and that beggarman came into the room, instead of shrieking, fainting, hiding, or turning, she made three steps straight toward him, looking him in the face like a wild cat at bay. Then she threw up her arms, and fell upon his neck.

It was Hereward himself. Filthy, ragged but Hereward.

His shirt was brown with gore, and torn with wounds, and through its rents showed more than one hardly healed scar. His hair and beard was all in elf-locks, and one heavy cut across the head had shown not only hair, but lun-pan very close.

But Hereward it was, and regardless of all beholders, she lay upon his neck, and never stirred nor spoke.

'I call you to witness, ladies,' cried the queen-countess, 'that I am guiltless. She has given

herself to this beggarman of her own free will. What say you?' and she turned to Torfrida's mother.

Torfrida's mother only prayed and whimpered. 'Countesses and ladies,' said the queen-countess, 'there will be two weddings to-morrow. The first will be that of my son Robert and my pretty Lady Gertrude here. The second will be that of my pretty Torfrida and Hereward.'

'And the second bride,' said the Countess Gertrude, rising and taking Torfrida in her arms, 'will be ten times prettier than the first. There, sir, I have done all you asked of me. Now go and wash yourself.'

'Hereward,' said Torfrida, a week after, 'and did you never change your shirt all that time?'

'Never. I kept my promise.'

'But it must have been very rusty.'

'Well, I bathed now and then.'

'But it must have been very cold.'

'I am warm enough now.'

'But did you never comb your hair, either?'

'Well, I won't say that. Travellers find strange bedfellows. But I had half a mind never to do it at all, just to spite you.'

'And what matter would it have been to me?'

'Oh! none. It is only a Danish fashion we have of keeping clean.'

'Clean! You were dirty enough when you came home. How silly you were! If you had sent me but one word.'

'You would have fanned me, beaten, and scolded me all over again. I know your ways now, Torfrida.'

CHAPTER XV

HOW EARL TOSTI GODWINSSON CAME TO
ST OMER

THE winter passed in sweet madness; and for the first time in her life Torfrida regretted the lengthening of the days, and the flowering of the primroses, and the return of the now needless wyneck, for they warned her that Hereward must forth to the wars in Skadduriland, which had broken out again, as was to be expected, as soon as Count Robert and his bride had tanned their backs.

And Hereward, likewise for the first time in his life, was loth to go to war. He was, doubtless, rich enough in this world's goods. Torfrida herself was rich, and seems to have had the disposal of her own property, for her mother is not mentioned in connection therewith. Hereward seems to have dwelt in her house at St Omer as long as he remained in Flanders. He had probably amassed some treasure of his own by the simple, but then most aristocratic, method of plunder. He had, too, probably, grants of land in Holland from the Frison, the rents whereof were not paid as regularly as might be. Moreover, as '*Magister Militum*,' 'Master of

the Knights,' he had, it is likely, pay as well as honour. And he approved himself worthy of his good fortune. He kept forty gallant housecarles in his hall all the winter, and Torfrida and her lasses made and mended their clothes. He gave large gifts to the Abbey of St. Bertin, and had masses sung for the souls of all whom he had slain, according to a rough list which he furnished—bidding the monks not to be chary of two or three masses extra at times, as his memory was short, and he might have sent more souls to purgatory than he had recollected. He gave great alms at his door to all the poor. He befriended, especially, all shipwrecked and needy mariners, feeding and clothing them, and begging their freedom as a gift from Baldwin. He feasted the knights of the neighbourhood, who since his Baresark campaign had all vowed him the most gallant of warriors, and since his accession of wealth, the most courteous of gentlemen, and all went merrily, as it is written, 'As long as thou dost well unto thyself, men will speak well of thee.'

So he would have fain stayed at home at St. Omer, but he was Robert's man, and his good friend likewise, and to the war he must go forth once more, and for eight or nine weary months Torfrida was alone, but very happy, for a certain reason of her own.

At last the short November days came round, and a joyful woman was fain Torfrida when Martin Lightfoot ran into the hall, and throwing himself down on the rushes like a dog, announced that Hereward and his men would be home before noon, and then fell fast asleep.

There was bustling to and fro of her and her maids, decking of the hall in its best hangings, strewing of fresh rushes, to the dislodgment of Martin, setting out of boards and trestles, and stools and mugs thereon, cooking of victuals, broaching of casks, and, above all, for Hereward's self, heating of much water, and setting out, in the inner chamber, of the great bath-tub and bath-sheet, which was the special delight of a hero fresh from war.

And by mid-day the streets of St. Omer rang with clank, and tramp, and trumpet-blare, and in marched Hereward and all his men, and swung round through the gateway into the court, where Torfrida stood to welcome them, as far as day, a silver stirrup cup in her hand. And while the men were taking off their harness and dressing their horses, she and Hereward went in together, and either took such joy of the other that a year's parting was forgot in a minute's meeting.

'Now!' cried she, in a tone half of triumph, half of tenderness, 'look there!'

'A cradle! And a baby!'

'Your baby!'

'Is it a boy?' asked Hereward, who saw in his mind's eye a thing which would grow and broaden at his knee year by year, and learn from him to ride, to shoot, to fight. 'Happy for him if he does not learn worse from me,' thought Hereward, with a sudden movement of

humility and contrition, which was surely marked in heaven, for Torfrida marked it on earth.

But she mistook its meaning.

'Do not be vexed. It is a girl!'

'Never mind.' As if it was a calamity over which he was bound to comfort the mother. 'If she is half as beautiful as you look at this moment, what spitting of lances there will be about her! How jolly to see the lads howling at each other, while our daughter sits in the pavilion as Queen of Love!'

Torfrida laughed. 'You think of nothing but fighting, bear of the North Seas!'

'Every one to his trade. Well, yes, I am glad that it is a girl!'

'I thought you seemed vexed. Why did you cross yourself?'

'Because I thought to myself how unfit I was to bring up a boy to be such a knight as—as you would have him,—how likely I was, ere all was over, to make him as great a ruffian as myself!'

'Hereward! Hereward!' and she threw her arms round his neck for the tenth time. 'Blessed be you for those words! Those are the fears which never come true, for they bring down from heaven the grace of God, to guard the humble and contrite heart from that which it fears.'

'Ah, Torfrida, I wish I were as good as you!'

'Now—my joy and my life, my hero and my scold—I have great news for you, as well as a little baby. News from England!'

'You, and a baby over and above, are worth all England to me!'

'But listen. Edward the king is dead!'

'Then there is one fool less on earth, and one saint more, I suppose, in heaven!'

'And Harold Godwinson is king in his stead. And he has married your niece Aldyth, and sworn friendship with her brothers!'

'I expected no less. Well, every dog has his day!'

'And his will be a short one. William of Normandy has sworn to drive him out!'

'Then he will do it. And so the poor little Swan-neck is packed into a convent, that the houses of Godwin and Leofric may rush into each other's arms, and perish together! Fools, fools, fools! I will hear no more of such a mad world. My queen, tell me about your sweet self. What is all this to me? Am I not a wolf's head, and a landless man?'

'O my king, have not the stars told me that you will be an earl and a ruler of men, when all your foes are wolves' heads as you are now? And the word is coming true already. Tost Godwinson is in the town at this moment, an outlaw and a wolf's head himself!'

Hereward laughed a great laugh.

'Alas! Every man to his right place at last. Tell me about that, for it will amuse me. I have heard naught of him since he sent the king his Hereford thralls' arms and legs in the

pickle-barrels, to show him, he said, that there was plenty of cold meat on his royal demeanour.

'You have not heard, then, how he murdered, in his own chamber at York, Ganel Ormsson and Ulf Dolfinsson!'

'That poor little lad?' Well, a gracious youth was Tosti, ever since he went to kill his brother Harold with teeth and claws, like a wolf, and as he grows 12 years, he grows in grace. But what said Ulf's father and the Gospatrics!'

'They were I know not where. But old Gospatric came down to Westminster, to demand law for his grand-nephew's blood.'

'A silly thing of the oldthane, to walk into the wolf's den.'

'And so he found. He was stabbed there, three days after Christmas-tide, and men say that Queen Edith did it for love of Tosti, her brother. Then Dolfin and the Gospatrics took to sea, and away to Scotland, and so Tosti rid himself of all the good blood in the north, except young Walthoof Swardsson, whose mind, I fear, will come next.'

'How comes he here, then?'

'The northern men rose at that, killed his servant at York, took all his treasures, and marched down to Northampton, plundering and burning. They would have marched on London town, if Harold had not met them there from the king. There they cried out against Tosti, and all his taxes, and his murders, and his changing Canute's laws, and would have you nephew Morcar for their earl. A tyrant they would not endure. Free they were born and bred, they said, and free they would live and die. Harold must needs do justice, even on his own brother.'

'Especially when he knows that that brother is his worst foe.'

'Harold is a better man than you take him for, my Hereward. But be that as it may, Morcar is earl, and Tosti outlawed, and here is St. Omer, with wife and child.'

'My nephew Earl of Northumbria! As I might have been, if I had been a wiser man.'

'If you had, you would never have found me.'

'True, my queen! They say heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, but it tempers it too, sometimes, to the hobbled ass, and so it has done by me. And so the rogues have fallen out, and honest men may come by their own. For as the northern men have done by one brother, so will the eastern men do by the other. Let Harold see how many of those fat Lincolnshire manors, which he has seized into his own hands, he holds by this day twelve months. But what is all this to me, my queen, while you and I can kiss, and laugh the world to scorn!'

'This to you, beloved, that, great as you are, Torfrida must have you greater still, and out of all this coil and confusion you may win something, if you be wise.'

'Sweet lips, be still, and let us play instead of plotting.'

'And thus, too—you shall not stop my mouth—that Harold Godwinsson has sent a letter to you.'

'Harold Godwinsson is my very good lord,' sneered Hereward.

'And thus it said, with such praises and courtesies concerning you as made my wife's heart beat high with pride—"If Hereward Leofricsson will come home to England, he shall have his rights in law again, and his manors in Lincolnshire, and a thaneship in East Anglia, and manors for his men-at-arms, and if that be not enough, he shall have an earldom, as soon as there is one to give."

'And what says to that Torfrida, Hereward's queen?'

'You will not be angry if I answered the letter for you?'

'If you answered it in one way—no. If another—yes.'

Torfrida trembled. Then she looked Hereward full in the face with her keen clear eyes.

'Now shall I see whether I have given myself to Hereward in vain, body and soul, or whether I have trained him to be my true and perfect knight.'

'You answered, then,' said Hereward, 'thus—'

'Say on,' said she, turning her face away again.

Hereward Leofricsson tells Harold Godwinsson that he is his equal, and not his man, and that he will never put his hands between the hands of a son of Godwin. An Etheling born, a king of the house of Cerdic, outlawed him from his right, and none but an Etheling born shall give him his right again.'

'I said it, I said it. Those were my very words!' and Torfrida burst into tears, while Hereward kissed her, almost fawned upon her, calling her his queen, his saga-wife, his guardian angel.

'I was sorely tempted,' sobbed she. 'Sorely. To see you rich and proud upon your own lands, an earl, may be—may be, I thought at times, a king. But it could not be. It did not stand with honour, my hero—not with honour.'

'Not with honour. Get me gay garments out of the chest, and let us go royally, and royally feast my jolly riders.'

'Stay awhile,' said she, kissing his head as she combed and curled his long golden locks, and her own raven ones, hardly more beautiful, fell over them and mingled with them. 'Stay awhile, my pride. There is another spell in the wind, stirred up by devil or witch-wife, and it comes from Tosti Godwinsson.'

'Tosti, the cold-meat butcher! What has he to say to me?'

'This—"If Hereward will come with me to William of Normandy, and help us against Harold the perjured, then will William do for him all that Harold would have done, and more beside."

'And what answered Torfrida?'

'It was not so said to me that I could answer.'

I had it by a side wind through the Countess Judith."

"And she had it from her sister Matilda."

"And she, of course, from Duke William himself."

"And what would you have answered, if you had answered, pretty one?"

"Nay, I know not. I cannot be always queen. You must be king sometimes."

Torfrida did not say that this latter offer had been a much sorer temptation than the former.

"And has not the base-born Frenchman enough knights of his own, that he needs the help of an outlaw like me?"

"He asks for help from all the ends of the earth. He has sent that Lanfranc to the Pope, and there is talk of a sacred banner, and a crusade against England."

"The monks are with him, then?" said Hereward. "That is one more count in their score. But I am no monk. I have shorn many a crown, but I have kept my own hair as yet, you see."

"I do see," said she, playing with his locks. "But—but he wants you. He has sent for Angevins, Portevins, Bretons, Flemings—purchasing lands, rank, money, what not. Tostig is recruiting for him here in Flanders now. He will soon be off to the Orkneys, I suspect, or to Sweyn in Denmark, after Vikings."

"Here? Has Baldwin promised him men?"

"What could the good old man do? He could not refuse his own son-in-law. Thus, at least, I know, that a messenger has gone off to Scotland, to Gilbert of Ghent, to bring or send any bold Flemings who may prefer let England to lean Scotland."

"Lands, rank, money, eh? So he intends that the war should pay itself—out of English purses. What answer would you have me make to that, wife mine?"

"The duke is a terrible man. What if he conquers? And conquer he will."

"Is that written in your stars?"

"It is, I fear. And if we have the Pope's blessing, and the Pope's banner—Dare we resist the Holy Father?"

"Holy stepfather, you mean, for a stepfather he seems to prove to merry England. But do you really believe that an old man down in Italy can make a bit of rag conquer by saying a few prayers at it? If I am to believe in a magic flag, give me Harold Hardrada's Landeycle, at least, with Harold and his Norwegians behind it."

"William's French are as good as those Norse men, man for man, and how'd withal, Hereward?"

"That may be," said he, half testily, with a curse on the tanner's grandson and his French popinjays, "and our Englishmen are as good as any two Norwegians, as the Norse themselves say." He could not divine, and Torfrida hardly liked to explain to him, the glamour which the Duke of Normandy had cast over her, as the

¹ Tostig's wife, Earl Baldwin's daughter, sister of Matilda, William the Conqueror's wife.

representative of chivalry, learning, civilization, a new and nobler life for men than the world had yet seen, one which seemed to connect the young races of Europe with the wisdom of the ancients and the magic glories of old Imperial Rome.

"You are not fair to that man," said she, after a while. "Hereward, Hereward, have I not told you how, though body be strong, mind is stronger? That is what that man knows, and therefore he has prospered. Therefore his realms are full of wise scholars, and thriving schools, and his ministers, and his men are sober, and wise, and learned like clerks—"

"And false like clerks, as he is himself. Skillcraft and honesty never went yet together, Torfrida."

"Not in me?"

"You are not a clerk—you are a woman, and more than woman, you are an elf, a godless, there is none like you. But hearken to me. This man is false. All the world knows it."

"He promises, they say, to govern England justly as King Edward's law, according to the old laws and liberties of this realm."

"Of course. If he does not come as the old monk's lien, how does he come at all? If he does not promise our—*they*, I mean, for I am no Englishman—*law* and liberties, who will join him? But his riders and hurlings will not fight for nothing. They must be paid with English land, and English land they will have, for they will be his men, whoever else are not. They will be his darlings, his householders, his hawks to sit on his fist and fly at his gains, and English bones will be packed clean to feed them. And you would have me help to do that, Torfrida? Is that the honour of which you spoke so loudly to Harold Godwinsson?"

Torfrida was silent. To have brought Hereward under the influence of William was an old dream of hers. And yet she was proud at the dream being broken thus. And so she said—

"You are right! It is better for you—it is better than to be William's darling, and the greatest evil in his court—to feel that you are still an Englishman. Promise me but one thing, that you will make no heroes or desperado answer to the duke."

"And why not answer the tanner as he deserves?"

"Because my art, and my heart too, tells me that your fortunes and his are linked together. I have studied my tables, but they would not answer. Then I cast lots in Virgilus—"

"And what found you there?" asked he anxiously.

"I opened at the lines—"

"*Pro in me exanilis et Martis sorte peremptis, Omitis? Equidem et vivis concedere villam.*"

"And what means that?"

"That you may have to pray him to pity the slain, and have for answer, that their lands may be yours if you will but make peace with him. At least, do not break hopelessly with

that man. Above all, never use that word concerning him which you used just now, the word which he never forgives. Remember what he did to them of Alençon, when they hung new hides over the wall, and cried, "Plenty of work for the tanner!"

'Let him pick out the prisoners' eyes, and chop off their hands, and shoot them into the town from mangonels. I know him, but he must go far and thrive well ere I give him a chance of doing that by the Wake.'

'Hereward, Hereward, my own! Boast not, but fear God. Who knows, in such a world as this, to what end we may come? Night after night I am haunted with spectres, eyeless, handless—'

'This is cold comfort for a man just out of hard fighting in the agnons!'

She threw her arms round him, and held him as if she would never let him go.

'When you die, I die. And you will not die—you will be great and glorious, and your name will be sung by scab and unsabred through many a land, far and wide. Only, be not rash. Be not high-minded. Promise me to answer this man wisely. The more crafty he is, the more crafty must you be likewise.'

'Let us tell this mighty hero then,' said Hereward, trying to laugh away her fears—and perhaps his own, 'that while he has the Holy Father on his side he can need no help from a poor sinful woman like me.'

'Hereward, Hereward!'

'Why, is there aught about hides in that?'

'I want—I want an answer which may not cut off all hope in case of the worst.'

'Then let us say boldly, "On the day that William is king of all England, Hereward will come and put his hands between his, and be his man!"'

That message was sent to William at Rouen. He laughed.

'It is a fair challenge from a valiant man. The day shall come when I will claim it.'

Tosti and Hereward passed that winter in St Omer, living in the same street, passing each other day by day, and never spoke a word one to the other.

Robert the Friar heard of it, and tried to persuade Hereward.

'Let him purge himself of the murder of Ulf the boy, son of my friend Dolfin, and avenge that of Gamel, son of Orm, and after that again of Gospatric, my father's friend, whom his sister slew for his sake; and then an honest man may talk with him. Were he not my good lord's brother-in-law, as he is, more's the pity, I would challenge him to fight à l'outrance, with any weapons he might choose.'

'Heaven protect him in that case,' quoth Robert the Friar.

'As it is, I will keep the peace. And I will see that my men keep the peace, though there are Scarborough and Bamborough lais among them, who long to cut his throat upon the streets. But more I will not do.'

So Tosti sulked through the winter at St Omer. Suddenly he turned traitor (no man knows why) to his good brother-in-law and new ally, William of Normandy, and went off to get help from Sweyn of Denmark, and, failing that, from Harold Hardraade of Norway. But how he sped there must be read in the words of a cunninger saga-man than this chronicler, even in those of the Icelandic Homer, Snorrio Sturluson.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW HEReward WAS ASKED TO SLAY AN OLD COMRADE

IN those days Hereward went into Bruges, to Margus Baldwin, about his business. And as he walked in Bruges street he met an old friend, Gilbert of Ghent.

He had grown somewhat stouter, and somewhat grayer, in the last ten years; but he was as hearty as ever, and as honest, according to his own notions of honesty.

He shook Hereward by both hands, clapt him on the back, swore with many oaths that he had heard of his fame in all lands, that he always said that he would turn out a champion and a gallant knight, and had said it long before he killed the bear. As for killing it, it was no more than he expected, and nothing to what Hereward had done since, and would do yet.

When from Hereward asked that Gilbert had need of him.

They chatted on Hereward asking after old friends, and sometimes after old foes, whom he had long since forgiven, for though he always avenged an injury, he never bore malice for one. A distinction less common now than then, when a man's honour, as well as his safety, depended on his striking again when he was struck.

'And how is little Alfrinka?—Big she must be now?' asked he at last.

'The fiend fly away with her—or rather, would that he had flown away with her, before ever I saw the troublesome jade. Big! She is grown into the most beautiful lass that ever was seen—which is, what a young fellow, like you, cares for, and more trouble to me than all my money, which is what an old fellow, like me, cares for. It is partly about her that I am over here now. Fool that I was ever to let a princess into my house,' and Gilbert swore a great deal.

'How was she a princess? I forget,' said Hereward, who cared nothing about the matter. 'And how came she into your house? I never could understand that, any more than how the bear came there.'

'Ah? As to the bear, I have my secrets, which I tell no one. He is dead and buried, thanks to you.'

'And I sleep on his skin every night.'

'You do, my little champion? Well—warn

is the bed that is well earned. But as for her, —see here, and I'll tell you. She was Gospatric's ward and kinswoman—how, I do not rightly know. But this I know, that she comes from Uoltred, the earl whom Canute slew, and that she is heir to great estates in Northumberland.

'Gospatric, that fought at Dunsinane!'

'Yes, not the oldthane, his uncle, whom Tosti has murdered, but Gospatric, King Malcolm's cousin, Dolfin's father. Well, she was his ward. He gave me her to keep, for he wanted her out of harm's way—the lass having a bouny dower, lands and money—till he could marry her up to one of his sons. I took her, but of course I was not going to do aith men's work for nought, so I would have married her up to my poor boy, if he had but lived. But he would not live, as you know. Then I would have married her to you, and made you my heir, I tell you honestly, if you had not flown off, like a hot-headed young springald as you were then.'

'You were very kind. But how is she a princess?'

'Princess! Twice over. Her father was of high blood among the Saxons, and if not, are not all the Gospatrics Ethelings? Their grandmother, Uoltred's wife, was Ethelred Evil-Connell's daughter, and I have heard that this girl's grandfather was his son—but died young—or was killed. Who cares?'

'Not I,' quoth Hereward.

'Well—Gospatric wants to marry her to Dolfin, his eldest son.'

'Why, Dolfin had a wife when I was at Dunsinane.'

'But she is dead since, and young Ulf, her son, was murdered by Tosti last winter.'

'I know.'

'Whereupon Gospatric sends to me for the girl and her dowry. What was I to do? Give her up? Little it is, lad, that I ever gave up, after I had it once in my grip, or I should be a poorer man than I am now. Have and hold, is my rule. What should I do? What I did. I was coming hither on business of my own, so I put her on board ship, and half her dower—where the other half is, I know, and man must draw me with wild horses before he finds out—and came here to my kinsman, Baldwin, to see if he had any proper young fellow to whom we might marry the lass, and so go shares in her money and the family connection. Could a man do more wisely?'

'Impossible,' quoth Hereward.

'But see how a wise man is lost by fortune. When I come here, whom should I find but Dolfin himself? The rogue had secret of my plan, all the way from Dolminton there, by Peebles. He hunts me out, the hungry Scotch wolf, rides for Lenth, takes ship, and is here to meet me, having accused me before Baldwin as a robber and a ravisher, and offered to prove his right to the jade on my body in single combat.'

'The villain!' quoth Hereward. 'There is no modesty left on earth, nor prudence either

To come here, where he might have stumbled on Tosti, who murdered his son, and who would surely do the like by him himself. Lucky for him that Tosti is off to Norway on his own errand.'

'Modesty and prudence! None nowadays, young sire, nor justice either, I think, for when Baldwin hears us both—and I told my story as calmly as I could—he tells me that he is very sorry for an old vassal and kinsman, and so farth,—but I must either disgorge or fight.'

'Then fight,' quoth Hereward.

'Per se aut per campionem,—that's the old law, you know.'

'Not a doubt of it.'

'Look you, Hereward. I am no coward, nor a chummy man of my kind.'

'He is either fool or liar who says so.'

'But see. I find it hard work to hold my own in Scotland now. Folks don't like me, or trust me, I can't say why.'

'How unreasonable!' quoth Hereward.

'And if I kill this youth, and so have a blood-feud with Gospatric, I have a hornet's nest about my ears. Not only he and his sons—who are masters of Scotch Northumberland—but all his cousins—King Malcolm, and Donaldbain, and, for aught I know, Harold and the Godwinsons, if he bid them take up the quarrel. And, besides, that Dolfin is a big man. If you cross Scot and Saxon you breed a very big man. If you cross again with a Dane or a Norseman, you breed a giant. His grandfather was a Scots prince, his grandmother an English princess, his mother a Norse princess, as you know—and how big he is, you should remember. He weighs half as much again as I, and twice as much as you.'

'Butchers count by weight, and knights by courage,' quoth Hereward.

'Very well for you, who are young and active, but I take him to be a better man than that ogre of Cornwall whom they say you killed.'

'What care I? Let him be twice as good, I'll try him.'

'Ah! I knew you were the old Hereward still. Now hearken to me. Be my champion. You owe me a service, lad. Fight that man. Challenge him in open field. Kill him, as you are sure to do. Claim the lass, and win her—and then we will part her dower. And (though it is little that I care for young lasses' fancies), to tell you truth she never favoured any man but you.'

Hereward started at the snare which had been laid for him, and then fell into a very great laughter.

'My most dear and generous host—you are the wiser, the older you grow. A plan worthy of Solomon! You are rid of Sieur Dolfin without any blame to yourself.'

'Just so.'

'While I win the lass, and, living here in Flanders, am tolerably safe from any blood-feud of the Gospatrics.'

'Just so.'

¹ Between Tweed and Forth.

'Perfect: but there is only one small hindrance to the plan; and that is—that I am married already.'

Gilbert stopped short, and swore a great oath.

'But,' he said after a while, 'does that matter so much after all?'

'Very little, indeed, as all the world knows, if one has money enough, and power enough.'

'And you have both, they say.'

'But, still more unhappily, my money is my wife's.'

'Pothe!'

'And, more unhappily still, I am so foolishly fond of her, that I would never have her in my snook, than any other woman with half England for a dowry.'

'Then I suppose I must look out for another champion.'

'Or save yourself the trouble, by being—just as a change—an honest man.'

'I believe you are right,' said Gilbert, laughing, 'but it is hard to begin so late in life.'

'And after one has had so little practice.'

'Alas! Thou art the same merry dog of a Hereward. Come along. But could we not poison this Dolfin after all?'

To which proposal Hereward gave no encouragement.

'And now, my friend-beanware, may I ask you, in return, what business brings you to Flanders?'

'Have I not told you?'

'No, but I have guessed. Gilbert of Ghent is on his way to William of Normandy.'

'Well. Why not?'

'Why not?—certainly. And has brought out of Scotland a few gallant gentlemen and stout housecarles of my acquaintance.'

Gilbert laughed.

'You may well say that. To tell you the truth, we have flitted, bag and baggage. I don't believe that we have left a dog behind.'

'So you intend to "colonise" in England, as the learned clerks would call it? To settle, to own land, and enter, like the Jews of old, into goodly houses which you builded not, fairs which you tilled not, wells which you digged not, and orchards which you planted not?'

'Why, what a lean neck clerk you are yourself! That sounds like Scripture.'

'And so it is. I heard it in a French priest's sermon which he preached here in St Omer a Sunday or two back, exhorting all good Catholics, in the Pope's name, to enter upon the barbarous land of England, tainted with the sin of Simon Magus, and expel thence the heretical priests, and so forth, promising them that they should have free leave to cut long thongs out of other men's hides.'

Gilbert chuckled.

'You laugh. The priest did not, for after sermon I went up to him, and told how I was an Englishman, and an outlaw, and a desperate man, who feared neither saint nor devil, and if I heard such talk as that again in St Omer, I would so shave the speaker's crown that he should never need razor to his dying day.'

'And what is that to me?' said Gilbert, in an uneasy, half-defiant tone; for Hereward's tone had been more than half-defiant.

'This. That there are certain broad lands in England, which were my father's, and are now my nephews' and my mother's, and some which should of right be mine. And I advise you, as a friend, not to make entry on those lands, lest Hereward in turn make entry on you. And who is he that will deliver you out of my hand?'

'God and His saints alone, thou bend out of the pit,' quoth Gilbert, laughing. But he was growing warm, and began to tutove Hereward.

'I am in earnest, Gilbert of Ghent, my good friend of old time.'

'I know thee well enough, man. Why, in the name of all glory and plunder, art thou not coming with us? They say William has offered thee the earldom of Northumberland.'

'He has not. And if he had, it is not his to give. And if it were, it is by right neither mine, nor my nephews', but Waltheof Swardson's. Now hearken unto me, and settle it in your minds, thou and William both, that your quarrel is against none but Harold and the Godwinsons, and their men of Wessex. But that if you go to cross the Watling Street, and meddle with the free Danes, who are none of Harold's men—'

'Stay. Harold has large manors in Lincolnshire, and so has Edith his sister, and what of them, *Sieur Hereward*?'

'That the man who touches them, even though the men on them may fight on Harold's side, had better have put his head into a hornet's nest. Unjustly were they seized from their true owners by Harold and his lathers, and the holders of them will owe no service to him a day longer than they can help. But will, if he fall, demand an eal of their own race, or fight to the death.'

'Best make young Waltheof eal, then.'

'Best keep thy foot out of them, and the foot of any man for whom thou carest. Now good-bye. Friends we are, and friends let us be.'

'Ah, that thou wert coming to England!'

'I bide my time. Come I may, when I see fit. But whether I come as friend or foe depends on that of which I have given thee tan warning.'

So they parted for the time.

It will be seen hereafter, how Gilbert took his own advice about young Waltheof: but did not take Hereward's advice about the Lincoln manors.

In Balwin's hall that day, Hereward met Dolfin, and when the magnificent young Scot sprang to him, embraced him, bewailed his murdered boy, talked over old passages, complimented him on his fame, lamented that he himself had won no such honours in the field, Hereward felt much more inclined to fight for him than against him.

Presently the ladies entered from the bower adjoining the hall. A buzz of expectation rose from all the knights, and Alfruda's name was whispered round.

She came in, and Hereward saw at the first glance that Gilbert had for once in his life spoken truth. So beautiful a damsel he had never beheld, and as she swept down toward him, he for one moment forgot Torfrida, and stood spell-bound like the rest.

Her eye caught his. If his face showed recognition, hers showed none. The remembrance of their early friendship, of her deliverance from the monster, had plainly passed away.

'Fickle, ingrateful things, these women,' thought Hereward.

She passed him close. As she did so, she turned her head, and looked him full in the face one moment, haughty and cold.

'So you could not wait for me?' said she, in a quiet whisper, and went on straight to Dolfin, who stood trembling with expectation and delight.

She put her hand into his.

'Here stands my champion,' said she.

'Say, here kneels your slave,' cried the Scot, dropping to the pavement a true Highland knee. Whereon faith twanged a harp, and Dolfin's minstrel sang, in most melodious Gaelic—

'Strong as a horse's hock, slinky as a stag's brisket,
Is the knee of the young torrid-kapel, his pride of
the house of Cithau.
It bent not to Macbeth the accursed, it bends not even
to Malcolm the Anointed,
But it bends like a barebell— who shall blame it?—
before the breath of beauty.'

Which magnificent effusion being interjected by Hereward for the instruction of the ladies, procured for the red-headed bard more than one handsome gift.

A sturdy voice arose out of the crowd.

'The lady, my lord marshal, and knights all, will need no champion as far as I am concerned. When one sees so fair a pair together, what can a knight say, in the name of all knighthood, but that the heavens have made them for each other, and that it were sin and shame to smiter them?'

The voice was that of Gilbert of Ghent, who, making a virtue of necessity, walked up to the pair, his weather-beaten countenance wreathed into what were meant for paternal smiles.

'Why did you not say as much in Scotland, and save me all this trouble?' pertinently asked the plain-spoken Scot.

'My lord prince, you owe me a debt for my caution. Without it, the fair lady had never known the whole fervency of your love, nor these noble knights and yourself the whole evenness of Count Belduin's justice.'

Alfrida turned her head away half contemptuously, and as she did so she let her hand drop listlessly from Dolfin's grasp, and drew back to the other ladies.

A suspicion crossed Hereward's mind. Did she really love the prince? Did those strange words of hers mean that she had not yet forgotten Hereward himself?

However, he said to himself that it was no concern of his, as it certainly was not. went

home to Torfrida, told her everything that had happened, laughed over it with her, and then forgot Alfrida, Dolfin, and Gilbert in the prospect of a great campaign in Holland.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW HERWARD TOOK THE NEWS FROM STANFORD BRIDGE AND DABINOS

AFTER that, news came thick and fast.

News of all the fowl of heaven flocking to the feast of the great God, that they might eat the flesh of kings, and captains, and mighty men, and horses, and them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both bond and free.

News true, news half true, news false. News from Rome, how England, when conquered, was to be held as a fief of St. Peter, and spiritually, as well as temporally, enslaved. News how the confusion of St. Peter, and a ring with a bit of St. Peter himself enclosed therein, had come to Rouen, to go before the Norman host as the ark went before that of Israel.

Then news from the North. How Tosti had been to Sweyn, and bid him come back and win the country again, as Canute his uncle had done, and how the cautious Dane had answered that he was a much smaller man than Canute, that he had enough to hold his own against the Norsemen, and could not afford to throw his such high stakes as his mighty uncle.

Then news how Tosti had been to Norway, to Harold Hardhaade, and asked him why he had been fighting fifteen years for Denmark, when England lay open to him. And how Harold of Norway had agreed to come, and how he had levied nine-hall of the able-bodied men in Norway, and how he was gathering a mighty fleet at Solmund, in the month of the Sogrie flood. Of all this Hereward was well informed, for Tosti came back again to St. Omer and talked long. But Hereward and he had no dealings with each other. But at last, when Tosti tried to entice some of Hereward's men to sail with him, Hereward sent him word that if he met him he would kill him in the streets.

Then Tosti, who (though he wanted not for courage) knew that he was no match for Hereward, went off to Bruges, leaving his wife and family behind, gathered sixty ships at Ostend, went off to the Isle of Wight, and forced the landfolk to give him money and food. Then Harold of England's fleet, which was watching the coast against the Normans, drove him away, and he sailed off north, full of black rage against his brother Harold and all Englishmen, and burned, plundered, and murdered, along the coast of Lincolnshire, out of brute spite to the Danes who had expelled him.

Then came news how he had got into the Humber, how Morecar and Elwin with the Northumbrians had driven him out; and how

he had gone off to Scotland to meet Harold of Norway, and how he had put his hands between Harold's, and become his man.

And all the while the Norman camp at St. Pierre-sur-Divo grew and grew, and all was ready, if the wind would but change.

And so Hereward looked on, helpless, and saw these two great storm-clouds growing one from north, and one from south—to burst upon his native land.

Two invasions at the same moment of time, and these no mere Viking raids for plunder, but deliberate attempts at conquest and colonisation, by the two most famous captains of the age. What if both succeeded? What if the two storm-clouds swept across England, each on its own path, and met in the midst, to hurl their lightnings into each other? A fight between William of Normandy and Harold of Norway, on some moorland in Mercia—that would be a battle of giants, a sight at which Odin and the gods of Valhalla would rise from their seats, and throw away the mead-horn, to stare down on the deeds of heroes scarcely less mighty than themselves. Would that neither might win! Would that they would destroy and devour, till there was none left of Frenchmen or of Norwegians!

So sang Hereward, after his heathen fashion, and his housecarls applauded the song. But Torfrida shuddered.

'And what will become of the poor English in the meantime?'

'They have brought it on themselves,' said Hereward bitterly. 'Instead of giving the crown to the man who should have had it—to Sweyn of Denmark—they let Godwin put it on the head of a drivelling monk, and as they sowed, so will they reap.'

But Hereward's own soul was black within him. To see these mighty events passing, as it were, within reach of his hand, and be unable to take his share in them—For what share could he take? That of Tosti Godwinsson against his own nephews? That of Harold Godwinsson, the usurper? That of the tanner's grandson against any man? Ah, that he had been in England! Ah, that he had been where he might have been, where he ought to have been, but for his own folly—high in power in his native land, perhaps a great earl, perhaps commander of all the armies of the Danelagh. And bitterly he cursed his youthful sins, as he rode to and fro almost daily to the port, asking for news, and getting often only too much.

For now came news that the Norsemen had landed in Humber; that Edwin and Morcar were beaten at York; that Hardraade and Tosti were masters of the North.

And with that, news that by the virtue of the relics of St. Valeri, which had been brought out of their shrine to frighten the demons of the storm, and by the intercession of the blessed St. Michael, patron of Normandy, the winds had changed, and William's whole armament had

crossed the Channel, landed upon an undefended shore, and fortified themselves at Pevensey and Hastings.

And then followed a fortnight of silence and torturing suspense.

Hereward could hardly eat, drink, sleep, or speak. He answered Torfrida's consolations curtly and angrily, till she betook herself to silent caresses, as to a sick animal. But she loved him all the better for his sullenness, for it showed that his English heart was awakening again, sound and strong.

At last news came. He was down as usual at the port. A ship had just come up the estuary. A man just landed stood on the beach, gesticulating, and calling in an unknown tongue to the bystanders, who laughed at him, and seemed inclined to misuse him.

Hereward galloped down the beach.

'Out of the way, villains! Why, man, you are a Norseman!'

'Norseman am I, yea, Thorl Gumlaugsson is my name, and news I bring for the Countess Judith (as the French call her) that shall turn her golden hair to snow—yea, and all her ladies' hair from tenderness to tumbledown.'

'Is the earl dead?'

'And Harold Sigurdsson.'

Hereward sat silent, appalled. For Tosti he cared not. But Harold Sigurdsson, Harold Hardraade, Harold the Viking, Harold the Varanger, Harold the Lion-slayer, Harold of Constantinople, the bravest among champions, the wisest among kings, the cunningest among minstrels, the darling of the Vikings of the north, the one man whom Hereward had taken for his pattern and his ideal, the one man under whose banner he would have been proud to fight the earth seemed empty, if Harold Hardraade were gone.

'Thorl Gumlaugsson,' cried he at last, 'or whatever be thy name, if thou hast led to me, I will draw thee with wild horses.'

'Would God that I did he! I saw him fall with an arrow through his throat. Then Jarl Tosti took the Land-ravager and held it up till he died. Then Rystem Orre took it, coming up hot from the ships. And then he died likewise. Then they all died. We would take no quarter. We threw off our mail, and fought bareback, till all were dead together!'

'How camest thou, then, hither?'

'Styrkar the marshal escaped in the night, and I with him, and a few more. And Styrkar bade me bring the news to Flanders, to the countess, whither he took it to Olaf Haroldsson, who lay off in the ships.'

'And thou shalt take it, Martin! get this man a horse. A horse, ye villains, and a good one, on your lives!'

'And Tosti is dead?'

'Dead like a hero. Harold offered him quarter—offered him his earlship, they say—even in the midst of battle—but he would not take it.'

1 For the details of this battle, see Snorrio Sturluson; or the admirable description in Bulwer's *Harold*.

He said he was the Sigurdsson's man now, and true man he would be.

'Harold offeral him?—What art bahbling at? Who fought you?'

Harold Godwinsson, the king.

'Where?'

'At Stanford Brigg, by York town.'

'Harold Godwinsson slew Harold Sigurdsson? After this wolves may eat lions!'

'The Godwinsson is a gallant fighter and a wise general, or I had not been here now.'

'Get on thy horse, man!' said he, scornfully and impatiently, 'and gallop, if thou canst.'

'I have ridden many a mile in Ireland, earl, and have not forgotten my seat.'

'Thou hast, hast thou?' said Martin, 'thou art Thord Ginnlaugsson of Waterford.'

'That am I. How knowest thou me, man?'

'I am of Waterford. Thou hadst a slave lass, once, I think, Mew; they called her Mew, her skin it was so white.'

'What's that to thee?' asked Thord, turning on him savagely.

'I meant no harm. I saw her at Waterford when I was a boy, and thought her a fair lass enough, that is all.'

And Martin drooped into the rear.

As they rode side by side, Hereward got more details of the fight.

'I knew it would fall out so. I foretold it!' said Thord. 'I had a dream. I saw us come to English land, and fight, and I saw the banners floating. And before the English army was a great witchwife, and rode upon a wolf, and he had a corpse in his bloody jaws. And when he had eaten one up, he throw him another, till he had swallowed all.'

'Did she throw him thus?' asked Martin, who ran looking by the stirrup.

'That did she, and eaten I saw myself. Yet here I am alive.'

'Then thy dreams were naught.'

'I do not know that. The wolf may have me yet.'

'I fear thou art fry.'

'What the devil is that to thee if I be?'

'Naught. But be comforted. I am a necromancer, and thus I know by my art, that the weapon that will slay thee was never forged in Flanders here.'

'There was another man had a dream,' said Thord, turning from Martin angrily. 'He was standing in the king's ship, and he saw a great witchwife with a fork and a trough stand on the island. And he saw a fowl on every ship's stem, a raven, or else an eagle, and he heard the witchwife sing an evil song.'

By this time they were in St Omer.

Hereward rode straight to the Countess Judith's house. He never had entered it yet, and was likely to be attacked if he entered it now. But when the door was opened, he thrust in with so earnest and sad a face that the

servants let him pass, though not without growling and motions as of getting their weapons.

'I come in peace, my men, I come in peace. This is no time for brawls. Where is the steward, or one of the countess' ladies?—Tell her, madam, that Hereward waits her commands, and entreats her, in the name of St Mary and all saints, to vouchsafe him one word in private.'

The lady hurried into the bower. The next moment Judith hurried out into the hall, her fair face blanched, her fair eyes wide with terror.

Hereward fell on his knee.

'What is this? It must be bad news if you bring it.'

'Madam, the grave covers all fends. Earl Tosti was a very valiant hero, and would to God that we had been friends!'

She did not hear the end of the sentence: but fell back with a shriek into the women's arms.

Hereward told them all that they needed to know of that fratricidal strife; and then to Thord Ginnlaugsson—

'Have you any token that this is true? Mind what I warned you, if you heed!'

'Thus have I, jarl and ladies,' and he drew from his bosom a reliquary. 'Ulf the marshal took this off the jarl's neck, and bade me give it to none but his lady. Therefore, with your pardon, sir jarl, I did not tell you that I had it, not knowing whether you were an honest man.'

'Thou hast done well; and an honest man thou shalt find me, though no jarl as yet. Come home, and I will feed thee at my own table, for I have been a sea-rover and a Viking myself.'

They left the reliquary with the ladies, and went.

'See to this good man, Martin.'

'That will I, as the apple of my eye.'

And Hereward went into Torfrida's room.

'I have news, news!'

'So have I!'

'Harold Hardrade is slain, and Tosti too!'

'Where? how?'

'Harold Godwinsson slew them by York.'

'Brother has slain brother? O God that died on cross!' murmured Torfrida, 'when will men look to Thee, and have mercy on their own souls? But Hereward—I have news—news more terrible by far. It came an hour ago. I have been dreading your coming back.'

'Say on. If Harold Hardrade is dead, no worse can happen.'

'But Harold Godwinsson is dead!'

'Dead! Who next? William of Normandy? The world seems coming to an end, as the monks say it will soon.'

'A great battle has been fought at a place they call Heathfield.'

'Close by Hastings? Close to the landing place? Harold must have flown thither back from York. What a captain the man is, after all!'

¹ Prophesying his own death. Literally 'fated.'

² For these two dreams, see Snorro Sturleson.

¹ There was a general rumour abroad that the end of the world was at hand, for the 'one thousand years' of prophecy had expired.

'Was. He is dead, and all the Godwinsons, and England lost.'

If Torfrida had feared the effect of her news, her heart was lightened at once as Hereward answered haughtily—

'England lost? Sussex is not England, nor Wessex either, any more than Harold was king thereof. England lost? Let the tanner try to cross the Watling Street, and he will find out that he has another stamp of Englishman to deal with.'

'Hereward, Hereward, do not be unjust to the dead. Men say—the Normans say—that they fought like heroes.'

'I never doubted that, but it makes me mad—as it does all eastern and northern men—to hear these Wessex churls and Godwinsons calling themselves all England.'

Torfrida shook her head. To her, as to most foreigners, Wessex and the south-east counties were England, the most civilised, the most French, the seat of royalty, having all the prestige of law, and order, and wealth. And she was shrewd enough to see that, as it was the part of England which had most sympathy with French civilisation, it was the very part where the Frenchman could most easily gain and keep his hold. The event proved that Torfrida was right, but all she said was, 'It is dangerously near to France, at least.'

'It is that. I would sooner see 100,000 French north of the Humber, than 10,000 in Kent and Sussex, where he can hurry over supplies and men every week. It is the starting point for him, if he means to conquer England piecemeal.'

'And he does.'

'And he shall not!' and Hereward started up, and walked to and fro. If all the Godwinsons be dead, there are Leofwinsons left, I trust, and Siward's kin, and the Gospatrics in Northumbria. Ah! Where were my nephews in the battle? Not killed too, I trust?

'They were not in the battle.'

'Not with their new brother-in-law? Much he has gained by throwing away the Swan-neck, like a base traitor as he was, and marrying my pretty niece. But where were they?'

'No man knows clearly. They followed him down as far as London, and then lingered about the city, meaning no man can tell what but we shall hear—and, I fear, hear too much—before a week is over.'

'Heavens! this is madness, indeed. This is the way to be eaten up one by one. Neither to do the thing, nor leave it alone. If I had been there! If I had been there—'

'You would have saved England, my hero!' and Torfrida believed her own words.

'I don't say that. Besides, I say that England is not lost. But there were but two things to do, either to have sent to William at once, and offered him the crown, if he would but guarantee the Danish laws and liberties to all north of the Watling Street, and if he would, fall on the Godwinsons themselves, by fair

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means or foul, and send their heads to William.'

'Or what?'

'Or have marched down after him, with every man they could muster, and thrown themselves on the Frenchman's flank in the battle—or between him and the sea, cutting him off from France or Oh, that I had but been there, what things could I have done!—And now these two wretched boys have fooled away their only chance.'

'Some say that they hoped for the crown themselves.'

'Which? Not both? Vain babies!' and Hereward laughed bitterly. 'I suppose one will murder the other next, in order to make himself the stronger by being the sole rival to the tanner. The milder, sleek sole rival to the eagle! Boy Walthof will set up his claim next, I presume, as Siward's son, and then Gospatric, as Ethelred Earl-Counsel's great grandson, and so forth, and so forth, till they all eat each other up, and the tanner's grandson calls the last. What care I? Tell me about the battle, my lady, if you know aught. That is more to my way than their statuta.'

And Torfrida told him all she knew of the great fight on Heathfield Down, which men call Senlat, and the battle of Hastings. And as she told it, in her wild eloquent fashion, Hereward's face reddened, and his eyes knitted. And when she told of the last struggle round the Dragon standard, of Harold's mighty figure in the front of all, hewing with his great double-headed axe, and then rolling in gore and agony an arrow in his eyeball, of the last rally of the men of Kent, of Guth, the last defender of the standard, falling by William's sword, of the standard hurled to the ground, and the popish Gonloman planted in its place. Then Hereward's eyes, for the first and last time for many a year, were flushed with noble tears, and springing up, he cried, 'Honour to the Godwinsons! Honour to the southern men! Honour to all true English hearts! Why was I not there, to go with them to Valhalla?'

Torfrida caught him round the neck. 'Be cause you are here, my hero, to free your country from her tyrants, and win yourself immortal fame.'

'Fool that I am, I verily believe I am crying.'

'These tears,' said she, as she kissed them away, 'are more precious to Torfrida than the spoils of a hundred fights, for they tell me that Hereward still loves his country, still honours virtue, even in a foe.'

And thus Torfrida—whether from a woman's

I have dared to differ from the excellent authorities who say that the standard was that of a Fighting Man, because the Bayeux Tapestry represents the last struggle as in front of a Dragon standard, which must be—as is to be expected—the old standard of Wessex, the standard of English royalty. That Harold had also a Fighting Man standard, and that it was sent by William to the Pope, there is no reason to doubt. But if the Bayeux Tapestry be correct, the fury of the fight for the standard would be explained. It would be a fight for the very symbol of King Edward's dynasty.

sentiment of pity, or from a woman's instinctive abhorrence of villainy and wrong, had become there and then an Englishwoman of the English, as she proved by strange deeds and sufferings for many a year.

'Where is that Norseman, Martin?' asked Hereward that night ere he went to bed. 'I want to hear more of poor Hardraade.'

'You can't speak to him now, master. He is sound asleep this two hours, and warm enough, I will warrant.'

'Where?'

'In the great green bed with blue curtains, just above the kitchen.'

'What nonsense is this?'

'The bed where you and I shall lie some day, and the kitchen to which we shall be sent down to turn our own spits, unless we mend our manners mightily.'

Hereward looked at the man. Madness glared unmistakably in his eyes.

'You have killed him!'

'And buried him, cheating the priests.'

'Traitor!' cried Hereward, seizing him.

'Take your hands off my throat, master. He was only my father.'

Hereward stood shocked and puzzled. After all, the man was No-man's-man, and would not be missed, and Martin Lightfoot, letting alone his madness, was as a third hand and foot to him all day long.

So all he said was, 'I hope you have buried him well and safely.'

'You may walk your bloodhound over his grave to-morrow without finding him.'

And where he lay, Hereward never knew. But from that night Martin got a tick of sticking and jutting his little axe, and talking to it as if it had been alive.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW EARL GODWIN'S WIDOW CAME TO ST OMER.

It would be vain to attempt even a sketch of the reports which came to Flanders from England during the next two years, or of the conversations which ensued thereon between Baldwin and his courtiers, and between Hereward and Torfrida. Two reports out of three were doubtless false, and two conversations out of three founded on those false reports.

It is best, therefore, to interrupt the thread of the story by some small sketch of the state of England after the battle of Hastings, that so we may at least guess at the tenor of Hereward and Torfrida's counsels.

William had, as yet, conquered little more than the south of England hardly, indeed, all that, for Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and the neighbouring parts, which had belonged to Sweyn, Harold's brother, were still insecure, and the noble old city of Exeter, confident in

her Roman walls, did not yield till two years after, in A.D. 1068.

North of his conquered territory, Mercia stretched almost across England, from Chester to the Wash, governed by Edwin and Morcar. Kilwin called himself Earl of Mercia, and held the Danish burghs. On the extreme north-west, the Roman city of Chester was his, while on the extreme south-east (as *Domesday-book* testifies), Morcar still held large lands round Bourne and throughout the south of Lincolnshire, besides calling himself the Earl of Northumbria. The young men seemed the darlings of the half-Danish northmen. Chester, Coventry, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Stamford, a chain of fortified towns stretching across England, were at their command; Blethyn, prince of North Wales, was their nephew.

Northumbria, likewise, was not yet in William's hands. Indeed it was in no man's hands, since the free Danes north of the Humber had expelled Tosti, putting Morcar in his place. Morcar, instead of residing in his earldom of Northumbria, had made one Oswulf his deputy: but he had rivals enough. There was Gospatric, claiming through his grandfather Uchtred, and strong in the protection of his cousin Malcolm, King of Scotland, there was young Waltheof, 'the forest thief,'—or rather, perhaps, 'the thief of slaughter,' who had been born to Siward Thorn in his old age, just after the battle of Dunsmuir, a fine and gallant young man, destined to a swift and sad end.

William sent to the Northumbrians one Copsi, athane of mark and worth, as his procurator, to expel Oswulf. Oswulf and the land folk answered by killing Copsi, and doing every man that which was right in his own eyes.

William determined to propitiate the young earls. Perhaps he intended to govern the centre and north of England through them, as feudal vassals, and hoped meanwhile to pay his Norman conquerors sufficiently out of the forfeited lands of Harold, and those who had fought by his side at Hastings. It was not his policy to make himself, much less to call himself, the conqueror of England. He claimed to be its legitimate sovereign, deriving from his cousin Edward the Confessor, and whosoever would acknowledge him as such, had neither right nor cause to fear. Therefore he sent for the young earls. He counted Waltheof, and more, really loved him. He promised Edwin his daughter in marriage. Some say it was Constance, afterwards married to Alan Fergant, of Brittany, but it may also have been the beautiful Adelaide, who, none knew why, early gave up the world, and died in a convent. Be that as it may, the two young people saw each, and loved each other at Rouen, whither William took Waltheof, Edwin, and his brother, as honoured guests in name; in reality as hostages likewise.

With the same rational and prudent policy, William respected the fallen royal families, both of Harold and of Edward; at least, he warred not against women, and the wealth and influence

of the great English ladies was enormous. Edith, sister of Harold, and widow of the Confessor, lived in wealth and honour at Winchester. Gyda, Harold's mother, retained Exeter and her land. Aldytha,¹ or Elfgiva, widow of Harold, lived rich and safe in Chester. Godiva the countess owned, so antiquarians say, manors from Cheshire to Lincolnshire, which would be now yearly worth the income of a great duke. Agatha the Hungarian, widow of Edmund the outlaw, dwelt at Romsey in Hampshire, under William's care. Her son Edgar Etheling, the rightful heir of England, was treated by William not only with courtesy, but with affection, and allowed to rebel, when he did rebel, with impunity. For the descendant of Rollo, the heathen Viking, had become a civilised chivalrous Christian knight. His mighty forefather would have split the Etheling's skull with his own axe. A Frank king would have shaved the young man's head, and nummed him in a monastery. An eastern sultan would have thrust out his eyes, or strangled him at once. But William, however cruel, however unscrupulous, had a knightly heart, and somewhat of a Christian conscience, and his conduct to his only lawful rival is a noble trait amid many sins.

So far all went well, till William went back to France, to be likened, not as his ancestors, to the gods of Valhalla, or the barbarous and destroying Vikings of mytime ages, but to Cæsar, Pompey, Vespasian, and civilised and civilising heroes of classic Rome.

But while he sat at the Easter Feast at Fécamp, displaying to Franks, Flemings, and Bretons, as well as to his own Normans, the treasures of Edward's palace at Westminster, and 'more English wealth than could be found in the whole estate of Gaul', while he sat there in his glory, with his young dupes, Edwin, Morcar, and Walthoot, by his side, having sent Harold's banner in triumph to the Pope, as a token that he had conquered the Church as well as the nation of England, and having founded abbeys as thank offerings to Him who had seemed to prosper him in his great crime, at that very hour the hand writing was on the wall, unseen by man, and he, and his policy, and his race, were weighed in the balance, and found wanting.

For now broke out in England that wrongdoing which endured as long as she was a mere appanage and foreign fief of Norman kings, whose hearts and homes were across the seas in France. Fitz Osbern, and Odo the warrior prelate, William's half-brother, had been left as his regents in England. Little do they seem to have cared for William's promise to the English people that they were to be ruled still by the laws of Edward the Confessor, and that where a grant of land was made to a Norman he was to hold it as the Englishman had done before him, with no heavier burdens on himself, but with no heavier burdens on the poor folk

who tilled the land for him. Oppression began, lawlessness, and violence, men were ill-treated on the highways, and women—what was worse—in their own homes, and the regents abetted the ill-doers. 'It seems,' says a most impartial historian,¹ 'as if the Normans, released from all authority, all restraint, all fear of retaliation, determined to reduce the English nation to servitude, and drive them to despair.'

In the latter attempt they succeeded but too soon, in the former, they succeeded at last but they paid dearly for their success.

Hot young Englishmen began to emigrate. Some went to the court of Constantinople, to join the Varanger Guard, and have their chance of a Polotaswarf like Harold Hardrade. Some went to Scotland to Malcolm Canmore, and brooded over return and revenge. But Harold's sons went to their father's cousin, Ulfsson of Denmark, and called on him to come and reconquer England in the name of his uncle Canute the great, and many an Englishman went with them.

These things Gospatric watched, as earl (so far as he could make any one obey him in the utter subversion of all order), of the lands between Forth and Tyne. And he determined to flee, ere evil befell him, to his cousin Malcolm Canmore, taking with him Marlesweyn of Lincolnshire, who had fought, it is said, by Harold's side at Hastings, and young Walthoef of York. But, moreover, having a head, and being indeed, as his final success showed, a man of ability and courage, he determined on a stroke of policy which had incalculable after-effects on the history of Scotland. He persuaded Agatha the Hungarian, Margaret and Christina her daughters, and Edgar the Etheling himself, to flee with him to Scotland. 'How he contrived to send them messages to Romsey, far south in Hampshire, how they contrived to escape to the Humber, and thence up to the Forth, this is a romance in itself, of which the chroniclers have left hardly a hint. But the thing was done, and at St Margaret's Hope, as tradition tells, the Scottish king met, and claimed as his unwilling bride, that fair and holy maiden who was destined to soften his fierce passions, to civilise and purify his people, and to become—if all had then just died—the true patron saint of Scotland.

Malcolm Canmore promised a mighty army, Sweyn a mighty fleet. And meanwhile, Eustace of Boulogne, the Confessor's brother in law, himself a Norman, rebelled at the head of the down-trodden men of Kent, and the Welshmen were harrying Herefordshire with fire and sword, in revenge for Norman ravages.

But as yet the storm did not burst. William returned, and with him something like order. He conquered Exeter, he destroyed churches and towns to make his new forest. He brought over his Queen Matilda with pomp and great glory, and with her the Bayeux Tapestry which she had wrought with her own hands, and meanwhile Sweyn Ulfsson was too busy

¹ See her history, told, as none other can tell it, in Bulwer's *Harold*.

¹ The late Sir F. Palgrave.

threatening Olaf Haraldsson, the new king of Norway, to sail for England, and the sons of King Harold of England had to seek help from the Irish Danes, and, ravaging the country round Bristol, be beaten off by the valiant burghers with heavy loss.

So the storm did not burst, and need not have burst, it may be, at all, had William kept his plighted word. But he would not give his fair daughter to Edwin. His Norman nobles, doubtless, looked upon such an alliance as debasing to a civilized lady. In their eyes, the Englishman was a barbarian, and though the Norman might well marry the Englishwoman, if she had beauty or wealth, it was a dangerous precedent to allow the Englishman to marry the Norman woman, and that woman a princess. Besides, there were those who coveted Edwin's broad lands, Roger de Montgomery who already (it is probable) held part of them as Earl of Shrewsbury, had no wish to see Edwin the son in law of his sovereign. Be the cause what it may, William faltered, and refused, and Edwin and Morcar left the court of Westminster in wrath. Waltheof followed them, having discovered—what he was weak enough continually to forget again—the treachery of the Norman. The young earls went off—one midlandward, one northward. The people saw their wrongs in those of their earls, and the rebellion burst forth at once, the Welsh under Blethyn, and the Cumbrians under Malcolm and Donaldbain, giving their help in the struggle.

It was the year 1069, a more evil year for England than even the year of Hastings.

The rebellion was crushed in a few months. The great general marched sturdily north, taking the boroughs one by one, storming, burning, sometimes, whole towns, massacring or mutilating young and old, and leaving, as he went on, a new portent, a Norman dungeon—till then all but unseen in England—as a place of safety for his garrisons. At Oxford (sacked horribly, and all but destroyed), at Warwick (destroyed utterly), at Nottingham, at Stafford, at Shrewsbury at Cambridge, on the huge barrow which overhangs the fen, and at York itself, which had opened its gates, trembling, to the great Norman strategist—at each doomed borough rose a castle, with its tall square tower within, its bailey around, and all the appliances of that ancient Roman science of fortification, of which the Danes, as well as the Saxons, knew nothing. Their struggle had only helped to tighten their bonds, and what wonder? There was among them neither unity, nor plan, nor governing mind and will. Hereward's words had come true. The only man, save Gospatric, who had a head in England, was Harold Godwinsson, and he lay in Waltham Abbey, while the monks ^{and masses} for his soul.

Edwin, Morcar, and Waltheof trembled before a genius superior to their own—a genius, indeed, which had not its equal in Christendom. They came in, and begged grace of the king. They got it. But Edwin's earldom was forfeited, and

he and his brother became, from thenceforth, desperate men.

Malcolm of Scotland trembled likewise, and asked for peace. The clans, it is said, rejoiced thereat, having no wish for a war which could lay them neither spoil nor land. Malcolm sent ambassadors to William, and took (at least for his Cambrian lands on this side the border) that oath of fealty to the 'Basileus of Britain,' which more than one Scottish king and kinglet had taken before—with the secret proviso (which, during the middle ages, seems to have been thoroughly understood in such cases by both parties), that he should be William's man just as long as William could compel him to be so, and no longer.

Then came cruel and unjust confiscations. Edmuth the standard bearer had fallen at Bristol, fighting for William against the Haraldssons; yet all his lands were given away to Normans. Edwin and Morcar's lands were parted likewise, and—to specify cases which bear especially on the history of Hereward—Oger the Briton got many of Morcar's manors round Bomeie, and Gilbert of Ghent many belonging to Marlesweyn about Lincoln city. And so did that valiant and crafty knight find his legs once more on other men's ground, and reappears in monkish story as the most devout and pious earl, Gilbert of Ghent.

What followed, Hereward must have heard not from flying rumours, but from one who had seen and known, and judged of all.¹

For one day about this time Hereward was riding out of the gate of St. Omer, when the porter appealed to him. Beggings for admittance were some twenty women, and a clerk or two, and they must needs see the chatelain. The chatelain was away. What should he do?

Hereward looked at the party, and saw, to his surprise, that they were Englishwomen, and that two of them were women of rank, to judge from the rich materials of their travel-stained and tattered garments. The ladies rode on sorry country garrons, plainly hired from the peasants who drove them. The rest of the women had walked, and weary and footsore enough they were.

'You are surely Englishwomen?' asked he of the foremost as he lifted his cap.

The lady bowed assent, beneath a heavy veil. 'Then you are my guests. Let them pass in.' And Hereward threw himself off his horse, and took the lady's bridle.

'Stay,' she said, with an accent half Wessex half Danish. 'I seek the Countess Judith, if it will please you to tell me where she lives.'

'The Countess Judith, lady, is no longer in St. Omer. Since her husband's death she lives with her mother at Bruges.'

The lady made a gesture of disappointment.

'It were best for you, therefore, to accept my hospitality, till such time as I can send you and your ladies on to Bruges.'

¹ For Gyda's coming to St. Omer that year, see *Ordericus Vitalis*.

'I must first know who it is who offers me hospitality'

This was said so proudly, that Hereward answered proudly enough in return—

'I am Hereward Leofricsson, whom his foes call Hereward the outlaw, and his friends, Hereward the master of knights.'

She started, and throw her veil back, looking intently at him. He, for his part, gave but one glance and then cried—

'Mother of heaven! You are the great countess!'

'Yes, I was that woman once, if all be not a dream. I am now I know not what, seeking hospitality—If I can believe my eyes and ears—of Godiva's son.'

'And from Godiva's son you shall have it, as though you were Godiva's self. God so deal with my mother, madam, as I will deal with you.'

'His father's wit, and his mother's beauty' and the great countess, looking upon him 'Too, too like my own lost Harold!'

'Not so, my lady. I am a dwarf compared to him.' And Hereward led the garron on by the bridle, keeping his cap in hand, while all wondered who the dame could be, before whom Hereward the champion would so abase himself.

'Leofric's son does me too much honour. He is forgotten, in his chivalry that I am Godwin's widow.'

'I have not forgotten that you are Sprakaleg's daughter and niece of Canute, king of kings! Neither have I forgotten that you are an English lady, in times in which all English folk are one, and all old English feuds are wiped away.'

'In English blood. Ah! If these last words of yours were true, as you, perhaps, might make them true, England might be saved even yet.'

'Saved?'

'If there were one man in it who cared for aught but himself.'

Hereward was silent and thoughtful.

He had sent Martin back to his house to tell Torfrida to prepare bath and food, for the Countess Gyda, with all her train, was coming to be her guest. And when they entered the court, Torfrida stood ready.

'Is this your lady?' asked Gyda, as Hereward lifted her from her horse.

'I am his lady and your servant,' said Torfrida, bowing.

'Child! child! Bow not to me. Talk not of servants to a wretched slave, who only longs to crawl into some hole and die, forgetting all she was and all she had.'

And the great countess reeled with weariness and woe, and fell upon Torfrida's neck.

A tall veiled lady next her helped to support her, and between them they almost carried her through the hall, and into Torfrida's best guest-chamber.

And there they gave her wine, and comforted her, and let her weep awhile in peace.

The second lady had unveiled herself, display-

1 See note at end of this chapter

ing a beauty which was still brilliant, in spite of sorrow, hunger, the stains of travel, and more than forty years of life.

'She must be Gunhilda,' guessed Torfrida to herself, and not amiss.

She offered Gyda a bath, which she accepted eagerly, like a true Dane.

'I have not washed for weeks. Not since we sat starving on the Flat Holm there, in the Severn sea. I have become as foul as my own fortunes, and why not? It is all of a piece. Why should not beggars go unwashed?'

But when Torfrida offered Gunhilda the bath, she declined.

'I have done, lady, with such carnal vanities. What use in cleaning the body which is itself unclean, and whitening the outside of this sepulchre? If I can but cleanse my soul fit for my heavenly Bridegroom, the body may become—as it must at last—food for worms.'

She will needs enter religion, poor child,' said Gyda, 'and what wonder?'

'I have chosen the better part, and it shall not be taken from me.'

'Taken! Taken! Hark to her. She means to mock me, the proud nun, with that same "taken".'

'God forbid, mother!'

'Then why say taken, to me from whom all is taken?—Husband, sons, wealth, land, renown, power—power which I loved, wretch that I was, as well as husband and as sons. Ah! God! the girl is right. Better to rot in the convent than writhe in the world. Better never to have had, than to have had and lost.'

'Amen!' said Gunhilda. 'Blessed are the barren, and they that never gave suck,' saith the Lord.'

'No! Not so!' cried Torfrida. 'Better, countess, to have had and lost, than never to have had at all. The glutton was right, swine as he was, when he said that not even heaven could take from him the dinners he had eaten. How much more we, if we say, not even heaven can take from us the love wherewith we have loved? Will not our souls be richer thereby through all eternity?'

'In purgatory?' asked Gunhilda.

'In purgatory, or where else you will. I love my love, and though my love prove false, he has been true, though he trample me under foot, he has held me in his bosom, though he kill me, he has lived for me. Better to have been his but for one day than never to have been his at all. What I have had will still be mine, when that which I have shall fail me.'

'And you would buy short joy with lasting woe?'

'That would I, like a brave man's child. I say—the present is mine, and I will enjoy it as greedily as a child. Let the morrow take thought for the things of itself—Countess, your bath is ready.'

Nineteen years after, when the great conqueror lay, tossing with agony and remorse, upon his dying bed, haunted by the ghosts of

his victims, the clerks of St. Saviour's in Bruges city were putting up a leaden tablet (which remains, they say, unto this very day) to the memory of one whose gentle soul had gently passed away 'Charitable to the poor, kind and agreeable to her attendants, courteous to strangers, and only severe to herself,' Gunhilda had lingered on in a world of war and crime, and had gone, it may be, to meet Torfrida beyond the grave, and there finish their doubtful argument.

The countess was served with food in Torfrida's chamber. Hereward and his wife refused to sit, and waited on her standing.

'I wish to show these saucy Flemings,' said he, 'that an English princess is a princess still in the eyes of one more nobly born than any of them.'

But after she had eaten, she made Torfrida sit before her on the bed, and Hereward likewise, and began to talk, eagerly, as one who had not unburdened her mind for many weeks, and eloquently too, as became Sprakalæg's daughter and Godwin's wife.

She told them how she had fled from the storm of Exeter, with a troop of women who dreaded the brutalities of the Normans.¹ How they had wandered up through Devon, found fishers' boats at Watchet in Somersetshire, and gone off to the little desert island of the Flat Holm, in hopes of there meeting with the Irish fleet which her sons Edmund and Godwin were bringing against the West of England. How the fleet had never come, and they had starved for many days, and how she had bribed a passing merchantman to take her and her wretched train to the land of Haldwin the Debonair, who might have pity on her for the sake of his daughter Judith, and Tosti her husband, who died in his sins.

And at his name her tears began to flow afresh fallen in his overweening pride—like Sweyn, like Harold, like herself—

'The time was, when I would not weep. If I could, I would not. For a year, lady, after Senlac, I sat like a stone. I hardened my heart like a wall of brass against God and man. Then, there upon the Flat Holm, feeding on shell fish, listening to the wail of the sea fowl, looking outside across the wan water for the sails which never came, my heart broke down a moment. And I heard a voice crying, "There is no help in man, go thou to God." And I answered—That were a beggar's trick, to go to God in need when I went not to Him in plenty. No. Without God I planned, and without Him I must fail. Without Him I went into the battle, and without Him I must hide the brunt. And at best—Can he give me back my sons? And I hardened my heart again like a stone, and shed no tear till I saw your fair face this day.'

¹ To do William justice, he would not allow his men to enter the city while they were bloodhot, and so prevented, as far as he could, the excesses which Gyda had feared.

'And now,' she said, turning sharply on Hereward, 'what do you do here? Do you not know that your nephews' lands are parted between grooms from Angers and scullions from Normandy?'

'So much the worse for both them and the grooms.'

'Sir?'

'You forget, lady, that I am an outlaw.'

'But do you not know that your mother's lands are seized likewise?'

'She will take refuge with her grandsons, who are, as I hear, again on good terms with their new master, showing thereby a most laudable and Christian spirit of forgiveness.'

'On good terms? Do you not know, then, that they are fighting again, outlaws, and desperate at the Frenchman's treachery? Do you not know that they have been driven out of York, after defending the city street by street, house by house? Do you not know that there is not an old man nor a child in arms left in York, and that your nephews, and the few fighting men who were left, went down the Humber in boats, and north to Scotland, to Gospatric and Waltheof? Do you not know that your mother is left alone—at Bourne, or God knows where—to endure at the hands of Norman ruffians what thousands more endure?'

Hereward made no answer, but played with his dagger.

'And do you know that England is ready to burst into a blaze if there be one man wise enough to put the live coal into the right place? That Sweyn Ulfson my nephew, or Asbiorn his brother, will surely land there within the year with a mighty host? And that if there be one man in England of wit enough, and knowledge enough of war, to lead the armies of England, the Frenchman may be driven into the sea—is there any here who understands English?'

None but ourselves.'

'And Canute's nephew sit on Canute's throne?'

Hereward still played with his dagger.

'Not the sons of Harold, then?' asked he after a while.

'Never! I promise you that—I, Countess Gyda, then grandmother.'

'Why promise me, of all men, O great lady?'

'Because—I will tell you after. But this I say, my curse on the grandson of mine who shall try to seize that fatal crown, which cost the life of my fairest, my noblest, my wisest, my bravest!'

Hereward bowed his head, as if consenting to the praise of Harold. But he knew who spoke, and he was thinking within himself 'Her curse may be on him who shall seize, and yet not on him to whom it is given.'

'All that they, young and unskilful lads, have a right to ask is, their father's earldoms and their father's lands. Edwin and Morcar would keep their earldoms as of right. It is a pity that there is no lady of the house of Godwin, whom we could honour by offering her to one of your nephews, in return for their nobleness in

giving Aldytha to my Harold. But this foolish girl here refuses to wed—'

'And is past forty,' thought Hereward to himself.

'However, some plan to join the families more closely together might be thought on. One of the young earls might marry Judith here. Waltheof would have Northumbria, in right of his father, and ought to be well content—for although she is somewhat older than he, she is peerlessly beautiful—to marry your niece Aldytha.'

'And Gospatric?'

'Gospatric,' she said, with a half-smile, 'will be as sure, as he is able, to get something worth having for himself out of any medley. Let him have Scotch Northumbria, if he claim it. He is more English than Dane: he will keep those northern English more true to us.'

'But what of Sweyn's gallant holders and housecarles, who are to help to do this mighty deed?'

'Senlac left gaps enough among the noblemen of the South, which they can fill up, in the place of the French scum who now riot over Wessex. And if that should suffice, what higher honour for me, or for my daughter the Queen, than to devote our lands to the heroes who have won them back for us?'

Hereward hoped inwardly that Gyda would be as good as her word, for her greedy grasp had gathered to itself, before the battle of Hastings, no less than six-and-thirty thousand acres of good English soil.

'I have always heard,' said he, bowing, 'that if the Lady Gyda had been born a man, England would have had another all-seeing and all-daring statesman, and Earl Godwin a rival, instead of a helpmate. Now I believe what I have heard.'

But Torfrida looked sadly at the Countess. There was something pitiable in the sight of a woman ruined, bereaved, seemingly hopeless, partitioning out the very land from which she was a fugitive, unable to restrain the passion for intrigue which had been the toil and the bane of her sad and splendid life.

'And now,' she went on, 'surely some kind saint brought me, even on my first landing, to you of all living men.'

'Doubtless the blessed St. Bertin, beneath whose shadow we repose here in peace,' said Hereward somewhat dryly.

'I will go barefoot to his altar to-morrow, and offer my last jewel,' said Gunhilda.

'You,' said Gyda, without noticing her daughter, 'are above all men the man who is needed.' And she began praising Hereward's *valetur*, his fame, his eloquence, his skill as a general and engineer, and when he suggested, smiling, that he was an exile and an outlaw, she insisted that he was all the fitter from that very fact. He had no enemies among the nobles. He had been mixed up in none of the civil wars and blood feuds of the last fifteen years. He was known only as that which he was, the ablest English captain of his day—the only man who could cope with William, the only man whom all parties in England would alike obey.

And so with flattery as well as with truth, she persuaded, if not Hereward, at least Torfrida, that he was the man destined to free England once more, and that an earldom—or anything which he chose to ask—would be the sure reward of his assistance.

'Torfrida,' said Hereward that night, 'kiss me well, for you will not kiss me again for a while.'

'What?'

'I am going to England to-morrow.'

'Alone?'

'Alone. I and Martin to spy out the land, and a dozen or so of housecarles to take care of the ship in harbour.'

'But you have promised to fight the Viscount of Pinkney.'

'I will be back again in time for him. Not a word—I must go to England, or go mad.'

'But Countess Gyda? Who will squire her to Bruges?'

'You and the rest of my men. You must tell her all. She has a woman's heart, and will understand. And tell Baldwin I shall be back within the month, if I am alive on land or water.'

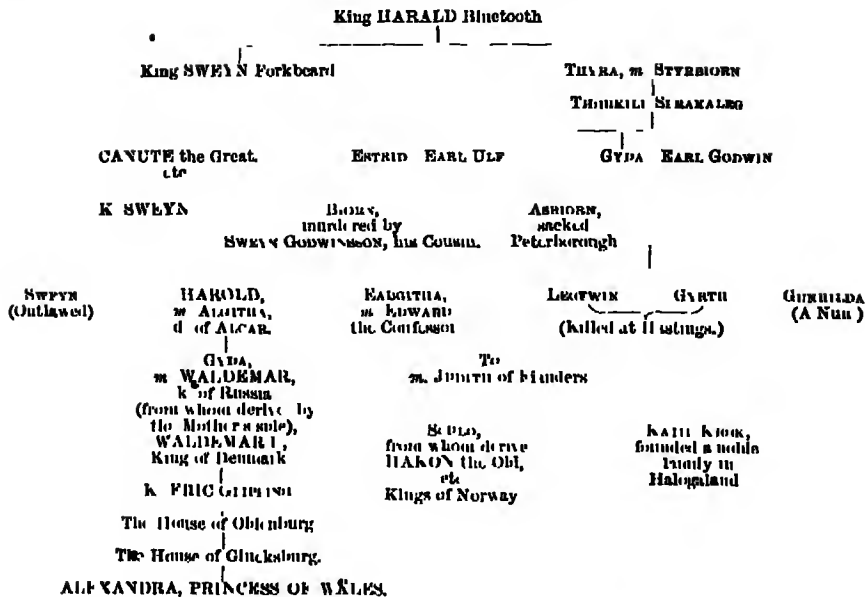
'Hereward, Hereward, the French will kill you!'

'Not while I have your armour on. Peace, little fool! Are you actually afraid for Hereward at last?'

'Oh, heaven's! when am I not afraid for you?' and she cried herself to sleep upon his bosom. But she knew that it was the right, and knightly, and Christian thing to do.

Two days after, a longship ran out of the Aa, and sailed away north.

NOTE.—I give so much of the pedigree of the Countess Gyda as may serve to explain her connection with the Royal House of Denmark.



Langsak (in his *Scythianum Breve Danicum*) tries ingeniously enough to rationalise the mythic pedigree of Earl Siward Dugre, by making the Fairy Bear identical with Steyrnorn, Spratling his son with Thorkil Sprakelag, and Bjorn Bearsson, father of Siward, a brother of Earl Ulf and Countess Gylfa. But if so, Ulf and Gylfa would have been notoriously of the House of the Bear, and famous, like Edward for their pointed ears. Besides, Siward would thus have been the nephew of Countess Gylfa and Earl Godwin, a fact which is mentioned by no chronicler, and which is inadmissible on account of Siward's age. His pedigree is altogether mythical, and best left in the fairyland whence it sprang.

CHAPTER XIX

NOW HERWARD CLARIFIED MIND OF FRANKLIN-
MEN

It may have been well a week after that Hereward came from the direction of Boston, with Martin running at his heels.

As Hereward rode along the summer wold the summer sun sank low, till just before it went down he came to an island of small enclosed fields, high hanks, elm trees, and a farm inside, one of those most ancient holdings of the Southern and Eastern Counties, still to be distinguished, by their huge hanks and dykes full of hedgerow timber, from the more modern corn lands outside, which were in Hereward's time mostly common pasture-land or rough fen.

This should he Azerdun, said he, 'and there inside, as I live, stands Awer getting in his crops. But who has he with him?'

With the old man were some half-dozen men of his own rank, some helping the serfs with might and main, one or two standing on the

top of the hanks, as if on the look-out, but all armed cap-a-pie.

'His friends are helping him to get them in,' quoth Martin, 'for fear of the rascally Frenchmen. A pleasant and peaceable country we have come back to.'

'And a very strong fortress are they holding,' said Hereward, 'against either French horsemen or French arrows. How to dislodge those six fellows without six times their number, I do not see. It is well to recollect that.'

And so he did, and turned to use again and again, in after years, the strategic capabilities of an old-fashioned English farm.

Hereward spurred his horse up to the nearest gate, and was instantly confronted by a little hair-haired man, as broad as he was tall, who heaved up a long twybill, or double axe, and bade him, across the gate, go to a certain place.

'Little Winter, little Winter, my chuck, my darling, my mad fellow, my brother-in-arms, my brother in robbery and murder, are you grown so honest in your old age that you will not know little Hereward the wolf's head?'

'Hereward!' shrieked the doughty little man. 'I took you for an accursed Norman in those onthuntish clothes,' and lifting up no little voice, he shouted—

'Hereward is back, and Martin Lightfoot at his heels!'

The gate was thrown open, and Hereward all but pulled off his horse. He was clapped on the back, turned round and round, admired from head to foot, shouted at by old companions of his boyhood, naughty young, hot-blooded of his old troop, now settled down into honest thriving yeomen, hard working and hard fight-

ing, who had heard again and again, with pride, his doughty doings over sea. There was Winter, and Gwenoch, and Gery, Hereward's cousin—ancestor, it may be, of the ancient and honourable house of that name, and of those parts, and Dnti and Onti, the two valiant twins, and Ulfard the White, and others, some of whose names and those of their sons, still stand in *Domesday-book*.

'And what,' asked Hereward, after the first congratulations were over, 'of my mother? What of the folk at Bourne?'

All looked each at the other, and were silent.

'You are too late, young lord,' said Aze.

'Too late!'

'The Frenchman has given it to a man of Gilbert of Ghent's—his butler, groom, cook, for aught I know.'

'To Gilbert's man? And my mother?'

'God help your mother, and your young brother too! She fled to Bourne a while ago out of Shropshire. All her lands in those parts are given away to Frenchmen. Even Coventry minster was not safe for her, so hither she came; but even here the French villains have found her out. Three days ago some five-and-twenty French marched into the place.'

'And you did not stop them?'

'Young sir, who are we to stop an army? We have enough to keep our own. Gilbert, let alone the villain Ivo at Spalding, can send a hundred men down on us in four-and-twenty hours.'

'Then I,' said Hereward in a voice of thunder, 'will hnd the way to send two hundred down on him,' and turning his horse from the gate, he rode away furiously towards Bourne.

He turned back as suddenly, and galloped into the field.

'Lads! old comrades! will you stand by me if I need you? Will you follow Tho Wake, as hundreds have followed him already, if he will only go before?'

'We will, we will.'

'I shall be back ere morning. What you have to do, I will tell you then.'

'Stop and eat—but for a quarter of an hour.'

Then Hereward swore a great oath, by oak and ash and thorn, that he would neither eat bread nor drink water while there was a Norman left in Bourne.

'A little ale, then, if no water,' said Aze.

Hereward laughed, and rode away.

'You will not go single-handed against all those ruffians?' shouted the old man after him. 'Saddle, lads, and go with him, some of you, for very shame's sake.'

But when they galloped after Hereward, he sent them back. He did not know yet, he said, what he would do. Better that they should gather their forces, and see what men they could afford him, in case of open battle. And he rode swiftly on.

When he came within the lands of Bourne it was dark.

'So much the better,' thought Hereward. 'I

have no wish to see the old place till I have somewhat cleaned it out.'

He rode slowly into the long street between the overhanging gables, past the crossways, and along the Water-gang and the high earth-banks of his ancient home. Above them he could see the great hall, its narrow windows all ablaze with light. With a bitter growl he turned back, trying to recollect a house where he could safely lodge. Martin pointed one out.

'Old Viking Surturbrand, the housecarle, did live there and maybe lives there still.'

'We will try,' and Martin knocked at the door.

The wicket was opened, but not the door, and through the wicket window a surly vinn asked who was there.

'Who lives here?'

'Pery, son of Surturbrand. Who art thou who askest?'

'An honest gentleman and his servant, looking for a night's lodging.'

'This is no place for honest folk.'

'As for that, we don't wish to be more honest than you would have us, but lodging we will pay for, freely and well.'

'We want none of thy money,' and the wicket was shut.

Martin pulled out his axe, and drove the panel in.

'What art doing? We shall rouse the town,' said Hereward.

'Let be, these are no French, but honest English, who like one all the better for a little horse-play.'

'What didst do that for?' asked the surly voice again. 'Were it not for those rascal Frenchmen up above, I would come out and spilt thy skull for thee.'

'If there be Frenchmen up above said Martin, in a voice of feigned terror, 'take us in for the love of the Virgin and all saints, or murdered we shall be ere morning light.'

'Thou hast no call to stay in the town, man, unless thou like.'

Hereward rode close to the wicket, and said in a low voice, 'I am a nobleman of Flanders, good sir, and a sworn foe to all French. My horse is weary, and cannot make a step forward, and if thou be a Christian man, thou wilt take me in and let me go off safe ere morning light.'

'From Flanders?' And the man turned and seemed to consult those within. At length the door was slowly opened, and Pery appeared, his double axe over his shoulder.

'If thou be from Flanders come in in God's name, but be quick, ere those Frenchmen get wind of thee.'

Hereward went in. Five or six men were standing round the long table, upon which they had just laid down their double axes and javelins. More than one countenance Hereward recognised at once. Over the peat fire sat a very old man, his hands upon his knees, as he warmed his bare feet at the embers. He started up at the noise,

and Hereward saw at once that it was old Surturbrand, and that he was blind.

'Who is it? Is Hereward come?' asked he, with the dull dreamy voice of age.

'Not Hereward, father,' said some one, 'but a knight from Flanders.'

The old man dropped his head upon his breast again with a querulous whine, while Hereward's heart beat high at hearing his own name. At all events he was among friends, and approaching the table he unbuckled his sword and laid it down among the other weapons. 'At least,' said he, 'I shall have no need of thee as long as I am here among honest men.'

'What shall I do with my master's horse?' asked Martin. 'He can't stand in the street to be stolen by drunken French horseboys.'

'Bring him in at the front door, and out at the back,' said Pery. 'Fine tunes these when a man dare not open his own yard gate.'

'You seem to be all besieged here,' said Hereward. 'How is this?'

'Besieged we are,' said the man, and then, partly to turn the subject off, 'Will it please you to eat, noble sir?'

Hereward declined, he had a vow, he said, not to eat or drink but once a day, till he had fulfilled a quest whereon he was bound. His hosts eyed him, not without some lingering suspicion, but still with admiration and respect. His splendid armour and weapons, as well as the golden locks which fell far below his shoulders and conveniently hid a face which he did not wish yet to have recognised, showed him to be a man of the highest rank, while the palm of his small hand, as hard and bony as any woodman's, proclaimed him to be no novice of a fighting man. The strong Flemish accent which both he and Martin Lightfoot had assumed prevented the honest Englishmen from piercing his disguise. They watched him, while he in turn watched them, struck by their uneasy looks and eulenic silence.

'We are a dull company,' said he after a while, courteously enough. 'We used to be told in Flanders that there were none such stout drinkers and none such jolly singers as you gallant men of the Danelagh here.'

'Dull times make dull company,' said one, 'and no offence to you, sir knight.'

'Are you such a stranger,' asked Pery, 'that you do not know what has happened in this town during the last three days?'

'No good, I will warrant, if you have Frenchmen in it.'

'Why was not Hereward here?' wailed the old man in the corner. 'It never would have happened if he had been in the town.'

'What?' asked Hereward, trying to command himself.

'What has happened,' said Pery, 'makes a free Englishman's blood boil to tell of. Here, sir knight, three days ago, comes in this Frenchman with some twenty ruffians of his own, and more of one Taillebois, too, to see him safe; says that this new king, this base-

born Frenchman, has given away all Earl Morcar's lands, and that Bourne is his, kills a man or two, upsets the women; gets drunk, ruffles and roysters, breaks into my lady's bower, calling her to give up her keys, and when she gives them, will have all her jewels too. She faces the rogues like a brave princess, and two of the hounds lay hold of her, and say that she shall ride through Bourne as she rode through Coventry. The boy Godwin—he that was the great earl's godson, our last hope, the last of our house—draws sword on them, and he, a boy of sixteen summers, kills them both out of hand. The rest set on him, cut his head off, and there it sticks on the gable spike of the hall to this hour. And do you ask, after that, why free Englishmen are dull company?'

'And our turn will come next,' growled some one. 'The turn will go all round, no man's life or land, wife or daughters, will be safe soon for these accursed Frenchmen, unless, as the old man says, Hereward comes back.'

Once again the old man wailed out of the chimney-corner. 'Why did they ever send Hereward away? I warned the good earl, I warned my good lady, many a time, to let him sow his wild oats and be done with them, or they might need him some day when they could not find him. He was a lad! He was a lad!' and again he winned, and sank into silence.

Hereward heard all this dry-eyed, hardening his heart into a great resolve.

'This is a dark story,' said he calmly, 'and it would behove me as a gentleman to succour this distressed lady, did I but know how. Tell me what I can do now, and I will do it.'

'Your health!' cried one. 'You speak like a true knight.'

'And he looks the man to keep his word, I'll warrant him,' spoke another.

'He does,' said Pery, shaking his head. 'Nevertheless, if anything could have been done, sir, be sure we would have done it. But all our armed men are scattered up and down the country, each taking care, as is natural, of his own cattle and his own women. There are not ten men-at-arms in Bourne this night, and what is worse, sir, as you may guess, who seem to have known war as well as I, there is no man to lead them.'

Here Hereward was on the point of saying, 'And what if I led you?'—on the point, too, of discovering himself, but he stopped short.

Was it fair to involve this little knot of gallant fellows in what might be a hopeless struggle, and to have all Bourne burned over their heads ere morning by the ruffian Frenchmen? No, his mother's quarrel was his own private quarrel. He would go alone and see the strength of the enemy; and after that, may be, he would raise the country on them or—and half a dozen plans suggested themselves to his crafty brain as he sat brooding and scheming, then, as always, utterly self-confident.

He was startled by a burst of noise outside—music, laughter, and shouts.

'There,' said Pery bitterly, 'are those Frenchmen, dancing and singing in the hall, with my Lord Godwin's head above them!' And curses bitter and deep went round the room. They sat sullen and silent it may be for an hour or more only moving when, at some fresh outbreak of revelry, the old man started from his doze and asked if that was Hereward coming.

'And who is this Hereward of whom you speak?' said Hereward at last.

'We thought you might know him, sir knight, if you come from Flanders, as you say you do,' said three or four voices in a surprised and sunny tone.

'Certainly I know such a man, if he be Hereward the wolf's head, Hereward the outlaw, Hereward the Wake, as they call him. And a good soldier he is, though he be not yet made a knight, and married, too, to a rich and fair lady. I served under this Hereward a few months ago in the Zealand war, and know no man whom I would sooner follow.'

'Nor I either,' chimed in Martin Iaghtfoot from the other end of the table.

'Nor we,' cried all the men-at-arms at once, each vying with the other in extravagant stories of their hero's prowess, and in asking the knight of Flanders whether they were true or not.

To avoid offending them, Hereward was forced to confess to a great many deeds which he had never done but he was right glad to find that his fame had reached his native place, and that he could count on the men if he needed them.

'But who is this Hereward,' said he, 'that he should have to do with your town here?'

Half a dozen voices at once told him his own story.

'I always heard,' said he drily, 'that that gentleman was of some very noble kin, and I will surely tell him all that has befallen here as soon as I return to Flanders.'

At last they grew sleepy. The men went out and brought in bundles of sweet sedge, spread them against the wall, and prepared to lie down, each with his weapon by his side. But when they were lain down, Hereward beckoned to him Pery and Martin Iaghtfoot, and went out into the back yard, under the pretence of seeing to his horse.

'Pery Surturbrandsson,' said he, 'thou seemest to be an honest man, as we in foreign parts hold all the Danelagh folk to be. Now it is fixed in my mind to go up, and my servant with me, to yon hall, and see what those French upstarts are about. Wilt thou trust me to go, without my fleeing back here if I am found out, or in any way bringing thee to harm by mixing thee up in my private matters? And wilt thou, if I do not come back, keep for thine own the horse which is in thy stable, and give moreover this purse and this ring to thy lady, if thou canst find means to see her face to face, and say thus to her—that he that sent that purse and ring may be found, if he be alive, at St. Omer, or with Baldwin, Marquis of Flanders, and that if he be dead (as he is like enough to be, his

trade being nought but war) she will still find at St. Omer a home and wealth and friends, till these evil times be overpast?'

As Hereward had spoken with some slight emotion, he had dropped unawares his assumed Flemish accent, and had spoken in broad burly Lincolnshire, and therefore it was that Pery, who had been staring at him by the moonlight all the while, said, when he was done, tremblingly—

'Either you are Hereward, or you are his double-ganger. You speak like Hereward, you look like Hereward. Just what Hereward would be now, you are. You are my lord, whom men call Wake, and you cannot deny it.'

'Pery, if thou knowest me, speak of me to no living soul, save to thy lady my mother, and let me and my serving-man go free out of thy yard gate. If I ask thee before morning to open it again to me, thou wilt know that there is not a Frenchman left in the Hall of Bourne.'

Pery threw his arms round him, and embraced him silently.

'Get me only,' said Hereward, 'some long woman's gown and black mantle; if thou canst, to cover this bright armour of mine.'

Pery went off in silence as one stunned, brought the mantle, and let them out of the yard gate. In ten minutes more, the two had waded the Water-gang, scrambled the dyke and its palisade, and stood under the gable of the great hall. Not a soul was stirring outside. The serfs were all cowering in their huts like so many rabbits in their burrows, listening in fear to the revelry of their new tyrants. The night was dark but not so dark that Hereward could not see between him and the sky his brother's long locks floating in the breeze.

'That I must have down, at least,' said he, in a low voice.

'Then here is wherewithal,' said Martin Iaghtfoot, as he stumbled over something. 'The drunken villains have left the ladder in the yard.'

Hereward raised the ladder, took down the head, and wrapped it in the cloak, and ere he did so, he kissed the cold forehead. How he had hated that boy! Well, at least he had never wilfully harmed him—or the boy him either, for that matter. And now he had died like a man, killing his foe. He was of the true old blood after all. And Hereward felt that he would have given all that he had, save his wife or his sword-hand, to have that boy alive again, to pet him, and train him, and teach him to fight at his side.

Then he slipped round to one of the narrow unshuttered windows and looked in. The hall was in a wasteful blaze of light, a whole month's candles burning in one night. The table was covered with all his father's choicest plate, the wine was running waste upon the floor; the men were lolling at the table in every stage of drunkenness, the loose women, camp-followers, and suchlike, were almost as drunk as their

masters and at the table-head, most drunk of all, sat, in Earl Leofric's seat, the new Lord of Bourne.

Hereward could scarce believe his eyes. He was none other than Gilbert of Ghout's stout Flemish cook, whom he had seen many a time in Scotland. Hereward turned from the window in disgust but looked again as he heard words which roused his wrath still more.

For in the open space nearest the door stood a gleeman, a dancing, harping, foul-mouthed fellow, who was showing off ape's tricks, jesting against the English short coats—a continual source of merriment among the long-robed French—and shuffling about in mockeries of English dancing. At some particularly coarse jest of his the new Lord of Bourne burst into a roar of admiration.

'Ask what thou wilt, fellow, and thou shalt have it. Thou wilt find me a better master to thee than ever was Morcar, the English barbarian.'

The scoundrel, say the old chronicles, made a request concerning Hereward's family which cannot be printed here.

Hereward ground his teeth. 'If thou livest till morning light,' said he, 'I will not.'

The last brutality awoke some better feeling in one of the girls—a large coarse Fleming, who sat by the new lord's side. 'Fino words,' said she, scornfully enough 'for the sweepings of Norman and Flemish kennels. You forget that you left one of this very Leofric's sons behind in Flanders, who would beason you all out if he was here before the morning's dawn.'

'Hereward!' cried the cook, striking her down with a drunken blow, 'the scoundrel who stole the money which the Frisians sent to Count Baldwin, and gave it to his own troops? We are safe enough from him at all events, he dare not show his face on this side the Alps for fear of the gallows.'

Hereward had heard enough. He slipped down from the window to Martin, and led him round the house.

'Now then, down with thy ladder quick, and dash in the door. I go in stay thou outside. If any man passes me, see that he pass not thee.'

Martin chuckled a ghostly laugh as he helped the ladder down. In another moment the door was burst in, and Hereward stood upon the threshold. He gave one war-shout of—*A Wake! A Wake!* and then rushed forward. As he passed the gleeman, he gave him one stroke across the loins, the wretch fell shrieking.

And then began a murder grim and great. They fought with ale cups, with knives, with benches but, drunken and unarmed, they were hewn down like sheep. Fifteen Normans, says the chronicle (who gives minute details of the whole scene), were in the hall when Hereward burst in. When the sun rose there were fifteen heads upon the gable. Escape had been impossible. Martin had laid the ladder across the door; and the few who escaped the master's

terrible sword stumbled over it, to be brained by the man's not less terrible axe.

Then Hereward took up his brother's head, and went in to his mother.

The women in the bower opened to him. They had seen all that passed from the gallery above, which, as usual, hidden by a curtain, enabled the women to watch unseen what passed in the hall below.

The Lady Godiva sat crouched together, all but alone—for her bower-maidens had fled or been carried off long since—upon a low stool beside a long dark thing covered with a pall. So utterly crushed was she that she did not even lift her up head as Hereward entered.

He placed his ghastly burden reverently beneath the pall, and then went and knelt before his mother.

For a while neither spoke a word. Then the Lady Godiva suddenly drew back her hood, and dropping on her knees, threw her arms round Hereward's neck, and wept till she could weep no more.

'Blessed strong arms,' sobbed she at last, 'around me! To feel something left in the world to protect me, something left in the world which loves me.'

'You forgive me, mother?'

'You forgive me? It was I, I who was in fault—I, who should have cherished you, my strongest, my bravest, any noblest—now my all.'

'No, it was all my fault, and on my head is all this misery. If I had been here, as I ought to have been, all this might have never happened.'

'You would only have been murdered too. No thank God you were away, or God would have taken you with the rest. His arm is bared against me, and His face turned away from me. All in vain, in vain! Vain to have washed my hands in innocence, and worshipped Him night and day. Vain to have builded minsters to His honour, and heaped the shrines of His saints with gold. Vain to have fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, and washed the feet of His poor, that I might atone for my own sins and the sins of my house. This is His answer. He has taken me up, and dashed me down and nought is left, but, like Job, to abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes—of, I know not what—I know not what—I know not what—unless it be that poor Algar held some Church lands, I forget where they are, now, though I warned him often of them. My brains are broken, good saints. I forget—would that I could forget more—and poor Morcar held them till this ruin. Is it that, Hereward? The father takes God's lands; the son will not restore them—a dark crime—who shall atone for that?—though it is but a few acres—a few acres—after all—'

And so she sobbed on, like any child.

'We will make them up, mother, we will make them up twice over. But never say that God has deserted you. See, He has sent you

me !' said Hereward, wondering to find himself, of all men on earth, preaching consolation.

'Yes, I have you ! Hold me Love me Let me feel that one thing loves me upon earth I want love, I must have it and if God and His mother, and all the saints refuse their love, I must turn to the creature, and ask it to love me, but for a day.'

'For ever, mother.'

'You will not leave me ?'

'If I do, I come back, to finish what I have begun.'

'More blood ? O God ! Hereward, not that ! Let us return good for evil Let us take up our crosses Let us bear our sin Let us humble ourselves under God's hand, and flee into some convent, and there die praying for our country and our kin.'

'Men must watch while women pray I will take you to a nunnery—to Peterborough.'

'No, not to Peterborough !—'

'But my uncle Brand is abbot there, they tell me, now this four years and that rogue Herlum prior in his place.'

'Brand is dying dying of a broken heart, like me The Frenchman has given his abbey to one Thorold, the tyrant of Malmsbury a Frenchman like himself No, take me where I shall never see a French face Take me to Crowland—and him with me—where I shall see nought but English faces, and hear English chants, and die a free Englishwoman under St. Guthlac's wings.'

'Ah !' said Hereward bitterly, 'St. Guthlac is a right Englishman, and will have some sort of fellow-feeling for us, while St. Peter, of course, is somewhat too fond of Rome and those Italian monks. Well—blood is thicker than water, so I hardly blame the blessed Apostle.'

'Do not talk so, Hereward.'

'Much the saints have done for us, mother, that we are to be so very respectful to their high mightinesses I fear that, if this French nun goes on with his plan of thrusting his monks into our abbey, I shall have to do more even for St. Guthlac than ever he did for me. Do not say more, mother This night has in Hereward a new man Now prepare' and she knew what he meant 'and gather all your treasures, and we will start for Crowland to-morrow afternoon.'

CHAPTER XX

HOW HERWARD WAS MADE A KNIGHT AFTER THE FASHION OF THE ENGLISH

A WILD night was that in Bourne All the folk, free and unfree, man and woman, were out on the streets, asking the meaning of those terrible shrieks, followed by a more terrible silence.

At last Hereward strode down from the hall, his drawn sword in his hand.

'Silence, good folks, and hearken to me,

once and for all. There is not a Frenchman left alive in Bourne. If you be the men I take you for there shall not be one left alive between Warh and Humbe! Silence again !' as a fierce cry of rage and joy arose, and men rushed forward to take him by the hand, women to embrace him 'This is no time for compliments, good folks, but for quick wit and quick blows For the law we fight, if we do fight, and by the law we must work, fight or not Where is the lawman of the town ?'

'I was lawman last night, to see such law done as there is left,' said Pery 'But you are lawman now Do as you will. We will obey you.'

'You shall be our lawman,' shouted many voices.

'I ? Who am I ? Ory-of-law, and a wolf's head.'

'We will put you back into your law, we will give you your lands in full husting.'

'Never mind a husting on my behalf Let us have a husting, if we have one, for a better end and a bigger than that Now, men of Bourne, I have put the coal in the bush Dare you blow the fire till the forest is aflame from south to north ? I have fought a dozen of Frenchmen Dare you fight Taillebois and Gilbert of Ghent, with William Duke of Normandy at their back ? Or will you take me, here as I stand, and give me up to them as an outlaw and a robber, to feed the crows outside the gates of Lincoln ? Do it, if you will It will be the wisest plan, my friends Give me up to be judged and hanged, and so purge yourselves of the villainous murder of Gilbert's cook your late lord and master.'

'Lord and master ?' 'We are free men !' shouted the holders, or yeomen gentlemen 'We hold our lands from God and the sun.'

'You are our lord,' shouted the sermen or tenants 'Who but you ? We will follow, if you will lead.'

'Hereward is come home !' cried a feeble voice behind 'Let me come to him Let me feel him.'

And through the crowd, supported by two ladies, tottered the mighty form of Snoturbrand the blind Viking.

'Hereward is come,' cried he, as he told his master's son in his arms 'Ahoi ! he is wet with blood ! Ahoi ! he smells of blood ! Ahoi ! the ravens will grow fat now, for Hereward is come home !'

Some would have led the old man away but he thrust them off fiercely.

'Ahoi ! come well ! Ahoi ! come kites ! Ahoi ! come come from off the fen !' You followed us, and we feel you well, when Swend Forkbeard brought us over the sea Follow us now, and we will feel you better still, with the mongrel Frenchers who scoff at the tongue of their forefathers, and would rob their nearest kinsman of land and lass. Ahoi ! Swend's men ! Ahoi ! Canute's men ! Vikings' sons, sea-cocks' sons, Berserkers' sons all ! Split up the war-arrow,

and send it round and the curse of Odin on every man that will not pass it on! A war-king to-morrow, and Hildar's game next day, that the old Surturbrand may fall like a free holder, axe in hand, and not die like a cow in the straw which the Frenchman has spared him!

All men were silent, as the old Viking's voice, cracked and feeble when he began, gathered strength from rage, till it rang through the still night air like a trumpet blast.

The silence was broken by a long wild cry from the forest, which made the women start, and catch their children closer to them. It was the howl of a wolf.

'Hark to the witch's horse! Hark to the son of Feura, how he calls for meat! Are ye your father's sons, ye men of Bourne! They never let the gray beast call in vain.'

Hereward saw his opportunity, and seized it. He well knew that there were those in the crowd, as there must needs be in all crowds, who wished themselves well out of the business, who shrank from the thought of facing the Norman barons, much more the Norman king, who were ready enough, had the tide of feeling begun to ebb, to blame Hereward for rashness, even though they might not have gone so far as to give him up to the Normans, who would have advised some sort of compromise, pacifying half-measure, or other weak plan for escaping present danger by future destruction. But three out of four there were good men and true. The savage chant of the old barbarian might have startled them somewhat, for they were tolerably orthodox Christian folk. But there was sense, as well as spirit, in his savagery, and they growled applause as he ceased. Hereward heard, and cried:

'The Viking is right! So speaks the spirit of our fathers, and we must show ourselves their true sons. Send round the war-arrow, and death to the man who does not pass it on! Better die bravely together than falter and part company, to be hunted down one by one by men who will never forgive us as long as we have an acre of land for them to seize. Pery, son of Surturbrand, you are the lawman. Put it to the vote!'

'Send round the war-arrow,' shouted Pery himself, and if there was a man or two who shrank from the proposal, they found it prudent to shout as loudly as did the rest.

Ere the morning light the war-arrow was split into four splinters, and carried out to the four airks, through all Kesteven. If the splinters were put into the house-father's hand he must send it on at once to the next freeman's house. If he were away, it was stuck into his house-door, or into his great chair by the fireside, and woe to him if, on his return, he sent it not on likewise. All through Kesteven went that night the arrow-splinters, and with them the whisper, 'The Wake is come again', till, before mid-day, there were fifty well-armed men in the old camping-field outside the town, and Hereward haranguing them in words of fire.

A chill came over them, nevertheless, when he told them that he must at once return to Flanders.

'But it must be,' he said. He had promised his good lord and sovereign, Baldwin of Flanders, and his word of honour he must keep. Two visits he must pay ere he went, and then to sea. 'But within the year, if he were alive on ground, he would return, and with him ships and men, it might be with Sweyn and all the power of Denmark. Only let them hold their own till the Dunes should come, and all would be well. So would they show that they were free Englishmen, able to hold England against Frenchmen and all strangers. And whenever he came back he would set a light to Tuft, Manthorpe, and Withan-on-the-hill. They were his own farms, or should have been, and better they should burn than Frenchmen hold them. They could be seen far and wide over the Bruneswold and over all the fen, and then all men might know for sure that the Wake was come again.'

'And nine-and-forty of them,' says the chronicler, 'he chose to guard Bourne' (securingly the lands which had been his nephew Morcar's) till he should come back and take them for himself. His own lands of Withan, Toft, and Manthorpe, Gely his cousin should hold till his return, and they should send what they could off them to Lady Godiva at Crowland.

Then they went down to the water and took burge, and laid the corpse therein, and Godiva and Hereward sat at the dead lad's head, and Winter steered the boat and Gwenoch took the stroke-oar.

And they rowed away for Crowland, by many a mere and many an ea, through narrow reaches of clear brown glassy water, between the dark-green alders, between the pale green reeds, where the coot clanked, and the bittern boomed, and the sedge-lark, not content with its own sweet song, mocked the notes of all the birds around, and then out into the broad lagoons, where hung motionless, high over head, hawk beyond hawk, buzzard beyond buzzard, kite beyond kite, as far as eye could see. Into the air, as they rowed on, whirled up great skeins of wild fowl innumerable, with a cry as of all the bells of Crowland, or all the hounds of the Bruneswold while clear above all then noise sounded the wild whistle of the curlew, and the trumpet note of the great white swan. Out of the reeds, like an arrow, shot the peregrine, singled one luckless mallard from the flock, caught him up, struck him stone dead with one blow of his terrible heel, and swept his prey with him into the reeds again.

'Death! death! death!' said Lady Godiva, as the feathers fluttered down into the boat and rested on the dead boy's pall. 'War among man and beast, war on earth, war in air, war in the water beneath,' as a great pike rolled at his bait, sending a shuddering white fish flying along the surface. 'And war, says holy

writ, in heaven above. O Thou who didst die to destroy death, when will it all be over ?'

And thus they glided on from stream to stream, until they came to the sacred isle of 'the inheritance of the Lord, the soil of St Mary and St. Bartholomew, the most holy sanctuary of St. Guthlac and his monks, the minster most free from worldly servitude, the special almahouse of the most illustrious kings, the sole place of refuge for any one in all tribulations; the perpetual abode of the saints, the possession of religious men, especially set apart by the Common Council of the kingdom, by reason of the frequent miracles of the most holy Confessor, an ever-fructful mother of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi, and by reason of the privileges granted by the kings, a city of grace and safety to all who repent.'

As they drew near, they passed every minute some fisher's log canoe, in which worked with net or line the criminal who had saved his life by fleeing to St. Guthlac, and becoming his man northwith, the slave who had fled from his master's cruelty, and here and there in those evil days, the master who had fled from the cruelty of Frenchmen, who would have done to him as he had done to others. But there all old grudges were put away. They had sought the peace of St. Guthlac, and therefore they must keep his peace, and get their living from the fish of the five rivers, within the bounds whereof was peace, as of their own quiet streams, for the abbot and St. Guthlac were the only lords thereof, and neither summoner nor sheriff of the king, nor armed force of knight or earl, could enter there.

At last they came to Crowland minster—a vast range of high-peaked buildings, founded on piles of oak and alder driven into the fen—itself built almost entirely of timber from the Bruneswold, barns, granaries, stables, workshops, strangers' hall, fit for the boundless hospitality of Crowland, infirmary, refectory, dormitory, library, abbot's lodgings, cloisters, with the great minster towering up, a steep pile, half wood, half stone, with narrow round-headed windows, and leaden roofs, and, above all, the great wooden tower, from which on high days chimed out the melody of the seven famous bells, which had not their like in English land. Guthlac, Bartholomew, and Bettelm were the names of the biggest, Turketul and Tatwin of the middle, and Pega and Pega of the smallest. So says Ingulf, who saw them a few years after pouring down on his own head in streams of melted metal. Outside the minster walls were the cottages of the corrodiers, or folk who, for a corrody, or life pittance from the abbey, had given away their lands,¹ beyond them again

¹ This fashion of corrody was one which brought much land to monks and grudging to heirs-at-law. As an instance—Geoffrey de Bracheourt and his wife, a few years after, gave (with consent of Alan de Morton, his nephew and heir, and Gilbert of Ghent, his feudal lord) his township of Bracheourt or Brathwaite to the Cistercian monks of Vauldey, now Grimsthorpe Park, on the following conditions. That his wife should have clothing of blue and lamb's skins, and he of grising or

the natural park of grass, dotted with mig oaks and ashes, and beyond all those, cornlands of inexhaustible fertility, broken up by the good abbot Egelric some hundred years before, from which, in times of dearth, the monks of Crowland fed the people of all the neighbouring fens.

They went into the great courtyard. All men were quiet, yet all men were busy, baking and brewing, carpentering and tailoring, in the workshops, reading and writing in the cloister, praying and singing in the church, and teaching the children in the schoolhouse. Only the ancient scempts—some near upon a hundred and fifty years old—wandered where they would, or basked against a sunny wall, like autumn flies, each with a young monk to guide him, and listen to his tattle of old days. For, said the laws of Turketul the good—'Nothing disagreeable about the affairs of the monastery shall be mentioned in their presence. No person shall presume in any way to offend them, but with the greatest peace and tranquillity they shall await their end.'

So while the world outside raged, and fought, and conquered, and plundered, they within the holy isle kept up some sort of order, and justice, and usefulness, and love to God and man. And about the yards, among the feet of the monks, hopped the sacred ravens, descendants of those who brought back the gloves at St. Guthlac's bidding, and overhead, under all the eaves, built the sacred swallows, the descendants of those who sat and sang upon St. Guthlac's shoulders, and when men marvelled thereof, he, the holy man replied, 'Know that they who live the holy life draw nearer to the birds of the air, even as they do to the angels in heaven.'

And Lady Godiva called for old Abbot Ulfketil, the good and brave, and fell upon his neck, and told him all her tale, and Ulfketil went upon her neck, for they were old and faithful friends.

And they passed into the dark cool church, where, in the crypt under the high altar, lay the thumb of St. Bartholomew, which old Abbot Turketul used to carry about, that he might cross himself with it in times of danger, tempest, and lightning, and some of the hair of St. Mary, queen of heaven, in a box of gold, and a bone of St. Leodegar of Aquitaine, and some few remains, too, of the holy bodies of St. Guthlac, and of St. Bettelm his servant, and St. Tatwin, who steered him to Crowland, and St. Egelric his confessor, and St. Cissa the halleright and lamb's skins, and that their food should be such as the monks had. Their two servants were to fare the same as those of the brotherhood. The opinion of Alan de Morton concerning such a bargain may be guessed, at least by those who are aware that it was made for the purpose of escaping certain years of purgatory, i.e. of burning alive in the next world.

When we talk of the piety of our ancestors in giving lands to the Church, we should always remember that this was what their piety too often signified. When we complain of the squires, in Edward the Sixth's time, for taking back the treasures and lands of the monasteries, we should remember that they had been got from those squires' forefathers on such grounds as these, and no other.

anchorite, and of the most holy virgin St. Etheldreda, and many more. But little of them remained since Sigtryg and Bagmac's heathen Danes had heaped them pell-mell on the floor, and burned the church over them and the bodies of the slaughtered monks.

The plunder which was taken from Crowland on that evil day lay, and lies still, with the plunder of Peterborough and many a minster more, at the bottom of the Ouse at Huntingdon Bridge. But it had been more than replaced by the piety of the Danish kings and nobles, and above the twelve white bearskins which lay at the twelve altars blazed, in the light of many a wax candle, gold and jewels inferior only to those of Peterborough and Coventry.

And there in the nave they buried the lad Godwin, with chant and dirge, and when the funeral was done, Hereward went up toward the high altar, and hadlo Winter and Gwenoeh come with him. And there he knelt, and vowed a vow to God and St. Guthlac and the Lady Torfrida, his true love, never to leave from slaying while there was a Frenchman left alive on English ground.

And Godiva and Ulfketyl heard his vow, and shuddered, but they dared not stop him, for they too had English hearts.

And Winter and Gwenoeh heard it, and repeated it word for word.

Then he kissed his mother, and called Winter and Gwenoeh, and went forth. If he would be luck again, he said, on the third day.

Then those three went to Peterborough, and asked for Abbot Brand. And the monks let them in, for the fame of their deed had passed through the forest, and all the French had fled.

And old Brand lay back in his great armchair, his legs all muffled up in furs, for he could get no heat; and by him stood Herlun the prior, and wondered when he would die, and Thorold take his place, and they should drive out the old Gregorian chants from the choir, and have the new Norman chants of Robert of Kécamp, and bring in French-Roman customs in all things, and rule the English hours with a rod of iron.

And old Brand knew all that was in his heart, and looked up like a patient ox beneath the butcher's axe, and said, 'I have patience with me, brother Herlun, and I will die as soon as I can, and go where there is neither French nor English, Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, but all are alike in the eyes of Him who made them.'

But when he saw Hereward come in, he cast the mufflers off him, and sprang up from his chair, and was young and strong in a moment, and for a moment.

And he threw his arms round Hereward, and wept upon his neck, as his mother had done. And Hereward wept upon his neck, though he had not wept upon his mother's.

Then Brand held him at arms' length, or thought he held him, for he was leaning on Hereward, and tottering all the while, and

extolled him as the champion, the warrior, the stay of his house, the avenger of his kin, the hero of whom he had always prophesied that his kin would need him, and that then he would not fail.

But Hereward answered him modestly and mildly.

'Speak not so to me and of me, uncle Brand. I am a very foolish, vain, sinful man, who have come through great adventures, I know not how, to great and strange happiness, and now again to great and strange sorrows, and to an adventure greater and stranger than all that has befallen me from my youth up until now. Therefore make me not proud, uncle Brand, but keep me modest and lowly, as befits all true knights and penitent sinners, for they tell me that God resists the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. And I have that to do which do I cannot, unless God and His saints give me grace from this day forth.'

Brand looked at him, astonished, and then turned to Herlun.

'Did I not tell thee, prior? This is the lad whom you called graceless and a savage, and see, since he has been in foreign lands, and seen the ways of knights he talks as eloquently as a Frenchman, and as piously as any monk.'

'The Lord Hereward,' said Herlun, 'has doubtless learned much from the manners of our nation which he would not have learned in England. I rejoice to see him returned so Christian and so courtly a knight.'

'The Lord Hereward, prior Herlun, has learnt one thing in his travels—to know somewhat of men, and the hearts of men, and to deal with them as they deserve of him. They tell me that one Thorold of Malmesbury—Thorold of Kécamp, the minstrel, he that made the song of Roland, that he desires this abbey.'

'I have so heard, my lord.'

'Then I command—I Hereward, Lord of Bourne—that this abbey be held against him and all Frenchmen, in the name of Sward Ulfsson, King of England, and of me. And he that admits a Frenchman therein, I will shave his crown for him so well that he shall never need razor more. Thus I tell thee, and this I shall tell thy monks before I go. And unless you obey the same, my dream will be fulfilled, and you will see Goldenborough in a light low, and yourselves burning in the midst thereof.'

'Sward Ulfsson? Sward of Denmark? What words are these?' cried Brand.

'You will know within six months, uncle.'

'I shall know better things, my boy, before six months are out.'

'Uncle, uncle, do not say that.'

'Why not? If this mortal life be at best a prison and a grave, what is it worth now to an Englishman?'

'More than ever, for never had an Englishman such a chance of showing English mettle, and winning renown for the English name. Uncle, you must do something for me and my comrades ere we go.'

'Well, boy?'

'Make us knights.'

'Knights, lad? I thought you had been a belted knight this dozen years!'

'I might have been made a knight by many, after the French fashion, many a year ago. I might have been knight when I slew the white bear. Ladies have prayed me to be knighted again and again since. Something kept me from it. Perhaps' (with a glance at Herluin) 'I wanted to show that an English squire could be the rival and the leader of French and Flemish knights.'

'And thou hast shown it, brave lad,' said Brand, clapping his great hands.

'Perhaps I longed to do some mighty deed at last, which would give me a right to go to the bravest knight in all Christendom, and say, Give me the accolade, then. Thou only art worthy to knight as good a man as thyself.'

'Pride and vainglory,' said Brand, shaking his head.

'But now I am of a sounder mind. I see now why I was kept from being knighted—till I had done a deed worthy of a true knight, till I had mightily avenged the wronged, and mightily succoured the oppressed, till I had purged my soul of my enmity against my own kin, and could go out into the world a new man, with my mother's blessing on my head.'

'But not of the robbery of St. Peter,' said Herluin. The French monk wanted not for moral courage, no French monk did in those days. And he proved it by those words.

'Do not anger the lad, prior, now, too, above all times, when his heart is softened towards the Lord.'

'He has not angered me. The man is right. Here, lord abbot and sir prior, is a chain of gold, won in the wars. It is worth fifty times the sixteen pence which I stole, and which I repaid double. Let St. Peter take it, for the sins of me and my two comrades, and forgive. And now, sir prior, I do to thee what I never did for mortal man. I kneel and ask thy forgiveness. Kneel, Winter! Kneel, Guenoch! And Hereward kneel.'

Herluin was of double mind. He longed to keep Hereward out of St. Peter's grace. He longed to see Hereward dead at his feet, not because of any personal hatred, but because he foresaw in him a terrible foe to the Norman cause. But he wished, too, to involve Abbot Brand as much as possible in Hereward's rebellions and misdeeds, and above all, in the master-offence of knighting him, for for that evil, he saw, Hereward was come. Moreover, he was touched with the sudden frankness and humility of the famous champion. So he answered mildly—

'Verily, thou hast a knightly soul. May God and St. Peter so forgive thee and thy companions as I forgive thee, freely and from my heart.'

'Now,' cried Hereward; 'a boon! A boon! Knight me and these my fellows, uncle Brand, this day.'

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Brand was old and weak, and looked at Herluin.

'I know,' said Hereward, 'that the French look on us English monk-made knights as squireous and scholterine, unworthy of the name of knight. But, I hold—and what churchman will gainsay me?—that it is nobler to receive sword and belt from a man of God than from a man of blood like one's self, for the fittest man to consecrate the soldier of an earthly king is the soldier of Christ the King of kings.'

'He speaks well,' said Herluin. 'Abbot, grant him his boon.'

'Who celebrates high mass to-morrow?'

'Wilton the priest, the monk of Ely,' said Herluin, aloud. 'And a very dangerous and stubborn Englishman,' added he to himself.

'Good! Then this night you shall watch in the church. To-morrow, after the Gospel, the thing shall be done as you will.'

That night two messengers, knights of the abbot, galloped from Peterborough. One rode to Ivo Taillebois at Spalding, to tell him that Hereward was at Peterborough, and that he must try to cut him off upon the Egelric's road, the causeway which one of the many abbots Egelric had made some thirty years before, through Deeping Fen to Spalding, at an enormous expense of labour and of timber. The other knight rode south, along the Roman road to London, to tell King William of the rising of Kesteven, and all the evil deeds of Hereward and of Brand.

And old Brand slept quietly in his bed, little thinking on what errands his prior had sent his knights.

Hereward and his comrades watched that night in St. Peter's church. Oppressed with weariness of body and awe of mind, they heard the monks drone out their chants through the misty gloom, they compassed the aisles—and they were many at their past wild lives. They had to summon up within themselves courage and strength henceforth to live, not for themselves, but for the fatherland which they hoped to save. They prayed to all the heavenly powers of that Pantheon which then stood between man and God, to help them in the coming struggle, but ere the morning dawned they were nodding, unused to any long strain of mind.

Suddenly Hereward started, and sprang up, with a cry of fire.

'What? Where?' cried his comrades, while the monks ran up.

'The minster is full of flame. No use, too late, you cannot put it out. It must burn.'

'You have been dreaming,' said one.

'I have not,' said Hereward. 'Is it Lammas night?'

'What a question! It is the vigil of the Nativity of St. Peter and St. Paul.'

'Thank heaven, I thought my old Lammas night's dream was coming true at last.'

Herluin heard, and knew what he meant.

¹ Almost word for word from the *Life of Hereward*.

After which Hereward was silent, filled with many thoughts.

The next morning, before the high mass, those three brave men walked up to the altar, laid thereon their belts and swords, and then knelt humbly at the foot of the steps till the Gospel was finished.

Then came down from the altar Wilton of Ely, and laid on each man's bare neck the hove blade, and bade him take back his sword in the name of God and of St. Peter and St. Paul, and use it like a true knight, for a terror and punishment to evil doers, and a defence for women and orphans, and the poor, and the oppressed, and the monks the servants of God.

And then the monks girded each man with his belt and sword once more. And after mass was sung, they rose, each feeling himself and surely not in vain—a better man.

At least this is certain, that Hereward would say to his dying day, how he had often prayed that none would fight so well as those who had received their sword from God's knights the monks. Therefore he would have in after years, almost all his companions knighted by the monks, and he brought into Ely with him that same good custom which he had learnt at Peterborough, and kept it up as long as he held the isle.

Then he said

'Have you monks a hammer here, who can paint for me?'

'That can I,' said Wilton of Ely.

'Then take my shield, and save from it this bear which I carry.'

Wilton brought pencil and paint, and did so.

'Now, paint me in a W, that shall stand for Wake, and make it—shake it out of the knots of a monk's grille, for a sign that I am a monk's knight, and not a king's, and that I am the champion of the monks of England against the monks of France, from this time forth for evermore.'

Wilton did it, and made out of two monks' grilles none other than the after famous Wake knot.

'Now do the same by Winter and Gwench's shields. Monks' knights are we, and monks' battles we will fight.'

'You must have a motto to match withal, my good lord,' said Wilton, throwing his English heart into the work.

'What better than my own name—Wake? These are times in which good Englishmen must not sleep and sleep I will not, first me, nor mine either.'

'Vigils, that will be in Latin.'

'Ay—let us have Latin, and show these Frenchmen that we are clerks and gentlemen, as well as they.'

'Vigils et Ora,' said the monk solemnly, 'Watch and pray, lest thou enter into temptation.'

'Watch—and pray. Thou speakest like a town of God,' said Hereward, half sadly. 'Thou hast said so be it. God knows, I have need of

that, too, if only I knew how. But I will watch, and my wife shall pray, and so will the work be well parted between us.'

And so was born the Wake motto and the Wake knot.

It was late when they got back to Crowland. The good abbot received them with a troubled face.

'As I feared, my lord, you have been too hot and hasty. The French have raised the country against you.'

'I have raised it against them, my lord.'

'But we have news that Sir Frederick --'

'And who may he be?'

'A very terrible cloth of these French, old and crafty, a brother of old Earl Warrene of Norfolk, whom God confound. And he has sworn to have your life, and has gathered knights and men at arms at Lynn in Norfolk.'

'Very good, I will visit him as I go home, lord abbot. Not a word of this to any soul.'

'I trouble for thee, thou young Devil.'

'One cannot live for ever, my lord. Farewell.'

A week after a boatman brought news to Crowland how Sir Frederick was sitting in his man at Lynn, when there came in one with a sword, and said, 'I am Hereward the Wake. I was told that thou didst desire greatly to see me, therefore I am come, being a courteous knight,' and therewith smote off his head. And when the knights and others would have stopped him, he cut his way through them, killing some three or four at each stroke, himself unhurt, for he was clothed from head to foot in magic armour, and whosoever smote it, their swords melted in their hands. And so gaining the door, he vanished in a great cloud of sea fowl, that cried for ever 'The Wake is come again.'

And after that the ten men said to each other, that all the birds upon the mere could nothing save 'The Wake is come again.'

And so, already surrounded with myth and mystery, Hereward flashed into the tens and out again, like the lightning brand, destroying as he passed. And the hearts of all the French were turned to water, and the land had peace from its tyrants for many days.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW TWO LANCEBORN MARCHED OUT OF SPALDING TOWN

A PROUD man was Ivo Taillebois, as he rode next morning out of Spalding town, with hawk on fist, hound at heel, and a dozen men-at-arms at his back, who would, on dine or undue cause shown, hunt men while he hunted game.

An adventurer from Anjou, brutal, ignorant, and profligate—low-born, too (for his own men whispered, behind his back, that he was no more than his name hinted, a wood cutter's

son), he still had his deserts. Valiant he was, cunning, and skilled in war. He and his troop of Angemuruthers had fought like tigers by William's side at Hastings, and he had been rewarded with many a manor which had been Earl Algar's, and should now have been Earl Edwin's, or Morcar's, or, if may be, Hereward's own.

'A fat land and fat,' said he to himself, 'and, after I have hanged a few more of these lawbreakers, a peaceable life enough to hand down to the lawful heirs of my body, if I had one. I must marry. Blessed Virgin! that it is to serve and honour your gracious glory, as I have always done according to my poor humility. Who would have thought that Ivo Taillebois would ever rise so high in life, as to be looking out for a wife—and that a lady, too!'

Then thought he over the peerless beauties of the Lady Lucia, Edwin and Morcar's sister, almost as fair as that hapless aunt of hers, Aldythia, King Harold's widow. Eddeva fana, Eddeva pulcra, stands her name in Domesday-book, known, even to her Norman conquerors, as the beauty of her time, as Godiva her mother had been before her. Scarcely less beautiful was Lucia, as Ivo had seen her at William's court, half-captives and half-guests, and he longed for her, love her he could not. 'I have her father's lands,' quoth he, 'what more reasonable than to have the daughter, too? And have her I will, unless the Minister, in his present morbid and political mood, makes a countess of her, and marries her up to some Norman coxcomb, with a long pedigree invented the year before last. If he does throw away his daughter on that Earl Edwin, in his fancy for petting and patting these savages into good humour, he is not likely to throw away Edwin's sister on a Taillebois. Well, I must put a spoke in Edwin's wheel. It will not be difficult to make him or Morcar, or both of them, traitors once more and for ever. We must have a rebellion in these parts. I will talk about it to Gilbert of Ghent. We must make these savages desperate, and William furious, or he will be soon giving them back their lands, besides asking them to court, and then how are valiant knights like us, who have won England for him, to be paid for their trouble? No, no. We must have a fresh rebellion, and a fresh confiscation, and then when English houses are going cheap, perhaps the Lady Lucia may fall to my share.'

And Ivo Taillebois kept his word, and without difficulty, for he had many to help him. To drive the English to desperation, and to get a pretext for seizing their lands, was the game which the Normans played, and but too well.

As he rode out of Spalding town, a man was being hanged on the gallows there permanently provided.

That was so common a sight, that Ivo would not have stopped, had not a priest, who was comforting the criminal, run forward and almost thrown himself under the horse's feet.

'Mercy, good my lord, in the name of God and all His saints.'

Ivo went to ride on.

'Mercy!' and he laid hands on Ivo's bridle. 'If he took a few pike out of your mere, remember that the mere was his, and his father's before him, and do not send a sorely tempted soul out of the world for a paltry fish.'

'And where am I to get fish for Lent, sir priest, if every tascal nets my waters, because his father did so before him?' 'Take your hand off my bridle, or, par le splendour Dex' (Ivo thought it fine to use King William's favourite oath), 'I will hew it off.'

The priest looked at him, with something of honest fierceness in his eyes, and dropping the bridle, muttered to himself in Latin: 'The bloodthirsty and deceitful man shall not live out half his days.' Nevertheless, my trust shall be in Thee, O Lord!

'What art muttering, beast? Go home to thy wife' (wife was by no means the word which Ivo used), 'and make the most of her, before I rout out thee and thy fellow canons, and put in good monks from Kornandy in the place of your drunken English swine. Hang him!' shouted he, as the bystanders fell on their knees before the tyrant, crouching in terror, every woman for her husband, every man for wife and daughter. 'And hearken, you fen-frogs all! Whoso touches pike or eel, swimming or wading fowl, within these miles of mine, without my leave, I will hang him as I hanged this man, as I hanged four brothers in a row on Wrokesham Bridge but last week.'

'Go to Wrokesham Bridge and see,' shouted a shrill cracked voice behind the crowd.

All looked round, and more than one of Ivo's men set up a yell, the hangman loudest of all.

'That's he, the heron again! Catch him! Stop him! Shoot him!'

But that was not so easy. As Ivo pushed his horse through the crowd, careless of whom he crushed, he saw a long lean figure flying through the air seven feet aloft, his heels higher than his head, on the further side of a deep broad ditch, and, on the nearer side of the same, one of his best men lying stark, with a cloven skull.

'Go to Wrokesham!' shrieked the lean man, as he rose, and showed a ridiculously long nose, neck, and legs (a type still not uncommon in the fens), a quilted leather coat, a double-bladed axe slung over his shoulder by a thong, a round shield at his back, and a pole three times as long as himself, which he dragged after him, like an unwieldy tail.

'The heron, the heron!' shouted the English. 'Follow him, men, heron or hawk!' shouted Ivo, galloping his horse up to the ditch, and stopping short at fifteen feet of water.

'Shoot, some one! Where are the bows gone?'

The heron was away two hundred yards, running, in spite of his pole, at a wonderful pace, before a bow could be brought to bear. He seemed to expect an arrow, for he stopped,

glanced his eye round, threw himself flat on his face, with his shield, not over his body, but over his bare legs, sprang up as the shaft stuck in the ground beside him, ran on, planted his pole in the next dyke, and flew over it.

In a few minutes he was beyond pursuit, and Ivo turned, breathless with rage, to ask who he was.

'Alas, sir, he is the man who set free the four men at Wrokesham Bridge last week.'

'Set free? Are they not hanged and dead?'

'We—we dare not tell you. But he came upon us—'

'Single-handed, you cowards?'

'Sir, he is not a man, but a witch or a devil. He asked us what we did there. One of our men laughed at his long neck and legs, and called him Heron. "Heron I am," says he, "and strike like a heron, right at the eye," and with that he cuts the man over the face with his axe, and laid him dead, and then another and another.'

'Till you all ran away, villains.'

'We gave back a step—no more. And he freed one of those four, and he again the rest, and then they all set on us, and went to hang us in their own stead.'

'When there were ten of you, I thought.'

'Sir, as we told you, he is no mortal man, but a fiend.'

'Beasts, fools! Well, I have hanged this one, at least!' growled Ivo, and then rode sullenly on.

'Who is this fellow?' cried he, to the trembling English.

'Wulfrio Raier, Wulfrio the Heron, of Wrokesham in Norfolk.'

'Aha! And I hold a mirror of him,' said Ivo to himself. 'Look you, villains, this fellow is in league with you.'

A burst of abject denial followed. 'Since the French—since Sir Frederick, as they call him, drove him out of his Wrokesham lands, he wanders the country, as you see, to-day here, but heaven only knows where he will be to-morrow.'

'And finds, of course, a friend everywhere. Now march!' and a string of threats and curses followed.

It was hard to see why Wulfrio should not have found friends, as he was simply a small holder, or squire, driven out of house and land, and turned adrift on the wide world, for the offence of having fought in Harold's army at the battle of Hastings. But to give him food or shelter was, in Norman eyes, an act of rebellion against the rightful King William, and Ivo rode on, boiling over with righteous indignation, along the narrow drove which led towards Deeping.

A pretty lass came along the drove, driving a few sheep before her, and spinning as she walked.

'Whose lass are you?' shouted Ivo.

'The abbot's of Crowland, please your lordship,' said she, trembling.

'Much too pretty to belong to monks. Chuck her up behind you, one of you.'

The shrieking and struggling girl was mounted behind a horseman, and bound, and Ivo rode on.

A woman ran out of a turf-hut on the drove side, attracted by the girl's cries. It was her mother.

'My lass! Give me my lass, for the love of St. Mary and all saints!' And she clung to Ivo's bridle.

He struck her down, and rode on over her.

A man cutting sedges in a punt in the lode alongside looked up at the girl's shrieks, and leapt on shore, scythe in hand.

'Father! father!' cried she.

'I'll rid thee, lass, or die for it,' said he, as he sprang up the drove-dyke, and swept right and left at the horses' legs.

The men recoiled. One horse went down, limed for life, another staggered backwards into the father lode, and was drowned. But an arrow went through the brave serf's heart, and Ivo rode on, cursing more bitterly than ever, and comforted himself by flying his hawks at a covey of partridges.

Soon a group came along the drove which promised fresh sport to the man hunters. But as the foremost person came, Ivo stopped in wonder at the shout of—

'Ivo! Ivo Taillebois! Halt and have a care! The English are risen, and we are all dead men!'

The words were spoken in French, and in French Ivo answered, laughing.

'Thou art not a dead man yet, it seems, Sir Robert, art thou going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, that thou comest in this fashion? Or dost thou mean to return to Anjou as bare as thou camest out of it?'

For Sir Robert had, like Edgar in Shakespeare's *Lea*, 'reserved himself a blanket, else had they all been shamed.'

But very little more did either he, his lady, and his three children wear, as they trudged along the drove, in even poorer case than that.

'Robert of Cunningsby,
Who came out of Normandy,
With his wife Tiffany,
And his man Maupas,
And his dog Hardgras.'

'For the love of heaven and all chivalry, joke me no jokes, Sir Ivo. But give me and mine clothes and food. The barbarians rose on us last night—with *Azer*, the rufian who owned my lands, at their head, and drove us out into the night as we are, bidding us carry the news to you, for your turn would come next. There are forty or more of them in West Deeping now, and coming eastward, they say, to visit you, and what is more than all, Hereward is come again.'

Hereward? cried Ivo, who knew that name full well.

Whereon Sir Robert told him the terrible tragedy of Bourne.

'Mount the lady on a horse, and wrap her in my cloak. Get that dead villain's clothes for Sir Robert as we go back. Put your horses' heads about and ride for Spalding.'

'What shall we do with the lass?'

'We cannot be burdened with the jade. She has cost us two good horses already. Leave her in the road, bound as she is, and let us see if St. Guthlac her master will come and untie her.'

So they rode back. Coming from Deeping two hours after, Aser and his men found the girl on the road, dead.

'Another count in the long score,' quoth Aser. But when, in two hours more, they came to Spalding town, they found all the folk upon the street, shouting and praising the host of heaven. There was not a Frenchman left in the town.

For when Ivo returned home, ere yet Sir Robert and his family were well clothed and fed, there galloped into Spalding from the north Sir Ascelin, whilome of St. Valeri, nephew and man of Thorhold, would be abbot of Peterborough.

'Not bad news, I hope!' cried Ivo, as Ascelin clanked into the hall. 'We have enough of our own. Here is all Kesteven, as the barbarians call it, risen, and they are murdering us right and left.'

'Worse news than that, Ivo Taillebois'—'sir,' or 'mieur,' Ascelin was loth to call him, being himself a man of family and fashion, and holding the *nouveaux venus* in deep contempt. 'Worse news than that. The North has risen again, and proclaimed Prince Edgar king.'

'A king of words! What care I, or you, as long as the Mamer, God bless him, is a king of deeds!'

'They have done them deeds, though, too. Gospatrick and Maelswynn are back out of Scotland. They attacked Robert de Comines¹ at Durham, and burnt him in his own house. There was but one of his men got out of Durham to tell the news. And now they have marched on York, and all the chiefs, they say, have joined them. Archill thethane, and Edwin and Morcar, and Waltheof too, the young traitors.'

'Blessed virgin!' cried Ivo, 'thou art indeed gracious to thy most unworthy knight!'

'What do you mean?'

'You will see some day. Now, I will tell you but one word. When fools make lay, wise men build ricks. This rebellion—if it had not come of itself, I would have roused it. We wanted it, to cure William of this just and benevolent policy of his, which would have ended in sending us back to France, as poor as we left it. Now, what am I expected to do? What says Gilbert of Ghent, the wise man of Lie-nie—what the pest do you call that outlandish place, which no civilised lips can pronounce?'

'Lie-me-cole?' replied Ascelin, who, like the rest of the French, never could manage to say Lincoln. 'He says, "March to me, and with me to join the king at York!"'

¹ Ancestor of the Comyns of Scotland

'Then he says well. These fat acres will be none the leaner, if I leave the English slaves to crop them for six months. Men! arm and horse! Sir Robert of Deeping. Then arm and horse yourselves. We march north in half an hour, bag and baggage, scrip and scrippage. You are all bachelors, like me, and travel light. So off with you! Sir Ascelin, you will eat and drink?'

'That will I.'

'Quick, then, knight, and after that pack up the Englishman's plate-chest, which we inherited by right of list—the only plate, and the only title deeds I ever possessed.'

'Now, Sir Ascelin'—as the three knights, the lady, and the poor children ate then fastest—'listen to me. The art of war lies in this one nutshell—to put the greatest number of men into one place at one time, and let all other places shunt, so striking swiftly, and striking heavily. That is the rule of our huge lord king William, and by it he will conquer England, or the world, if he will, and while he does that, he shall never say that Ivo Taillebois stayed at home to guard his own manors, while he could join his king, and win all the honors of England once and for all.'

'Tailor! whatever men may say of thy lineage or thy virtues, they cannot deny this, that thou art a most wise and valiant captain.'

'That am I,' quoth Taillebois, too much pleased with the praise to care about being tutored by a younger man. 'As for my lineage, my lord the king has a fellow feeling for upstarts, and the woodman's grandson may very well serve the tanner's. Now, men! is the litter ready for the lady and children? I am sorry to rattle you about this, madam, but war has no courtesies, and march I must.'

And so the French went out of Spalding town.

'Don't be in a hurry to thank your saints!' shouted Ivo to his victims. 'I shall be back this day three months, and then you shall see a row of gibbets all the way from here to Deeping, and an Englishman hanging on every one.'

CHAPTER XXII

HOW HERWARD SAILED FOR ENGLAND ONCE AND FOR ALL

So Herward fought the Viscount of Pinkney, who had the usual luck which befell those who crossed swords with him, and plotted meanwhile with Gyda and the Countess Judith. Abbot Egoleson sent them news from King Sweyn in Denmark, soon Judith and Tosti's two sons went themselves to Sweyn, and helped the pilot and the fitting out of the armament. News they had from England in plenty, by messengers from Queen Matilda to the sister who was intriguing to dethrone her husband, and by

private messengers from Durham and from York.

Baldwin, the debonair marquis, had not lived to see this fruit of his long efforts to please everybody. He had gone to his rest the year before, and now there ruled in Bruges his son, Bahlwin the Good, 'Count Palatine,' as he styled himself, and his wife Reginida, the Lady of Hainault.

They probably cared as little for the success of their sister Matilda as they did for that of their sister Judith, and followed out—Baldwin at least—the great marquis's plan of making Flanders a retreat for the fugitives of all the countries round.

At least, if (as seems) Sweyn's fleet made the coast of Flanders its rendezvous and base of operations against King William, Baldwin offered no resistance.

So the messengers came, and the plots went on. Great was the delight of Hereward and the ladies when they heard of the taking of Durham and York, but bitter their surprise and rage when they heard that Gospatric and the confederates had proclaimed Edgar Atheling king.

'Fools! they will run all!' cried Gyda. 'Do they expect Sweyn Ulfsson, who never moved a finger yet unless he saw that it would pay him within the hour, to spend blood and treasure in putting that puppet boy upon the throne instead of himself?'

'Calm yourself, great countess,' said Hereward, with a smile. 'The man who puts him on the throne will find it very easy to take him off again when he needs.'

'Push!' said Gyda. 'He must put him on the throne first. And how will he do that? Will the men of the Danolagh, much less the Northumbrians south of Tyne, ever rally round an Atheling of Cerdic's house?'

'Those between Tyne and Forth will join him,' said Hereward. 'They are Saxons like himself.'

'And who are they, that three-fourths of England should be scorned for their sake? If their cousins of Wessex, with my boys at their head, could not face this Frenchman, how will they? It is in my blood and my kin, in the Danolagh and the Dunes, that the strength of England lies, and not in a landlul of Scotch earls, backed by a barbarian like Malcolm. If the boy Edgar be Gospatric's cousin, or Malcolm's brother-in-law, what is that to England, or indeed to them? The boy is a mere stalking-horse, behind which each of these greedy chiefs expects to get back his own lands in the north, and if they can get them back by any other means, well and good. Mark my words, Sir Hereward, that cunning Frenchman will treat with them one by one, and betray them one by one, till there is none left.'

How far Gyda was right will be seen hereafter. But a less practised diplomat than the great countess might have speculated reasonably on such an event. The connection between Scotch and English royalty was, at the moment,

most harmful to England. But more harmful far would it have been, had the Danish invasion succeeded, had England been parted, perhaps for ever, from the ruling houses of Scotland, and become a mere appanage of the Scandinavian kings.

Then came darker news. As Ivo had foreseen, and as Ivo had done his best to bring about, William dashed on York, and drove out the confederates with terrible slaughter, profaned the churches, plundered the town. Gospatric and the earls retreated to Durham, the Atheling, more cautious, to Scotland.

Then came a strange story, worthy of the grown children who, in those old times, bore the hearts of boys with the ferocity and intellect of men.

A great fog fell on the Frenchmen as they struggled over the Durham moors. The doomed city was close beneath them, they heard Wear roaring in his wooded gorge. But a darkness, as of Egypt, lay upon them, 'neither rose any from his place.'

Then the Frenchmen cried, 'This darkness is from St. Cuthbert himself! We have invaded his holy soil. Who has not heard how none who offend St. Cuthbert ever went unpunished? How palsy, blindness, madness fall on those who dare to violate his sanctuary?''

And the French turned and fled before the face of St. Cuthbert, and William went down to Winchester angry and sad, and then went off to Gloucestershire, and hunted—for whatever betell, he still would hunt—in the forest of Dean.

And still Sweyn and his Danes had not sailed, and Hereward walked to and fro in his house impatiently, and lided his time.

In July Baldwin died. Arnoul, the boy, was Count of Flanders, and Reginida, his sorceress-mother, ruled the land in his name. She began to oppress the Flemings—not those of French Flanders, round St. Omer, but those of Flemish Flanders, toward the north. They threatened to send for Robert the Frisian to right them.

Hereward was perplexed. He was Robert the Frisian's friend, and old soldier. Reginida was Tofrida's friend, so was, still more, the boy Arnoul, which party should he take? Neither, if he could help it. And he lounged to be safe out of the land.

And at last his time came. Martin Lightfoot ran in, breathless, to tell how the sails of a mighty fleet were visible from the Dunes.

'Here!' cried Hereward. 'What are the fools doing down here, wandering into the very jaws of the wolf? How will they land here? They were to have gone straight to the Lincolnshire coast. God grant this mistake be not the first of dozens!'

Hereward went into Tofrida's bower.

'This is an evil business. The Danes are here, where they have no business, instead of being off Scheldtmouth, as I entreated them. But go we must, or be for ever shamed. Now, true wife, are you ready? Dare you leave home, and kin, and friends, once and for all, to go,

you know not whither, with one who may be a gory corpse by this busy week ?'

'I dare,' said she.

So they went down the Aa by night, with Torhula's mother, and the churl, and all their jewels, and all they had in the world. And then housecarles went with them, forty men, tried and trained, who had vowed to follow Hereward round the world. And there were two longships ready, and twenty good mariners in each. So when the Danes made the South Foreland the next morning, they were aware of two gallant ships bearing down on them, with a strange knot endronkered on their sails.

A proud man was Hereward that day, as he sailed into the midst of the Danish fleet, and up to the royal ships, and shouted -

'I am Hereward the Wake, and I come to take service under my rightful lord, Sweyn, king of England.'

'Come on board, then, will do we know you, and right glad we are to have the Wake with us.'

And Hereward laid his ship's bow upon the quarter of the royal ship (to lay alongside was impossible, for fear of breaking oars), and came on board.

'And thou art Hereward?' asked a tall and noble warrior.

'I am. And thou art Sweyn Ulfsson, the king?'

'I am Jarl Aslaug, his brother.'

'Then where is the king?'

'He is in Denmark, and I command his fleet, and with me Camuto and Hurohl, Sweyn's sons, and juls and bishops enough for all England.'

This was spoken in a somewhat haughty tone, in answer to the look of surprise and disappointment which Hereward had, unawares, allowed to pass over his face.

'Thou art better than none,' said Hereward.

'Now, he ken, Aslaug the jarl. Had Sweyn been here, I would have put my hand between his, and said in my own name, and that of all the men in Kesteven and the fens, Sweyn's men we are, to live and die.' But now, as it is, I say for me and them thy men we are, to live and die, as long as thou art true to us.'

'True to you I will be,' said Aslaug.

'Be it so,' said Hereward. 'Thou wilt be, whatever befall. Now, whither goes Jarl Aslaug, and all his great men?'

'We purpose to try Dover.'

'You will not like it. The Frenchman has strengthened it with one of his accursed keeps, and without battering engines you may sit before it a month.'

'What if I ask you to go in thither yourself, and try the mettle and the luck which, they say, never failed Hereward yet?'

'I should say that it was a churl's trick to throw away against a paltzy stone wall the life of a man who was ready to raise for you, in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, five times as many men, as you will lose in taking Dover.'

'Hereward is right,' said more than one jarl.

'We shall need him in his own country.'

'If you are wise, to that country you yourselves will go. It is ready to receive you. This is truly to oppose you. You are attacking the Frenchman at his strongest point, instead of his weakest. Did I not send again and again, entreating you to cross from Scheklmouth to the Wash, and send me word that I might come and raise the Fin-men for you, and then we would all go north together?'

'I have heard, ere now,' said Aslaug haughtily, 'that Hereward, though he be a valiant Viking, is more fond of giving advice than of taking it.'

Hereward was about to answer very hotly. If he had, no one would have thought any harm, in those plain spoken times. But he was wise, and restrained himself, remembering that Torhula was there, all but alone in the midst of a fleet of savage men, and that beside, he had a great deed to do, and must do it as he could. So he answered -

'Aslaug the jarl has not, it seems, heard this of Hereward. That because he is accustomed to command, he is also accustomed to obey. What thou wilt do, do, and bid me do. He that quarrels with his captain cuts his own throat and his fellows too.'

'Wise spoken!' said the jarls, and Hereward went back to his ship.

'Torhula,' said he latterly, 'the game is lost before it is begun.'

'God forbid, my beloved! What words are these?'

'Sweyn took that he is with his over-caution always the same. He has let the prize slip from between his fingers. He has sent Aslaug instead of himself.'

'But why is that so terrible a mistake?'

'We do not want a fleet of Vikings in England, to plunder the French and English alike. We want a king, a king, a king!' and Hereward stamped with rage. 'And instead of a king we have this Aslaug - all men know him - greedy, and false, and weak-headed. Here he is going to be bestricken at Dover, and then, I suppose, at the next port, till the whole season is wasted, and the ships and men lost by dribbles. Pray for us to God and His saints, Torhula, you who are no nearer to heaven than I, for we never needed it more.'

So Aslaug went in, tried to take Dover, and was beaten off with heavy loss.

Then the jarls bade him take Hereward's advice. But he would not.

So he went round the Forland, and tried Sandwich. As it, indeed, there, he would have been seen marching on London, in the teeth of the clite of Normandy.

But he was beaten off there with more loss. Then, too late, he took Hereward's advice - or, rather, half of it - and sailed north, but only to commit more follies.

He dared not enter the Thames. He would not go on to the Wash, but he went into the Orwell, and attacked Ipswich, plundering right and left, instead of proclaiming King Sweyn,

and calling the Danish folk around him. They naturally enough rose, and, like valiant men, beat him off, while Hereward lay outside the river mouth, his soul within him black with disappointment, rage, and shame. He would not go in. He would not fight against his own countrymen. He would not help to turn the whole plan into a marauding raid. And he told Jarl Ashnorn so, so fiercely, that his life would have been in danger, had not the force of his arm been as much feared as the force of his name was needed.

At last they came to Yarmouth. Ashnorn would needs land there, and try Norwich. Hereward was high desperate but he lit upon a plan. Let Ashnorn do so, if he would. He himself would sail round to the Wash, raise the Fen-men, and march eastward at their head through Norfolk to meet him. Ashnorn himself could not refuse so rational a proposal. All the jarls and bishops approved loudly, and away Hereward went to the Wash, his heart well-nigh broke, foreseeing nothing but evil.

CHAPTER XXIII

HOW HERWARD GATHERED AN ARMY

THE voyage round the Norfolk coast was rough and wild. Torfrida was ill, the little girl was ill, the poor old mother was so ill that she could not even say her prayers. Packed in comfortably under the awning on the poop, Torfrida looked on from beneath it upon the rolling water-waste, with a heart full of gloomy forebodings, and a brain whirling with wild fancies. The wreaths of cloud were gray with lies, hurrying on with the ship to work her woe; the low red storm dawn was streaked with blood; the water which gurgled all night under the lee was alive with hoarse voices, and again and again she started from fitful slumber to clasp the child closer to her, or look up for comfort to the sturdy figure of her husband, as he stood, like a tower of strength, steering and commanding, the long night through.

Yes, on him she could depend. On his courage, on his skill. And as for his love, had she not that utterly? and what more did woman need?

But she was going, she scarce knew whither, and she scarce knew for what. At least, on a fearful adventure, which might have a fearful end. She looked at the fair child, and reproached herself for a moment, at the poor old mother, whining, and mumbling, her soft southern heart quite broken by the wild chill northern sea-breeze, and reproached herself still more. But was it not her duty? Him she loved, and his she was, and him she must follow, over sea and land, till death, and if possible, beyond death again for ever. For his sake she would slave. For his sake she would be strong. If ever there rose in her a home-sickness, a

regret for leaving Flanders, and much more for that summer south where she was born, he at least should never be saddened or weakened by one hint of her sadness and weakness. And so it befell that, by the time they made the coast, she had (as the old chronicler says) 'altogether conquered all womanly softness.'

And yet she shuddered at the dreary mud-creek into which they ran their ships, at the dreary flats on which they landed shivering, swept over by the keen north-east wind. A lonely land, and within, she knew not what of danger, it might be of hideous death!

But she would be strong, and when they were all landed, men, arms, baggage, and had pitched the tents which the wise Hereward had brought with them, she rose up like a queen, and took her little one by the hand, and went among the men, and spoke.

'Housecarles and mariners! You are following a great captain upon a great adventure. How great he is you know as well as I. I have given him myself, my wealth, and all I have, and have followed him. I know not whither, because I trust him utterly. Men, trust him as I trust him, and follow him to the death.'

'That we will!'

'And men, I am here among you, a weak woman, trying to be brave for his sake—and for yours. Be true to me, too, as I have been true to you. For your sakes have I worked hard, day and night, for many a year. For you I have baked, and brewed, and cooked, like any poor churl's wife. Is there a garment on your backs which my hands have not mended? Is there a wound on your limbs which my hands have not salved? Oh, if Torfrida has been true to you, promise me this day that you will be true men to her and hers, that if—which Heaven forbid—'

ought should befall him and me, you will protect this my poor old mother, and this my child, who has grown up amongst you all—a lambs-brought up within the lion's den. Look at her, men, and promise me, on the faith of valiant soldiers, that you will be lions on her behalf, if she shall ever need you. Promise me, that if you have but one more stroke left to strike on earth, you will strike it to defend the daughter of Hereward and Torfrida from cruelty and shame.'

The men answered with a shout which rolled along the fen, and startled the wild fowl up from far-off pools. They crowded round their lady, they kissed her hands, they bent down and kissed their little playmate, and swore—one by God and His Apostles, and the next by Odin and Thor—that she should be a daughter to each and every one of them, as long as they could grip steel in hand.

Then (says the chronicler) Hereward sent on spies, to see whether the Frenchmen were in the land, and how folks fared at Holbeach, Spalding, and Bourne.

The two young Siwards, as 'knowing the country and the folk, pushed forward, and

with them Martin Lightfoot to bring back news.

Martin ran back all the way from Holbeach, the very first day, with right good tidings. There was not a Frenchman in the town. Neither was there, they said, in Spalding. Ivo Tallobous was still away at the wars, and long might he stay.

So forward they marched, and everywhere the landsfolk were tilling the ground in peace, and when they saw that stout array, they hurried on to meet the troops, and burdened them with food, and ale, and all they needed.

And at Holbeach, and at Spalding, Hereward split up the war-arrow, and sent it through Kesteven, and south into the Cambridge fens, calling on all men to arm, and come to him at Bourne, in the name of Walthof and Morcar the earls.

And at every farm and town he blew the war-horn, and summoned every man who could bear arms to be ready, against the coming of the Danish host from Norwich. And so through all the fens came true what the wild fowl said upon the meres, that the Wako was come again.

And when he came to Bourne, all men were tilling in peace. The terror of the Wako had fallen on the Frenchmen, and no man had dared to enter on his inheritance, or to set a French foot over the threshold of that ghastly hall, above the gable whereof still grinned the fifteen heads, on the floor whereof still spread the dark stains of blood.

Only Gory dwelt in a corner of the house, and with him Leofric, once a roystering housecarle of Hereward's youth, now a monk of Crowland, and a deacon, whom Lady Godiva had sent thither that he might take care of her poor. And there Gory and Leofric had kept house, and told sagas to each other over the beech log fire might after night, for all Leofric's study was, says the chronicler, 'to gather together for the edification of his hearers all the acts of giants and warriors out of the fables of the ancients, or from faithful report, and to commit them to writing, that he might keep England in mind thereof.' Which Leofric was afterwards ordained priest, probably in Ely, by Bishop Egelwin of Durham, and was Hereward's chaplain for many a year.

Then Hereward, as he had promised, set fire to the three farms close to the Bruneswold, and all his outlawed friends, lurking in the forest, knew by that signal that Hereward was come again. So they cleansed out the old house, though they did not take down the heads from off the gable, and Torfrida went about the town, and about it, and confessed that England was after all a pleasant place enough. And they were as happy, it may be, for a week or two, as ever they had been in their lives.

'And now,' said Torfrida, 'while you see to your army, I must be doing, for I am a lady now, and mistress of great estates. So I must be seeing to the poor.'

'But you cannot speak their tongue.'

'Can I not? Do you think that in the face of coming to England, and fighting here, and plotting here, and being, may be, an earl's countess, I have not made Martin Lightfoot teach me your English tongue, till I can speak it as well as you? I kept that hidden as a surprise for you, that you might find out, when you most needed, how Torfrida loved you.'

'As if I had not found out already! Oh, woman, woman! I verily believe that God made you alone, and left the devil to make us linters of men.'

Meanwhile went round through all the fens, and north into the Bruneswold, and away again to Lincoln and merry Sherwood, that the Wako was come again. And Gilbert of Ghent, keeping Lincoln Castle for the Conqueror, was perplexed in mind, and looked well to gates and bars, and sentinels, for Hereward sent him at once a message, that forasmuch as he had forgotten his warning in Bruges street, and put a rascal cook into his mother's manors, he should ride Odin's horse on the highest ash in the Bruneswold.

On which Gilbert of Ghent, inquiring what Odin's horse might be, and finding it to signify the ash tree whereon, as a rod to Odin, the ves were hanged by Danes and Norse, made answer.

'That he Gilbert had not put his cook into Bourne, nor otherwise harmed Hereward or his. That Bourne had been seized by the king himself, together with Earl Morcar's lands in those parts, as all men knew. That the said cook so pleased the king with a dish of stewed eel-pout, which he served up to him at Cambridge, and which the king had never eaten before, that the king begged the said cook of him (Gilbert) and took him away, and that after, so he heard, the said cook had begged the said manor of Bourne of the king, without the knowledge or consent of him (Gilbert). That he therefore knew nought of the matter. That if Hereward meant to keep the king's peace, he might live in Bourne till Doomsday, for aught he Gilbert cared; but that if he and his men meant to break the king's peace, and attack Lincoln city, he Gilbert would nail their skins to the door of Lincoln Cathedral, as they used to do by the heathen Danes in old time. And that, therefore, they now understood each other.'

At which Hereward laughed, and said that they had done that for many a year.

And now poured into Bourne from every side brave men and true, some great holders dispossessed of their land, some the sons of holders who were not yet dispossessed, some Morcar's men, some Edwin's, who had been turned out by the king, and almost all of them, probably, blood relations of Hereward's, or of King Harold's, or of each other.

To him came 'Guenoch and Alutus Gurgan, foremost in all valour and fortitude, tall and large, and ready for work,' and with them their three nephews, Godwin Gille, 'so called because he was not inferior to that Godwin Guthlacsson who is preached much in the fables of the

ancients,' and Houti and Onti, the twins, alike in face and manners', and Godric, the knight of Conby, nephew of the 'Count of Warwick, and thus, probably, Hereward's first cousin or nephew', and Tosti of Davenesse, his kinsman, and Aser Vass, whose father had possessed Lincoln Tower, and Loofwin Mone—that is, the scythe, so called 'because when he was mowing all alone, and twenty country folk set on him with pitchforks and javelins, he slew and wounded almost every one, sweeping his scythe among them as one that moweth', and Whinnens the Blackfalcon, so called because he once blackened his face with coal, and came unknown among the enemy, and slew ten of them with one lance, and 'Timbertin, a great-grandson (†) of Earl Edwin', and Loofwin Priat (perhaps the ancestor of the ancient and honourable house of Priat of Ryston), so called from his 'Priat' or call, 'because he had often escaped cunningly when taken by the enemy, having more than once killed his keepers', and the Steward of Drayton, and Thurkill and Uthunle, the outlaws, Hereward's cook, and Oger, Hereward's kinsman, and 'Winter and Lavret, two very famous ones', and Randel the skuschil of Ramsey—'he was the standard-bearer, and Wulfic the Black and Wulfic the White, and Hugh the Norman, a priest, and Wulfic, his brother, and Tosti and Godwin of Rothwell, and Alan and Hunkill, and Hugh the Breton, who was Hereward's chaplain, and Whislaw, his brother, 'a magnificent knight, which two came with him from Flanders',—and so forth. Names merely, of whom naught is known, save, in a few cases, from *Domesday-book*, the manors which they held. But honour to their very names! Honour to the last heroes of the old English race.

These valiant gentlemen, with the house-carles whom, more or fewer, they would bring with them, constituted a formidable force, as after years proved well. But having got his men, Hereward's first care was, doubtless, to teach them that art of war, of which they, like true Englishmen, know nothing.

The art of war has changed little, if at all, by the introduction of gunpowder. The campaigns of Hannibal and Cæsar succeeded by the same tactics as those of Frederic and Wellington, and so, as far as we can judge, did those of the master-general of his age, William of Normandy.

But of those tactics the English knew nothing. Their armies were little more than tumultuous levies, in which men marched and fought under local leaders, often divided by local jealousies. The commissariats of the armies seem to have been so worthless that they had to plunder friends as well as foes as they went along, and with plunder came every sort of excess—as when the Northern men, marching down to meet Harold Godwinsson and demand young Edwin as their earl, laid waste, seemingly out of mere brute wantonness, the country round Northampton, which must have been in Edwin's earldom, or at least in that of his brother

Morcar. And even the local leaders were not over-well obeyed. The reckless spirit of personal independence, especially among the Anglo-Danes, prevented anything like discipline, or organised movement of masses, and made every battle degenerate into a confusion of single combats.

But Hereward had learned that art of war which enabled the French to crush piecemeal, with their inferior numbers, the vast but straggling levies of the English. His men, mostly outlaws and homeless, kept together by the pressure from without, and free from local jealousies, resembled rather an army of professional soldiers than a country posse comitatus. And to the discipline which he instilled into them, to his ability in marching and manœuvring troops, to his care for their food and for their transport, possibly also to his training them in that art of fighting on horseback in which the men of Wessex, if not the Anglo-Danes of the East, are said to have been quite unskilled—in short, to all that he had learned as a mercenary under Robert the First, and among the highly civilised warriors of Flanders and Normandy, must be attributed the fact that he and his little army defied for years the utmost efforts of the Frenchmen, appearing and disappearing with such strange swiftness, and comparing against such strange odds, as astonished the guerrilla captain in an atmosphere of myth and wonder, only to be accounted for, in the mind of French as well as English, by the supernatural counsels of his sorceress wife.

But Hereward grew anxious and more anxious as days and weeks went on, and yet there was no news of Asbiorn and his Danes at Norwich. Time was precious. He had to march his little army to the Wash, and then transport it by boats—no easy matter to Lynn in Norfolk, as his nearest point of attack. And as the time went on, Earl Waren and Ralph de Guader would have gathered their forces between him and the Danes, and a landing at Lynn might become impossible. Meanwhile there were hints of great clangs in the north of Lincolnshire. Young Earl Wulfic was said to be there, and Edgar the Atheling with him, but what it portended, no man knew. Morcar was said to have raised the centre of Mercia, and to have sent Edmund to have raised the Welsh, and to be at Chester with Alkythia his sister. And Hereward sent spies along the Fosse Street—the only road, then, toward the north-west of England—and spies northward along the Roman road to Lincoln. But the former met the French in force near Nottingham, and came back much later than they went. And the latter stumbled on Gilbert of Ghent, riding out of Lincoln to Folkingham, and had to flee into the fens, and came back much slower than they went.

At last news came. For into Bourne stalked Wulfic the Heron, with axe and bow, and leaping-pole on shoulder, and an evil tale he brought.

The Danes had been beaten utterly at Norwich. Ralph de Guader and his Frenchmen had fought like lions. They had killed many Danes in the assault on the castle. They had sallied out on them as they recoiled, and driven them into the river, drowning many more. The Danes had gone down the Yare again, and out to sea northward, no man knew whither. He, the Horon, prowling about the fenslands of Norfolk, to pick off straggling Frenchmen and look out for the Danes, had heard all the news from the landsfolk. He had watched the Danish fleet along the shore as far as Blakeney. But when they came to the mole, they stood out to sea, right north-west. He, the Horon, believed that they were gone for Humber Mouth.

After a while he had heard how Hereward was come again, and had sent round the war-arrow, and it seemed to him that a landless man could be in no better company, wherefore he had taken boat, and come across the deep sea. And there he was, if they had need of him.

'Need of you?' said Hereward, who had heard of the deed at Wikesham Bidge. 'Need of a hundred like you. But this is better now.'

And he went in to ask counsel of Torfrid, ready to weep with rage. He had disappointed—deceived his men. He had drawn them into a snare. He had proposed that the Danes should come. How should he look them in the face?

'Look them in the face! Do that at once now, without losing a moment. Call them together and tell them all. If their hearts are staunch, you may do great things without the traitor earl. If their hearts fail them, you would have done nothing with them worthy of yourself, had you had Norway as well as Denmark at your back. At least, be true with them, as your only chance of keeping them true to you.'

'Wise, wise wife,' said Hereward, and went out and called his band together, and told them every word, and all that had passed since he left Calais Straits.

'And now I have deceived you, and entrapped you, and I have no right to be your captain more. He that will depart in peace, let him depart, before the Frenchmen close in on us on every side and swallow us up at one mouthful.'

Not a man answered.

'I say it again. He that will depart, let him depart.'

They stood thoughtful.

Ranald of Ramsey drove the Wake-knot banner firm into the earth, tucked up his monk's frock, and threw his long axe over his shoulder, as if preparing for action.

Winter spoke at last.

'If all go, there are two men here who stay, and fight by Hereward's side as long as there is a Frenchman left in English soil; for they have sworn an oath to Heaven and to St. Peter, and

that oath will they keep. What say you, Gwenoeh, knighted with us at Peterborough?'

Gwenoeh stepped to Hereward's side.

'None shall go!' shouted a dozen voices. 'With Hereward we will live and die. Let him lead us to Lincoln, to Nottingham—where he will. We can save England for ourselves without the help of Danes.'

'It is well for one at least of you, gentlemen, that you are in this pleasant inn,' quoth Ranald the monk.

'Well for all of us, then, valiant purveyor of beef and beer.'

'Well for me. For the first man that had turned to go, I would have blamed him with this axe.'

'And now, gallant gentlemen,' said Hereward, 'we must take new counsel, as our old has failed. Whither shall we go? For stay here, eating up the country, we must not do.'

'They say that Waltham is in lamsey, raising the landsfolk. Let us go and join him.'

'We can at least find what he means to do. This can be no better counsel. Let us march. Only we must keep clear of Lincoln as yet. I hear that Gilbert has a strong garrison there, and we are not strong enough yet to force it.'

So they rode north, and up the Roman road toward Lincoln, sending out spies as they went, and soon they had news of Waltham. News, too, that he was between them and Lincoln.

'Then the sooner we are with him, the better; for he will find himself in trouble ere long, if old Gilbert comes up with him. So run your best, footmen, for forward we must get.'

And as they came up the Roman road, they were aware of a great press of men in front of them, and hard fighting toward.

Some of the English would have spurred forward at once. But Hereward held them back with loud reproaches.

'Will you forget all I have told you in the first skirmish, like so many dogs when they see a bull? Keep together for five minutes more. The pot will not be cool before we get our sip of it. I verily believe that it is Waltham and that Gilbert has caught him already.'

As he spoke, one part of the combatants broke up, and fled right and left, and a knight in full armour galloped furiously down the road right at them, followed by two or three more.

'Here comes some one very valiant or very much afraid,' said Hereward, as the horseman rode right upon him, shouting.

'I am the king.'

'The king?' roared Hereward, and dropping his lance, spurred his horse forward, kicking his feet clear of the stirrups. He caught the knight round the neck, dragged him over his horse's tail, and fell with him to the ground.

The armour clashed, the sparks flew from the old gray Roman flint, and Hereward, willing over once, rose, and knelt upon his prisoner.

'Wilham of Normandy! yield or die!'

The knight lay still and stark.

'Ride on!' cried Hereward from the ground.

'Ride at them and strike hard' You will soon find out which is which. This booty I must pick for myself. What are you doing?' roared he after his knights. 'Spread off the road, and keep your line, as I told you, and don't override each other! Curse the hot-headed fools! The French will scatter them like sparrows. Run on, men-at-arms, to stop the French if we are broken. And don't forget Gunes's field and the horses' legs. Now, king, are you come to life yet!'

'You have killed him,' smothered Leofric the deacon, whom Hereward had beckoned to stop with him.

'I hope not. Lend me a knife. He is a much lighter man than I fancied,' said Hereward, as they got his helmet off.

And when it was off, both started and stared. For they had uncovered, not the beetling brow, Roman nose, and firm curved lip of the Ulysses of the middle age, but the face of a fair lad, with long straw-coloured hair, and soft blue eyes staring into vacancy.

'Who are you?' shouted Hereward, saying very bad words, 'who come here, among the name of kings?'

'Mother! Christina! Margaret! Waltheof Earl!' moaned the lad, raising his head and letting it fall again.

'It is the Atheling!' cried Leofric.

Hereward rose, and stood over the boy.

'Ah! what was I doing to handle him so tenderly? I took him for the Mamzer, and thought of a king's ransom.'

'Do you call that tenderly? You have nigh pulled the boy's head off.'

'Would that I had! Ah!' went on Hereward, apostrophising the unconscious Atheling, 'ah, that I had broken that white neck once and for all! To have sent thee feet foremost to Winchester, to be by thy grandfathers and great grandfathers, and then to tell Norman William that he must fight it out henceforth not with a straw malkin like thee, which the very crows are not afraid to perch on, but with a cock of a very different make, Sweyn Ulsson, King of Denmark.'

And Hereward drew Bram-bite.

'For mercy's sake! you will not harm the lad?'

'If I were a wise man now, and hard hearted as wise men should be, I should—I should——' and he played the point of the sword backwards and forwards, nearer and nearer to the lad's throat.

'Master! master!' cried Leofric, clinging to his knees, 'by all the saints! What would Our Lady in heaven say to such a deed!'

'Well, I suppose you are right. And I fear what our lady at home might say likewise and we must not do anything to vex her, you know. Well, let us do it handsomely, if we must do it. Get water somewhere, in his helmet. No, you need not linger. I will not cut his throat before you come back.'

Leofric went off in search of water; and

Hereward knelt with the Atheling's head on his knee, and on his lip a sneer at all things in heaven and earth. To have that lad stand between him and all his projects, and, to be forced, for honour's sake, to let him stand!

But soon his men returned, seemingly in high glee, and other knights with them.

'Hoy, lads!' said he, 'I aimed at the falcon and shot the goose. Here is Edgar Atheling prisoner. Shall we put him to ransom?'

'He has no money, and Malcolm of Scotland is much too wise to lend him any,' said some one. And some more rough jokes passed.

'Do you know, sirs, that he who lies there is your king?' asked a very tall and noble looking knight.

'That do we not,' said Hereward sharply.

'There is no king in England this day, as far as I know. And there will be none north of the Watling Street till he be chosen in full hustings, and anointed at York, as well as at Winchester or London. We have had one king made for us in the last forty years, and we intend to make the next ourselves.'

'And who art thou, who talkest so bold of king-making?'

'And who art thou, who askest so bold who I am?'

'I am Waltheof Swardsson, the earl, and you is my army behind me.'

'And I am Hereward Leofnesson, the Wake, and you is my army behind me.'

If the two champions had flown at each other's throats, and their armies had followed their example, simply as dogs fly at each other they know not why, no one would have been astonished in those unhappy times.

But it fell not out upon that wise, for Waltheof, leaping from his horse, pulled off his helmet, and seizing Hereward by both hands, cried

'Blessed is the day which sees again in England Hereward, who has upheld throughout all lands and seas the honour of English chivalry.'

'And blessed is the day in which Hereward, meets the head of the house of Sward where he should be, at the head of his own men, in his own carldoon. When I saw my friend, thy brother Ashborn Bulax, brought unto the camp at Dunsinane with all his wounds in front, I wept a young man's tears, and said, "Ther ends the glory of the White-Bears' house!" But this day I say—The White-Bears' blood is risen from the grave in Waltheof Swardsson, who with his single axe kept the gate of York against all the army of the French, and who shall keep against them all England, if he will be as wise as he is brave.'

Was Hereward honest in his words? Hardly so. He wished to be honest. As he looked upon that magnificent young man, he hoped and trusted that his words were true. But he gave a second look at the face, and whispered to himself, 'Weak, weak. He will be led by priests perhaps by William himself. I must be courteous but confide I must not.'

The men stood round, and looked with admiration on the two most splendid Englishmen then alive. Hereward had taken off his helmet likewise, and the contrast between the two was as striking as the completeness of each of them in his own style of beauty. It was the contrast between the slow-hound and the deer-hound, each alike high-couraged and high-bred; but the former short, sturdy, cheerful, and sagacious, the latter tall, stately, melancholy, and not over wise withal.

Walthoof was a full head and shoulders taller than Hereward. He was one of the tallest men of his generation, and of a strength which would have been gigantic, but for the too great length of neck and limb, which made him loose and slow in body, as he was somewhat loose and slow in mind. An old man's child, although that old man was one of the old giants, there was a vein of weakness in him, which showed in the arched eyebrow, the sleepy pale blue eye, the small soft mouth, the lazy voice, the narrow and lofty brow over a shallow brow. His face was not that of a warrior, but of a saint in a painted window, and to his own place he went, and became a saint, in his due time. But that he could out-general William, that he could even manage Gospatric and his intrigues, Hereward expected as little, as that his own nephews Edwin and Morecar could do it.

'I have to thank you, noble sir,' said Walthoof languidly, 'for sending your knights to our rescue when we were really hard pressed—I fear much by our own fault. Had they told me whose men they were, I should not have spoken to you so roughly as I fear I did.'

'There is no offence. Let Englishmen speak their minds, as long as English land is above sea. But how did you get into trouble, and with whom?'

Walthoof told him how he was going round the country, raising forces in the name of the Atheling, when, as they were struggling along the Roman road, Gilbert of Ghent had dashed out on them from a wood, cut their line in two, driven Walthoof one way, and the Atheling another, so that the Atheling had only escaped by riding, as they saw, for his life.

'Well done, old Gilbert!' laughed Hereward. 'You must beware, my lord owl, how you venture within reach of that old bear's paw.'

'Bear! By the joys, Sir Hereward,' asked Walthoof, whose thoughts ran loosely right and left, 'they told me that you carried a white bear on your banner—but I only see a knot.'

'Ah! I have parted with my old bear, all save his skin, for keeping which, by the bye, your house ought to have a blood feud against me. I slew your great-uncle or cousin, or some other kinsman, at Gilbert's house in Scotland long ago, and since then I sleep on his skin every night, and need to carry his picture in my banner all day.'

'Blood-feuds are solemn things,' said Walthoof, frowning. 'Karl killed my grandfather Aldred

at the battle of Setterington, and his four sons are with the army at York now—'

'For the love of all saints and of England, do not think of avenging that! Every man must now put away old grudges, and remember that he has but one foe, William and his Frenchmen.'

'Very nobly spoken. But those sons of Karl—and I think you said you had killed a kinsman of mine?'

'It was a bear, lord earl, a great white bear. Cannot you understand a jest? Or are you going to take up the quarrels of all white bears that are slain between here and Iceland? You will end by burning Crowland monster then, for there are twelve of your kinsmen's skins there, which Canute gave forty years ago.'

'Burn Crowland monster! St Guthlac and all saints forbid!' said Walthoof, crossing himself devoutly.

'Are you a monk-monger into the bargain, as well as a dolt? A bad prospect for us, if you are,' said Hereward to himself.

'Ah, my dear lord king!' said Walthoof, 'and you are recovering?'

'Somewhat,' said the king, sitting up, 'under the care of this kind knight.'

'He is a monk, Sir Atheling, and not a knight,' said Hereward. 'Our men can wear a mail-shirt as easily as a frock, and handle a twybill as neatly as a breviary.'

Walthoof shook his head. 'It is contrary to the canons of Holy Church.'

'So are many things that are done in England just now. Need has no master. Now, sir earl and Sir Atheling, what are you going to do?'

'Neither of them, it seemed, very well knew. They would go to York if they could get there, and join Gospatric and Maelgwyn. And certainly it was the most reasonable thing to be done.'

'But if you mean to get to York, you must march after another fashion than this,' said Hereward. 'See, sir earl, why you were broken by Gilbert. And why you will be broken again, if this order holds. If you march your men along one of these old Roman streets—By St Mary, these Romans had more wits than we, for we have spoilt the roads they left us, and never made a new one of our own—'

'They were heathens and enchanter,' and Walthoof crossed himself.

'And conquered the world. Well—it you march along one of these streets, you must ride as I rode, when I came up to you. You must not let your knights go head, and your men at arms struggle after in a tail a mile long, like a scratch pack of hounds, all sizes except each others'. You must keep your footmen on the high street, and make your knights ride in two bodies, right and left, upon the wold, to protect their flanks and baggage.'

'But the knights will not. As gentlemen, they have a right to the best ground.'

'Then they may go to—, whither they will go, if the French come upon them. If they are

on the flanks, and you are attacked, then they can charge in right and left on the enemy's flank, while the footmen make a stand to cover the waggons.'

'Yes—that is very good, I believe that is your French fashion!'

'It is the fashion of common sense, like all things which succeed.'

'But, you see, the knights would not submit to ride in the mire.'

'Then you must make them. What else have they horses for, while homelier men than they trudge on foot?'

'Make them?' said Waltheof, with a shrug and a smile. 'They are all free gentlemen, like ourselves.'

'And, like ourselves, will come to utter ruin, because every one of them must needs go his own way.'

'I am glad,' said Waltheof, as they rode along, 'that you called this my earldom. I hold it to be mine of course in right of my father. But the landstolk, you know, gave it to your nephew Morcar.'

'I care not to whom it is given. I care for the man who has it, to raise these landstolk, and make them fight. You are here, therefore you are earl.'

'Yes, the powers that be are ordained by God.'

'You must not strain that text too far, lord earl, for the only power that is, whom I see in England—worse luck for it—is William the Man-of-war.'

'So I have often thought.'

'You live! As I feared!' (To himself) 'The jake will have you again, gadgeon!'

'He has with him the Holy Father at Rome, and therefore the Blessed Apostle St Peter of course. And—*is* a man right in the sight of heaven, who resists them? I only say it—but where a man looks to the salvation of his own soul, he must needs think thereof seriously at least.'

'Oh, are you at that?' thought Hereward. 'Tont est perdu! The question is, earl,' said he aloud, 'simply this. How many men can you raise off this shire?'

'I have raised—not so many as I could wish. Harold and Eilth's men have joined me fairly well, but your nephew, Morcar—'

'I can command them. I have half of them here already.'

'Then—then we may raise the rest?'

'That depends, my lord earl, for whom we fight?'

'For whom? I do not understand.'

'Whether we fight for that lad, child Edgar—or for Sweyn of Denmark, the rightful king of England?'

'Sweyn of Denmark? Who should be the rightful king but the heir of the blessed St Edward?'

'Blessed old fool! He has done harm to us enough on earth, without leaving us his second-cousin's aunt's walking to him in us after he is in heaven.'

'Sir Hereward, Sir Hereward, I fear thou art not as good a Christian as so good a knight should be.'

'Christian or not, I am as good a one as my neighbours. I am Leofric's son. Leofric put Hardicanute on the throne; and your father, who was a man, helped him. You know what has befallen England, since we Danes left the Danish stock at Godwin's bidding, and put our necks under the yoke of Wessex monks and monk-mongers. You may follow your father's track, or not, as you like. I shall follow my father's, and fight for Sweyn Ulfsson, and no man else.'

'And I,' said Waltheof, 'shall follow the appointed of the Lord.'

'The appointed of Gospatric and two or three boys!' said Hereward. 'Knights! Turn your horses' heads. Right about face all! We are going back to the Bruneswald, to live and die free Danes.'

And to Waltheof's astonishment, who had never before seen discipline, the knights wheeled round, the men-at-arms followed them, and Waltheof and the Atheling were left to themselves on Lincoln Heath.

CHAPTER XXIV

HOW AN BISHOP ALDRED DIED OF SORROW

In the tragedies of the next few months Hereward took no part, but they must be looked at now, in order to understand somewhat of the men who were afterwards mixed up with him for weal and woe.

When William went back to the South, the confederates, child Edgar the Atheling, Gospatric, and their friends, had come south again from Durham. It was undignified, a confession of weakness. If a Frenchman had likened them to a snice coming out when the cat went away, none could blame him. But so they did, and Aslaug and his Danes, landing in Humbershire, 'were met (says the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) by child Edgar and Earl Waltheof and Malcolme, and Earl Gospatric with the men of Northumberland, riding and marching joyfully with an immense army,' not having the spirit of prophecy, or foreseeing those things which were coming on the earth.

To them repaired Edwin and Morcar, the two young earls, Arkil and Kniel, 'the great thanes', or at least the four sons of Karl—for accounts differ, and what few else of the northern nobility that had left unmurdered.

The men of Northumberland received the Danes with open arms. They would besiege York. They would storm the new French keep. They would proclaim Edgar king at York.

In that keep sat two men, one of whom knew his own mind, the other did not. One was William Malet, knight, one of the heroes of Hastings, a noble Norman, and chateau of

York Castle. The other was Archbishop Aldred.

Aldred seems to have been a man like too many more—pious, and virtuous, and harmless enough, and not without worldly prudence; but his prudence was of that sort which will surely swim with the stream, and 'honour the powers that be,' if they be but prosperous enough. For after all, if success be not God, it is like enough to Him in some men's eyes to do instead. So Archbishop Aldred had crowned Harold Godwinsson, when Harold's star was in the ascendant.¹ And who but Archbishop Aldred should crown William, when his star had cast Harold's down from heaven? He would have crowned Satan's himself, had he only proved himself king *de facto*—as he asserts himself to be *de jure*—of this wicked world.

So Aldred, who had not only crowned William, but supported his power north of Humber by all means lawful, sat in York keep, and looked at William Malet, wondering what he would do.

Malet would hold out to the last. As for the new keep, it was surely impregnable. The old walls the Roman walls on which had floated the flag of Constantine the Great were surely strong enough to keep out men without battering rams, balistas, or artillery² of any kind. What mattered Ashmole's two hundred and forty ships, and their crews of some ten or fifteen thousand men? What mattered the tens of thousands of northern men, with Gasparic at their head? Let them rage and rob round the walls. A messenger had galloped in from William in the forest of Dean, to tell Malet to hold out to the last. He had galloped out again, bearing for answer that the Normans could hold York for a year.

But the Archbishop's heart misgave him, as from north and south at once came up the dark masses of two mighty armies, broke into columns, and surged against every gate of the city at the same time. They had no battering ram to breach the ancient walls—but they had—aplomb knew it better than Ashmole—hundreds of friends inside, who would throw open to them the gates.

One gate he could command from the castle town. His face turned pale as he saw a mob of armed townsmen rushing down the street towards it, a furious scuffle with the French guards, and then, through the gateway, the open campaign beyond, and a gleaming wave of axes, helms, and spears, pouring in and up the street.

'The traitors!' he almost shrieked, as he turned and ran down the ladder to tell Malet below.

Malet was firm, but pale as Aldred.

'We must fight to the last,' said he, as he hurried down, commanding his men to sally at once *en masse* and clear the city.

The mistake was fatal. The French were

entangled in the narrow streets. The houses, shut to them, were opened to the English and Danes, and, overwhelmed from above, as well as in front, the greater part of the French garrison perished in the first fight. The remnant were shut up in the castle. The Danes and the English seized the houses round, and shot from the windows at every loophole and embrasure where a Frenchman showed himself.

'Shoot me upon the houses!' said Malet.

'You will not leave York? O God! is it come to this?'

'And why not York town, or Yorkminster, or Rome itself with the Pope inside it, rather than yield to barbarians?'

Archbishop Aldred went into his room, and lay down on his bed. Outside was the roar of the battle, and soon, louder and louder, the roar of flame. This was the end of his time-serving and king-making. And he said many prayers, and beat his breast, and then called to his chaplain for clothes, for he was very old. 'I have slain my own sheep,' he moaned, 'slain my own sheep!'

His chaplain kept him up in bed, and looked out of the window at the light. 'There was no hill, neither was there any great advantage on either side.' Only from the southward he could see fresh bodies of Danes coming across the plain.

'The cross is here, and the eagles are gathered together. Hush me the Holy Sacrament, chaplain, and God be merciful to an unfaithful shepherd!'

The chaplain went.

'I have slain my own sheep,' moaned the archbishop. 'I have given them up to the wolves, given mine own minister, and all the treasures of the saints, and said—I am very cold!'

When the chaplain came back with the blessed Sacrament, Archbishop Aldred was more than cold, for he was already dead and still. But William Malet would not yield. He and his Frenchmen fought day after day, with the energy of despair. They asked leave to put forth the body of the archbishop, and young Wulfstan, who was a pious man, insisted that leave should be given.

So the archbishop's coffin was thrust forth of the castle-gate, and the monks from the abbey came and bore it away, and buried it in the cathedral-church.

And then the fight went on, day after day, and more houses burnt, till York was all aflame. On the eighth day the number was in a light low over Archbishop Aldred's new-made grave. All was burnt, minister, churches, old Roman palaces, and all the glories of Constantine the Great and the mythic past.

The besiegers, hewing and hammering gate after gate, had now won all but the keep itself. Then Malet's heart failed him. A wife he had, and children, for their sake he turned coward, and fled by night, with a few men-at-arms, across the burning ruins.

¹ So says Florence of Worcester. The Norman chroniclers impute the act to Sigismund.

² Artillery is here used in its old English meaning for any kind of warlike engine. Cf. 1 Samuel xx. 40.

Then, into what once was York, the confederate earls and thanes marched in triumph, and proclaimed Edgar king—a king of dust and ashes.

And where were Edwin and Morcar the meanwhile? It is not told. Were they struggling against William at Stafford, or helping Edric the Wild and his Welshmen to besiege Chester? Probably they were aiding the insurrection, if not at these two points, still at some other of their great earldoms of Mercia and Chester. They seemed to triumph for a while during the autumn of 1069 the greater part of England seemed lost to William. Many Normans packed up their plunder and went back to France, and those whose hearts were too stout to return showed no mercy to the English, even as William showed none. To crush the heart of the people by massacres, and mutilations, and devastations, was the only hope of the invader and thoroughly he did his work whenever he had a chance.

CHAPTER XXV

HOW HERWARD FOUND A WISE MAN IN ENGLAND LIAN HIMSELF

THERE have been certain men so great, that he who describes them in words—much more pretends to analyse their inmost feelings—must be a very great man himself, or incur the accusation of presumption. And such a great man was William of Normandy—one of those unfathomable master-personages, who must not be rashly dragged on any stage. The genius of a Bulwer, in attempting to draw him, took care with a wise modesty not to draw him in too much detail—to confess always that there was much beneath and behind in William's character, which none, even of his contemporaries, could guess. And still more modest than Bulwer is this chronicler bound to be.

But one may fancy, for once in a way, what William's thoughts were, when they brought him the evil news of York. For we know what his acts were, and he acted up to his thoughts.

Hunting he was, they say, in the Forest of Dean, when first he heard that all England, north of the Watling Street, had broken loose, and that he was king of only half the Isle.

Did he—as when, hunting in the Forest of Ronen, he got the news of Harold's coronation—play with his bow, stinging and unstringing it nervously, till he had made up his mighty mind? Then did he go home to his lodge, and there spread on the rough oak board a parchment map of England, which no child would deign to learn from now, but was then good enough to guide armies to victory, because the eyes of a great general looked upon it?

As he pored over the map, by the light of a bog-dial torch or rush candle, what would I see upon it?

Three separate blazes of insurrection, from north-west to east, along the Watling Street.

At Chester, Edric, 'the wild Thane' who, according to Domesday-book, had lost vast lands in Shropshire, Alghitha, Harold's widow, and Blethwallon and all his Welsh, 'the white mantles' swarming along Chester streets, not as usually, to tear and ravage like the wild cats of their own rocks, but fast friends by blood with Aldyth, once their queen, on Penmaenmawr.¹ Edwin, the young earl, Alghitha's brother, Hereward's nephew—he must be with them too, if he were a man.

Eastward, round Stafford, and the centre of Mercia, another blaze of furious English valour. Morcar, Edwin's brother, must be there, as their earl, if he too was a man.

Then in the fens and Kesteven. What meant this news, that Hereward of St Omer was come again, and an army with him? That he was loving war on all Frenchmen, in the name of Sweyn, King of Denmark and of England? He is an outlaw, a desperado, a boastful swash-buckler, thought William, it may be, to himself. He found out, in after years, that he had mistaken his man.

And north, at York, in the rear of those three insurrections, lay Gospatric, Waltheof, and Maelgwyn, with the Northumbrian host. Durham was lost, and Comyn burnt therein. But York, so boasted William Malet, could hold out for a year. He should not need to hold out for so long.

And last, and worst of all, hung on the eastern coast the mighty fleet of Sweyn, who claimed England as his of right. The foe whom he had most feared ever since he set foot on English soil, a collision with whom had been inevitable all along, was come at last—but when would he strike his blow?

William knew, doubt it not, that the Danes had been defeated at Norwich. He knew, doubt it not, for his spies told him everything, that they had purposed entering the Wash. To prevent a junction between them and Hereward was impossible. He must prevent a junction between them and Edwin and Morcar.

He determined, it seems—for he did it—to cut the English line in two, and marched upon Stafford as its centre.

But all records of these campaigns are fragmentary, confused, contradictory. The Normans fought, and had no time to write history. The English, beaten and crushed, died and left no sign. The only chroniclers of the time are monks. And little could Ordericus Vitalis, or Florence of Worcester, or he of Peterborough, faithful as he was, who filled up the sad pages of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle—little could they see or understand of the masterly strategy which was conquering all England for Norman monks, in order that they, following the army like black ravens, might feast themselves upon the prey which others won for them. To them the death

¹ See the admirable description of the tragedy of Penmaenmawr, in Bulwer's *Harold*.

of an abbot, the squabbles of a monastery, the journey of a prelate to Rome, are more important than the manoeuvres which decided the life and freedom of tens of thousands.

So all we know is, that William fell upon Morcar's men at Stafford, and smote them with a great destruction, rolling the fugitives west and east, toward Edwin, perhaps, at Chester, certainly toward Hereward in the fens.

At Stafford met him the fugitives from York, Malet, his wife, and children, with the dreadful news that the Danes had joined Gospatric, and that York was lost.

William burst into terrible fury. He accused the wretched men of treason. He cut off their hands, thrust out their eyes, threw Malet into prison, and stormed on northward.

He lay at Pontefract for three weeks. The bulwarks over the Aire were broken down. But at last he crossed and marched on York.

No man opposed him. The Danes were given down to the Humber. Gospatric and Walthoof's hearts had failed them, and they had retired before the great captain.

Florence of Worcester says that William bought Earl Asbjorn off, giving him much money, and leave to lounge for his fleet along the coast.

Doubtless William would have so done if he could. Doubtless the angry and disappointed English raised such accusations against the earl, believing them to be true. But is not the simpler cause of Asbjorn's conduct to be found in the plain facts?—That he had sailed from Denmark to join Sweyn, his brother, on the throne. He found on his arrival that Gospatric and Walthoof had seized it in the name of Edgar Atheling. What had he to do more in England, save what he did?—go out into the Humber, and winter safely there, waiting till Sweyn should come with reinforcements in the spring?

Then William had his revenge; he destroyed, in the language of Scripture, 'the life of the land.' Far and wide the farms were burnt over their owners' heads, the growing crops upon the ground, the houses were houghed, the cattle driven off, while of human death and misery there was no end. Yorkshire and much of the neighbouring counties lay waste for the next nine years. It did not recover itself fully till several generations after.

The Danes had boasted that they would keep their Yule at York. William kept his Yule there instead. He sent to Winchester for the regalia of the Confessor, and in the midst of the blackened ruins, while the English for miles around wandered starving in the snows, feeding on carrion, on rats and mice, and at last upon each other's corpses, he sat in his royal robes, and gave away the lands of Edwin and Morcar to his henchmen. And thus, like the Romans, from whom he derived both his strategy and his civilisation, he 'made a solitude, and called it peace.'

He did not give away Walthoof's lands, and only part of Gospatric's. He wanted Gos-

patric, he loved Walthoof, and wanted him likewise.

Therefore through the desert which he himself had made he forced his way up to the Tees, a second time, over snow-covered moors, and this time St. Cuthbert sent no fog, being satisfied presumably with William's orthodox attachment to St. Peter and Rome, so the Conqueror treated quietly with Walthoof and Gospatric, who lay at Durham.

Gospatric got an earldom, from Tees to Tyne, and paid down for it much hard money and treasure,—bought it, in fact, he said.

Walthoof got back his earldom, and much of Morcar's. From the Tees to the Tees was to be his province.

And then, to the astonishment alike of Normans and English, and, it may be of himself, he married Judith, the Conqueror's niece, and became once more William's loved and trusted friend—or slave.

It seems inexplicable at first sight. Inexplicable, save as an instance of that fascination which the strong sometimes exert on the weak.

Then William turned southwest. Edwin, wild being, the dispossession of Thane of Shropshire, and the wilder Methwylan and his Welshmen, were still harrying and slaying. They had just attacked Shrewsbury. William would come upon them by a way they thought not of.

So over the backbone of England, by way probably of Malpas or Huddersfield, through pathless moors and bogs, down towards the plains of Lancashire and Cheshire he pushed over and on. His subjects from the plains of sunny Flanders could not face the cold the rain, the morasses, the hideous gorges, the valiant peasants still the stout and sturdyest race of men in all England—who set upon them in wooded glens, in wild stones on them from the limestone crags. They feared to be themselves, to go home.

'Towards might go back,' said William, 'he should go on.' If he could not take, he would walk. Whoever lagged, he would be farriest. And cheered by his example, the army at last debouched upon the Cheshire flats.

Then he fell upon Edwin, as he had taken upon Morcar. He drove the wild Welsh through the pass of Mold, and up into their native hills. He laid all waste with fire and sword for many a mile, as *Domesday* book testifies to this day. He strengthened the walls of Chester, trampled out the last embers of rebellion, and went down south to Salisbury, King of England once again.

Why did he not push on at once against the one rebel left alight, that of Hereward and his men?

It may be that he understood him and them. It may be that he meant to treat with Sweyn, as he had done, if the story be true, with Asbjorn. It is more likely that he could do no more, that his army, after so swift and long a campaign, required rest. It may be that the time of service of many of his mercenaries was expired.

Be that as it may, he mustered them at Old Sarum—the Roman British burgh which still stands on the down side—and rewarded them, according to their deserts, from the lands of the conquered English.

How soon Hereward knew all this, or how he passed the winter of 1070-71, we cannot tell. But to him it must have been a winter of latter perplexity.

It was impossible to get information from Edwin, and news from York was almost impossible to get, for Gilbert of Ghent stood between him and it.

He felt himself now pent in, all but trapped. Since he had set foot last in England ugly things had risen up, on which he had calculated too little, namely, Norman castles. A whole ring of them in Norfolk and Suffolk cut him off from the south. A castle at Cambridge closed the south end of the fens, another at Bedford, the western end, while Lincoln Castle to the north cut him off from York.

His men did not see the difficulty, and wanted him to march towards York, and clear all Lindsey and right up to the Humber.

Gladly would he have done so, when he heard that the Danes were wintering in the Humber.

'But how can we take Lincoln Castle without artillery or even a lattering-rain?'

'Let us march past it, then, and leave it behind.'

Alh, my sons,' said Hereward, lunging sulkily, 'do you suppose that the Manner spends his time—and Englishmen's life and labour—in heaping up those great stone mountains, that you and I may walk past them? They are put there just to prevent our walking past, unless we choose to have the garrison rallying out to attack our rear, and cut us off from home, and carry off our women into the laigam, when our backs are turned.'

The English swore, and declared that they had never thought of that.

'No. We drink too much ale on this side of the Channel, to think of that—in of anything beside.'

'But,' said Leofwin Prat, 'if we have no artillery, we can make some.'

'Spoken like yourself, good comrade. If we only knew how.'

'I know,' said Torfrida. 'I have read of such things in books of the ancients, and I have watched them making continually—I little knew why, or that I should ever turn engineer.'

'What is there that you do not know?' cried they all at once. And Torfrida actually showed herself a fair practical engineer.

But where was men to come from? Iron for catapult springs, iron for ram-heads, iron for bolts and bars?

'Torfrida,' said Hereward, 'you are wise. Can you use the divining rod?'

'Why, my knight?'

'Because there might be iron-ore in the woods, and if you could find it by the rod, we might get it up and smelt it.'

Torfrida said humbly that she would try; and walked with the divining rod between her pretty fingers for many a mile in wood and wold, wherever the ground looked red and rusty. But she never found any iron.

'We must take the tires off the cart-wheels,' said Leofwin Prat.

'But how will the carts do without? For we shall want them if we march.'

'In Provence, where I was born, the wheels were made out of one round piece of wood. Could we not cut wheels like them?' asked Torfrida.

'You are the wise woman as usual,' said Hereward.

Torfrida burst into a violent flood of tears, no one knew why.

There came over her a vision of the creaking carts, and the little sleek oxen, dove coloured and dove-eyed, with their canvas mantles tied neatly on to keep off heat and flies, lugging on with their light load of vine and olive-twigs beneath the blazing southern sun. When should she see the sun once more? She looked up at the brown branches overhead, howling in the December gale, and down at the brown fen below, dying into mist and darkness as the low December sun died down; and it seemed as if her life was dying down with it. There would be no more sun, and no more summers, for her upon this earth.

None certainly for her poor old mother. Her southern blood was churning more and more beneath the latter sky of Kesteven. The fall of the leaf had brought with it rheumatism, ague, and many miseries. Cunning old leech-wives treated the French lady with tunces, mugwort, and logbean, and good wine enough. But, like David of old, she got no heat, and before Yuletide came, she had perished herself safely out of this world, and into the world to come. And Torfrida's heart was the more light when she saw her go.

She was absorbed utterly in Hereward and his plots. She lived for nothing else, hardly even for her child, and clinging to her husband's fortunes all the more fiercely, the more desperate they seemed.

So that small band of gallant men laboured on, waiting for the Danes, and trying to make artillery and take Lincoln keep. And all the while, so unequal is fortune when God wills—throughout the Southern Weald, from Hastings to Hud-head, every corner glared with charcoal heaps, every glen was burrowed with iron diggups, every hammer-pound stamped and gurgled night and day, smelting and forging English iron, wherewith the Frenchmen might slay Englishmen.

Wilham—though perhaps he knew it not himself—had, in securing Essex and Surrey, secured the then great ironfield of England, and an unlimited supply of weapons. And to that circumstance, it may be, as much as to any other, the success of his campaigns may be due.

It must have been in one of these December

days that a handful of knights came through the Bruneswald, mud and blood-be-spattered, urging on tired horses, as men desperate and forlorn. And the foremost of them all, when he saw Hereward at the gate of Bourne, leaped down, and threw his arms round his neck, and burst into bitter weeping.

'Hereward, I know you, though you know me not. I am your nephew, Morcar Algarsson, and all is lost.'

As the winter ran on, other fugitives came in, mostly of rank and family. At last Edwin himself came, young and fair, like Morcar, he who should have been the Conqueror's son-in-law, for whom his true-love pined, as he pined in vain. Where were Sweyn and his Danes? Whither should they go till he came?

'To Ely,' answered Hereward.

Whether or not it was his wit which first seized on the military capabilities of Ely is not told. Leofric the deacon, who is likely to know best, says that there were men already there holding out against William; and that they sent for Hereward. But it is not clear from his words whether they were fugitives, or merely bold Abbot Thurstan and his monks.

It is but probable nevertheless, that Hereward, as the only man among the fugitives who ever showed any ability whatsoever, and who was also the only leader (save Morcar) connected with the fen, conceived the famous 'Camp of Refuge,' and made it a formidable fact. Be that as it may, Edwin and Morcar went to Ely, and there joined an Earl Tofti (according to Richard of Ely), unknown to history, a Seward Barn, 'the boy or the chieftain,' who had been dispossessed of lands in Lincolnshire, and other valiant and noble gentlemen—the last remnants of the English aristocracy. And there they sat in Abbot Thurstan's hall, and waited for Sweyn and the Danes.

But the worst job's messenger who, during that evil winter and spring, came into the fen, was Bishop Egelwin of Durham. He it was, most probably, who brought the news of Berkshire laid waste with fire and sword. He it was, most certainly, who brought the worst news still, that Gospatric and Waltheof were gone over to the king. He was at Durham, seemingly, when he saw that, and fled for his life, ere evil overtook him for to yield to William that brave bishop had no mind.

But when Hereward heard that Waltheof was

¹ *Ordericus Vitalis* says that he and his brother Aldred were 'sons of Ethelgar, the late king's grandson.' In another place he makes Ethelgar a 'cousin of King Edward.' Mr. Forester, in his notes to *Ordericus Vitalis*, says (with probability) that the 'late king' may have been Edward the Elder, who had a son named Alward Snow, whose son Algar (Ethelgar) was probably the father of Seward, Barn and Aldred, as well as of Brihtic, who had the largest possessions in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire. If so, we have a fresh illustration of the fact that the lands of England had, before the Conquest, been accumulated in the hands of an aristocracy numerically small, and closely interrelated in blood, a state of things sufficient in itself to account for the easy victory of the French.

married to the Conqueror's niece, he smote his hands together, and cursed him, and the mother who bore him to Seward the Stout.

'Could thy father rise from the grave he would spit thy craven head in the very lap of the Frenchwoman.'

'A hard lap will he find it, Hereward,' said Toftida. 'I know her—wanton, false, and vain. Heaven grant he do not see the day he ever saw her!'

'Heaven grant he may rue it! Would that her bosom were knives and fish-hooks, like that of the statue in the fairy tale. See what he has done for us! He is cruel, not only of his own hands, but of poor Morcar's too, and of half his earldom. He is Earl of Huntingdon, of Cambridge, they say—of this ground on which we stand. What right have I here now? How can I call on a single man to arm, as I could in Morcar's name? I am an outlaw here, and a robber, and so is every man with me. And do you think that William did not know that? He saw well enough what he was doing when he set up that great brainless idol as earl again. He wanted to spit up the Danish folk, and he has done it. The Northumbrians will stick to Waltheof. They think him a mighty hero, because he held York gate alone with his own axe against all the French.'

'Well, that was a gallant deed.'

'Fish! we are all gallant men, we English. It is not courage that we want, it is brains. So the Yorkshire and Lindsey men, and the Nottingham men too, will go with Waltheof. And round here, and all through the fens, every coward, every prudent man even—every man who likes to be within the law, and to feel his head safe on his shoulder—no blame to him—will draw off from me for fear of this new earl, and leave us to end as a handful of outlaws. I see it all. And William sees it all. He is wise enough, the Mamzer, and so is his father Beht, to whom he will go home some day. Yes, Toftida, he went on after a pause, more gently, but in a tone of exquisite sadness, 'you are right, as you always are. I am no match for that man. I see it now.'

'I never said that. Only—'

'Only you told me again and again that he was the wisest man on earth.'

'And yet, for that very reason, I had you win glory without end by defying the wisest man on earth.'

'And do you bid me do it still?'

'God knows what I bid,' said Toftida, bursting into tears. 'Let me go pray, for I never needed it more.'

Hereward watched her kneeling, as he sat moody, all but desperate. Then he glided to her side and said gently—

'Teach me how to pray, Toftida. I can say a pater or an ave. But that does not comfort a man's heart, as far as I could ever find. Teach me to pray, as you and my mother pray.'

And she put her arms round the wild man's neck, and tried to teach him like a little child.

CHAPTER XXVI

HOW HERWARD FULFILLED HIS WORDS TO
THE PRIOR OF THE GOLDEN BOROUGH

In the course of that winter died good Abbot Brand. Hereward went over to see him, and found him moaning to himself texts of Isaiah, and confessing the sins of his people.

'Woe to the vineyard that bringeth forth wild grapes. Woe to those that join house to house and field to field—like us, and the Goldwinsons, and every man that could—till we stood alone in the land. Many houses, great and fan, shall be without inhabitants. It is all for told in holy writ, Hereward, my son. Woe to those who rise early to fill themselves with strong drink, and the tabret and harp are in their fists but they regard not the works of the Lord. Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge. Ah—those Frenchmen have knowledge, and too much of it while we have brains filled with ale instead of justice. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure—and all go down into it, one by one. And dost thou think thou shalt escape, Herward, thou stout-hearted?'

'I neither know nor care—but this I know, that whithersoever I go, I shall go sword in hand.'

'Tary that take the sword shall perish by the sword,' said Brand, and blessed Herward and died.

A week after came news that Thorold of Malmesbury was coming to take the abbey of Peterborough, and had got as far as Stamford, with a right royal train.

Then Herward sent Abbot Thorold word that if he or his Frenchman put foot into Peterborough, his Hereward would hunt it over their heads. And that if he rode a mile beyond Stamford town, he should walk into it barefoot in his shirt.

Whereon Thorold abode at Stamford, and kept up his spirits by singing the song of Roland, which some say he himself composed.

A week after that, and the Danes were come.

A mighty fleet, with Sweyn Ulfsson at their head, went up the Ouse towards Ely. Another, with Ashorn at their head, having joined them off the mouth of the Humber, sailed (it seems) up the Nene. All the chivalry of Denmark and Ireland was come, and with it all the chivalry, and the unchivalry, of the Baltic shores—Vikings from Jomsburg and Aikona, Gottlanders from Wisby, and with them their heathen tributaries, Wends, Finns, Esthoniens, Comluders, Russians from Novogorod and the heart of Holmgard, Letts who still offered, in the forest of Rugen, human victims to the four-headed Swantowit, foul hordes in sheepskins and primeval filth, who might have been scented from Hinnantanon Ness ever since their ships had rounded the Skaw.

Hereward hurried to them with all his men. He was anxious, of course, to prevent their plundering the landfolk as they went—and that the savages from the Baltic shore would certainly do, if they could, however reasonable the Danes, Orkney-men, and Irish Ostmen might be.

Food, of course, they must take where they could find it, but outrages were not a necessary, though a too common, adjunct to the process of emptying a farmer's granaries.

He found the Danes in a dangerous mood, sulky and disgusted, as they had good right to be. They had gone to the Humber, and found nothing but mud, the land waste, the French holding both the shores of the Humber, and Ashorn covering in Humber-mouth, hardly able to feed his men. They had come to conquer England, and nothing was left for them to conquer but a few peat-bogs. Then they would have what there was in them. Every one knew that gold grew up in England out of the ground, wherever a monk put his foot. And they would plunder Crowland. Their forefathers had done it, and had fared none the worse. English gold they would have, if they could not get fat English manors.

'No—not Crowland!' said Hereward. Any place but Crowland, endowed and honoured by Canute the Great—Crowland, whose abbot was a Danish nobleman, whose monks were Danes to a man, of their own flesh and blood. Canute's soul would rise up in Valhalla and curse them, if they took the value of a penny from St Guthlac. St Guthlac was then good friend. He would send them bread, meat, ale, all they needed, but woe to the man who set foot upon his ground.

Hereward sent off messengers to Crowland, warning all to be ready to escape into the fens, and entreating Ulfketyl to empty his storehouses into his barges, and send food to the Danes ere a day was past. And Ulfketyl worked hard and well, till a string of barges wound its way through the fens, laden with beaver and bread, and ale-barrels in plenty, and with monks too who welcomed the Danes as their brethren, talked to them in their own tongue, blessed them in St Guthlac's name as the saviours of England, and then went home again, chanting so sweetly their thanks to heaven for their safety, that the wild Vikings were awed, and agreed that St Guthlac's men were wise folk and open-hearted, and that it was a shame to do them harm.

But plunder they must have.

'And plunder you shall have!' said Hereward, as a sudden thought struck him. 'I will show you the way to the Golden Borough—the richestminster in England, and all the treasures of the Golden Borough shall be yours, if you will treat Englishmen as friends, and spare the people of the fens.'

It was a great crime in the eyes of men of that time. A great crime, taken simply, in Hereward's own eyes. But necessity has no law. Something the Danes must have, and ought to have, and St. Peter's gold was better

in their purses than in that of Thorold and his French monks.

So he led them up the fens and rivers, till they came into the old Nene, which men call Catwater and Muscal now.

As he passed Nomanlandhurne, and the mouth of the Portland river, he trembled, and trusted that the Danes did not know that they were within three miles of St Guthlac's sanctuary. But they went on ignorant, and up the Muscal till they saw St. Peter's towers on the wooded rise, and behind them the great forest which is now Milton Park.

There were two parties in Peterborough minster, a smaller faction of stout-hearted English, a larger one which favoured William and the French customs, with Prior Herhun at their head. Herhun wanted not for for-sight, and he knew that evil was coming on him. He knew that the Danes were in the land. He knew that Herward was with them. He knew that they had come to Crowland. Herward could never mean to let them sack it. Peterborough must be their point. And Herhun set his teeth, like a bold man determined to abide the worst, and barred and barricaded every gate and door.

That night a hapless churchwarden—Ywa was his name—might have been seen galloping through Milton and Castor Hanglands, and on by Barnack quarries over Southorpe heath, with saddlebags of huge size stuffed with 'gospels, mass robes, cassocks, and other garments, and such other small things as he could carry away.' And he came before day to Stamford, where Abbot Thorold lay at his ease in his inn with his *homines d'armes* asleep in the hall.

And the churchwarden knocked them up, and drew Abbot Thorold's curtains with a face such as his who

'drew Priam's curtain in the deed of night,
And would have told him half his Troy was burned',

and told Abbot Thorold that the monks of Peterborough had sent him, and that unless he saddled and rode his best that night, with his *mainie* of men-at-arms, his Golden Borough would be even as Troy town by morning light.

'*A moi hommes d'armes*!' shouted Thorold, as he used to shout whenever he wanted to scourge his wretched English monks at Midnesbury into some French fashion.

The men leaped up and poned in, growling.

'Take me this monk and kick him into the street for waking me with such news.'

'But, gracious lord, the heathen will surely burn Peterborough, and folks said that you were a mighty man of war.'

'So I am, but if I were Roland, Oliver, and Turpin rolled into one, how am I to fight Herward and the Danes with forty men-at-arms? Answer me that, thou dunder-headed English porker.'

So Ywa was kicked into the cold, while Thorold raged up and down his chamber in mantle and slippers, wringing his hands over the treasure of the Golden Borough, snatched

from his fingers just as he was closing them upon it.

That night the monks of Peterborough prayed in the minster till the long hours passed into the short. The corrodiers, and servants of the monastery, fled from the town outside into the Milton woods. The monks prayed on inside till an hour after matins. When the first flush of the summer's dawn began to show in the north-eastern sky, they heard, mingling with their own chant, another chant, which Peterborough had not heard since it was Medehamstead, three hundred years ago, the terrible Ych-hey-saa-saa—the war song of the Vikings of the north.

Their chant stopped of itself. With blanched faces and trembling knees, they fled, regardless of all discipline, up into the minster tower, and from the leads looked out north-eastward on the fen.

The first rays of the summer sun¹ were just steaming over the vast sheet of mistral, and glittering upon the winding river, and on a winding fur, too, seemingly endless, of scarlet coats and shields, black hulls, gilded prows and vanes and beak heads, and the flash and foam of innumerable oars.

And nearer and louder came the oar roll, like thunder working up from the east, and mingled with it, that grim yet laughing Hey-saa, which he spoke in its very note the revelry of slaughter.

The ships had all their sails on deck. But as they came nearer the monks could see the banners of the two foremost vessels.

The one was the red and white of the terrible Danelaw. The other, the scarcely less terrible Waki knot of Herward.

'He will burn the minster!' He has vowed to do it. As a child he vowed, and he must do it. In this very minster the head entered into him and possessed him, and to this minster has the head brought him back to do his will. Sathur, my brethren, having a special spite (as must needs be) against St. Peter, rock and pillar of the Holy Church, chose out and inspired this man, even from his mother's womb, that he might be the foe and robber of St. Peter, and the hater of all who, like my humility, honour him, and strive to bring this English land in due obedience to that blessed Apostle. Bring forth the relics, my brethren. Bring forth, above all things, those things of St. Peter's own chains, the special glory of our monastery—and perhaps its safeguard this day.

Some such bombast would any monk of those days have talked in like case. And yet, so strange a thing is man, he might have been withal, like Herhun, a shrewd and valiant man.

They brought out all the relics. They brought out the filings themselves, in a box of gold. They held them out over the walls at the ships, and called on all the saints to whom

¹ 'This befell on the fourth day of the Nonas of June.' So says the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, from which the details of the sack are taken.

they belonged. But they stopped that line of scarlet, black, and gold, as much as their spiritual descendants stop the lava-stream of Vesuvius, when they hold out similar matters at them, with a hope unchanged by the experience of eight hundred years. The Heysaa rose louder and nearer. The Danes were coming. And they came.

And all the while a thousand skylarks rose from off the fen, and chanted their own chant aloft, as if appealing to heaven against that which man's greed, and man's rage, and man's superstition, had made of this fair earth of God.

The relics had been brought out—but, as they would not work, the only thing to be done was to put them back again and hide them safe, lest they should bow down like Bel and stoop like Nebo, and be carried, like them, into captivity themselves, being worth a very large sum of money in the eyes of the more Christian part of the Danish host.

Then to hide the treasures as well as they could, which (says the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) they hid somewhere in the steeples.

The Danes were landing now. The shout which they gave as they leaped on shore made the hearts of the poor monks sink low. 'Would they be murdered as well as robbed?' Perhaps not—probably not. Hereward would see to that. And some wanted to retaliate.

Herluf would not hear of it. They were safe enough. St Peter's relics might not have worked a miracle on the spot—but they must have done something. St Peter had been appealed to on his honour, and on his honour he must surely take the matter up. At all events, the walls and gates were strong, and the Danes had no artillery. Let them howl and rage round the holy place, till Abbot Thorold and the Frenchmen of the country rose and drove them to their ships.

In that last thought the cunning Frenchman was not so far wrong. The Danes pushed up through the little town, and to the monster gates—but entrance was impossible and they prowled round and round like 'raging wolves about a winter steading—but found no crack of entry.

Prior Herluf grew bold, and coming to the heads of the gateway tower, looked over cautiously, and holding up a certain most sacred emblem—not to be profaned in these pages—cursed them in the name of his whole Pantlecon.

'Aha, Herluf! Are you there?' asked a short square man in gay armour. 'Have you forgotten the peatstack outside Bolldyke Gate, and how you bade light it under me thirty years since!'

'Thou art Winter!' and the prior uttered what would be considered from any but a churchman's lips a blasphemous and blood-thirsty curse.

'Aha! That goes like rain off a duck's back to one who has been a minister scholar in his time. You! Danes! Oetmen! down! If you

shoot at that man, I'll cut your heads off! He is the oldest foe I have in the world, and the only one who ever hit me without my hitting him again, and nobody shall touch him but me. So down bows, I say.'

The Danes—humorous all of them—saw that there was a jest toward, and perhaps some earnest too, and joined in jeering the prior.

Herluf had ducked his head behind the parapet, not from cowardice, but simply because he had on no mail, and might be shot any moment. But when he heard Winter forbid them to touch him, he lifted up his head, and gave his old pupil as good as he brought.

With his sharp swift French priest's tongue he sneered, he jeered, he scolded, he argued, and then threatened. Suddenly changing his tone, in words of real eloquence he appealed to the superstitious of his hearers. He threatened them with supernatural vengeance. He set before them all the terrors of the unseen world.

Some of them began to slink away frightened. St Peter was an ill man to have a blood feud with.

Winter stood, laughing and jeering in return, for full ten minutes. At last 'I asked, and you have not answered, have you forgotten the old peatstack outside Bolldyke Gate? For if you have, The Wake has not. He has piled it against the gate, and it should be burnt through by this time. Go and see.'

Herluf disappeared with a curse.

'Now, you sea-cocks,' said Winter, springing up. 'We'll to the Bolldyke Gate, and all start fan.'

The Bolldyke Gate was on fire, and more, so were the suburbs. There was no time to save them, as Hereward would gladly have done, for the sakes of the corrobbers. They must go—on to the Bolldyke Gate. Who cared to put out flames behind him, with all the treasures of Golden Borough before him? In a few minutes all the town was alight. In a few minutes more, the monastery likewise.

A fire is detestable enough at all times, but most detestable by day. At night it is customary, a work of darkness which lights up the dark, picturesque, magnificent, with a fitness Tartarean and diabolical. But under a glaring sun, amid green fields and blue skies, all its wickedness is revealed without its beauty. You see its works and little more. The flame is hardly noticed. All that is seen is a canker eating up God's works, breaking the bones of its prey with a horrible cracking uglier than all stage-scene glares, cruelly and shamelessly under the very eye of the great, honest, kindly sun.

And that felt Hereward, as he saw Peterborough burn. He could not put his thoughts into words, as men of this day can—so much the better for him, perhaps. But he felt all the more intensely—as did men of his day—the things he could not speak. All he said was, aside to Winter—

'It is a dark job. I wish it had been done in the dark.' And Winter knew what he meant.

Then the men rushed into the Bolldyke Gate, while Hereward and Winter stood and looked with their men, whom they kept close together, waiting their commands. The Danes and their allies cared not for the great glowing heap of peat. They cared not for each other, hardly for themselves. They rushed into the gap, they thrust the glowing heap inward through the gateway with their lances, they thrust each other down into it, and trampled over them to fall themselves, rising scorched and withered, and yet struggling on toward the gold of the Golden Borough. One savage Lett caught another round the waist, and hurled him bodily into the fire, crying in his wild tongue—

'You will make a good stepping-stone for me.'

'That is not fair,' quoth Hereward, and clove him to the chine.

It was wild work. But the Golden Borough was won.

'We must in now and save the monks,' said Hereward, and dashed over the embers.

He was only just in time. In the midst of the great count were all the monks, huddled together like a flock of sheep, some kneeling, most weeping bitterly, after the fashion of monks.

Only Herlum stood in front of them, at bay, a lofty crucifix in his hand. He had no mind to weep. But with a face of calm and bitter wrath, he uttered words of peace and entreaty. They were what the time needed. Therefore they should be given. To-morrow he would write to Bishop Egelsin, to excommunicate with hell, hook, and handle, to the lowest put of Tartarus, all who had done the deed.

But to-day he spoke thus in fair. However, his fair speeches profited little, not being understood by a huddle of Letts and Finns, who howled and bayed at him, and tried to tear the crucifix from his hand, but feared 'The white Christ.'

They were already gaining courage from their own yells, in a moment more blood would have been shed, and then a general massacre must have ensued.

Hereward saw it, and shouting 'After me, Hereward's men! A Wake! A Wake!' swung Letts and Finns right and left like cornsheaves, and stood face to face with Herlum.

An angry savage smote him on the hind head full with a stone axe. He staggered, and then looked round and laughed.

'Fool! hast thou not heard that Hereward's armour was forged by dwarfs in the mountain-bowels? Off, and hunt for gold, or it will be all gone.'

The Finn, who was astonished at getting no more from his blow than a few sparks, and expected instant death in return, took the hint and vanished jabbering, as did his fellows.

'Now, Herlum the Frenchman!' said Hereward.

'Now, Hereward the robber of saints!' said Herlum.

It was a fine sight. The soldier and the

churchman, the Englishman and the Frenchman, the man of the then world, and the man of the then Church, jotted fairly, face to face.

Hereward tried for one moment to stare down Herlum. But those terrible eye glances, before which Vikings had quailed, turned off harmless from the more terrible glance of the man who believed himself backed by the Maker of the universe, and all the hierarchy of heaven.

A sharp, unlovely face it was, though, like many a great churchman's face of those days, it was neither thin nor haggard. But rather round, sleek, of a puffy and unwholesome paleness. But there was a thin lip above a broad square jaw, which showed that Herlum was neither fool nor coward.

'A robber and a child of Belial thou hast been from thy cradle, and a robber and a child of Belial thou art now. Dare thy last iniquity. Slay the servants of St Peter on St Peter's altar, with thy worthy comrades, the heathen Saracens,¹ and set up Mahound with them in the holy place.'

Hereward laughed so puffy a laugh, that the prior was taken aback.

'Slay St Peter's monks.' Not even his rats! I am a monk's knight, as my knot testifies. There shall not a hair of your head be touched. Only, I must clear out all Frenchmen hence, and all Englishmen likewise, as stinks have chosen to jock with the cranes. Here, Hereward's men! march these traitors and their French prior safe out of the walls, and into Milton woods, to look after their poor comrades.'

'Out of this place I stir not. Here I am, and here I will live or die, as St Peter shall send aid.'

But as he spoke he was precipitated rudely forward, and hurried almost into Hereward's arms. The whole body of monks, when they heard Hereward's words, cared to hear no more, but, desperate between fear and joy, rushed forward, bearing away their prior in the midst.

'So go the rats out of Peterborough, and so is my dream fulfilled. Now for the treasure, and then to fly.'

But Herlum thrust himself clear of the frantic mob of monks, and turned back on Hereward.

'Thou wast dubbed knight in that church!'

'I know it, man, and that church and the relics of the saints in it are safe therefore. Hereward gives his word.'

'That—but not that only, if thou art a true knight, as thou holdest, Englishman.'

Hereward growled savagely, and made an ugly step toward Herlum. That was a point which he would not have questioned.

'Then behave as a knight, and save, save'—as the monks dragged him away—'save the heathen! There are women—ladies there!' shouted he, as he was borne off.

They never met again on earth. But both comforted themselves in after years, that two old

¹ The Danes were continually mistaken by medieval churchmen for Saracens, and the Saracens considered to be idolaters. A *maumet* or idol means a Mahomet.

enemies' last deed in common had been one of mercy.

Hereward uttered a cry of horror. If the wild Letts, even the Jomsburgers, had got in, all was lost. He rushed to the door. It was not yet burst, but a bench, swung by strong arms, was battering it in fast.

'Winter! Gery! Swards! To me, Hereward's men! Stand back, fellows. Here are friends here inside. If you do not, I'll cut you down.'

But in vain. The door was burst, and in poured the savage mob. Hereward, unable to stop them, headed them, or pretended to do so, with five or six of his own men round him, and went into the hall.

On the rushes lay some half-dozen groans. They were hunched instantly, simply because they were there. Hereward saw but could not prevent. He ran as hard as he could to the foot of the wooden stairs which led to the upper floor.

'Guard the stair-foot, Winter!' and he ran up.

Two women covered upon the floor, shrieking and praying with hands clasped over their heads. He saw that the arms of one of them were of the most delicate whiteness, and judging her to be the lady, bent over her. 'Lady, you are safe. I will protect you. I am Hereward.'

She sprang up, and threw herself with a scream into his arms.

'Hereward! Hereward! Save me. I am—'

'Alfrida!' said Hereward.

It was Alfrida, if possible more beautiful than ever.

'I have got you!' she cried. 'I am safe now. Take me away—Out of this horrible place—Take me into the woods—Anywhere—Only do not let me be hurt here—stilled like a rat. Give me air! Give me water!' and she clung to him so madly that Hereward, as he held her in his arms, and gazed on her extraordinary beauty, forgot Torfrida for the second time.

But there was no time to indulge in evil thoughts, even had any crossed his mind. He caught her in his arms, and exclaiming the maid to follow, hurried down the stair.

Winter and the Swards were defending the foot with swinging blades. The savages were howling round like curs about a bull, and when Hereward appeared above with the women, there was a loud yell of rage and envy.

He should not have the women to himself. They would share the plunder equally—was shouted in half a dozen barbarous dialects.

'Have you left any valuables in the chamber?' whispered he to Alfrida.

'Yes, jewels—tokens—Let them have all, only save me!'

'Let me pass!' roared Hereward. 'There is rich booty in the room above, and you may have it as these ladies' ransom. Then you do not touch. Back, I say, let me pass!'

And he rushed forward. Winter and the housecarles formed round him and the women,

and hurried down the hall while the savages hurried up the ladder, to quarrel over their spoil.

They were out in the courtyard, and so for the moment. But whither should he take her?

'To Earl Asbiorn,' said one of the Swards. But how to find him?

'There is Bishop Christein!' And the bishop was caught and stopped.

'This is an evil day's work, Sir Hereward.'

'Then help to mend it by taking care of these ladies, like a man of God.' And he explained the case.

'You may come safely with me, my poor lamb,' said the bishop. 'I am glad to find something to do fit for a churchman. To me, my housecarles.'

But they were all off plundering.

'We will stand by you and the ladies, and see you safe down to the ships,' said Winter, and so they went off.

Hereward would gladly have gone with them, as Alfrida piteously entreated him. But he heard his name called on every side in angry tones.

'Who wants Hereward?'

'Earl Asbiorn—Here he is.'

'Those scoundrel monks have hidden all the altar furniture. If you wish to save them from being tortured to death, you had best find it.'

Hereward ran with him into the cathedral. It was a hideous sight, torn books and vestments, broken tabernacle-work, foul savages swarming in and out of every dark aisle and cloister, like wolves in search of prey, five or six ruffians aloft upon the roof-screen, one tearing the golden crown from the head of the crucifix, another the golden footstool from its feet.¹

As Hereward came up, crucifix and man fell together, crashing upon the pavement, amid shouts of brutal laughter.

He hurried past them, shuddering, into the choir. The altar was bare, the golden pallium which covered it gone.

'It may be in the crypt below. I suppose the monks keep their relics there,' said Asbiorn.

'No! Not there. Do not touch the relics! Would you have the curse of all the saints? Stay! I know an old hiding-place. It may be there. Up into the steeple with me.'

And in a chamber in the steeple they found the golden pall, and treasures countless and wonderful.

'We had better keep the knowledge of this to ourselves awhile,' said Earl Asbiorn, looking with greedy eyes on a heap of wealth such as he had never beheld before.

'Not we! Hereward is a man of his word, and we will share and share alike.'

'What will you?' And Asbiorn caught him by the arm. 'This treasure belongs of right to Swoyn the king.'

¹ The crucifix was probably of the Greek pattern, in which the figure stood upon a flat slab projecting from the cross.

'It belongs to St. Peter, who must lend it to-day to save the poor fen-men from robbers and ravishers, and not to any king on earth. Take golf thine hand, jarl, if thou wouldst keep it safe on thy body.'

Ashorn drew back, gnashing his teeth with rage. To strike Hereward was more than he, or any Berserker in his host, dared do and besides, he felt that Hereward's words were just.

'Hither!' shouted Hereward down the stair. 'Up hither, Vikings, Berserkers, and sea cocks all! Here, Jutlanders, Jomsburgers, Letts, Finns, with their sons and devils' sons all! Here is gold, here is the dwarf's work, here is the dragon's hoard! Come up and take your Polakaswarf! You would not get a richer out of the kaiser's treasury. Here, wolves and ravens, eat gold, drink gold, roll in gold, and know that Hereward is a man of his word, and pays his soldiers' wages royally.'

They rushed up the narrow stair, trampling each other to death, and thrust Hereward and the earl, choking, into a corner. The room was so full for a few moments that some died in it. Hereward and Ashorn, protected by their strong armour, forced their way to the narrow window, and breathed through it, looking out upon the sea of flame below.

'I am sorry for you, jarl,' said Hereward. 'But for the poor Englishmen's sake, so it must be.'

'King Sweyn shall judge of that. Why dost hold my wrist, man?'

'Daggers are apt to get loose in such a press as this.'

'Always the Wake,' said Ashorn, with a forced laugh.

'Always the Wake. And as thou saidst, King Sweyn the just shall judge between us.'

Jarl Ashorn swung from him, and into the now thinning press. Soon only a few remained, to watch, by the glare of the flames, for what their fellows might have overlooked.

'Now the play is played out,' said Hereward, 'we may as well go down and to our ships.'

Some drunken ruffians would have leaped the church for mere mischief. But Ashorn, as well as Hereward, stopped that. And gradually they got the men down to the ships, some drunk, some struggling under plunder, some cursing and quarrelling because nothing had fallen to their lot. It was a hideous scene. But one to which Hereward, as well as Ashorn, was too well accustomed to see aught in it save an hour's inevitable trouble in getting the men on board.

The monks had all fled. Only Leofwin the Long was left, and he lay sick in the infirmary. Whether he was burnt therein, or saved by Hereward's men, was not told.

And so was the Golden Borough sacked and burnt. Now then, whither?

The Danes were to go to Ely, and join the army there. Hereward would march on to Stamford; secure the town if he could; then

to Huntingdon, to secure it likewise, and on to Ely afterwards.

'You will not leave me among these savages?' said Alfrida.

'Heaven forbid! You shall come with me as far as Stamford, and then I will set you on your way.'

'My way?' said Alfrida, in a bitter and hopeless tone.

Hereward mounted her on a good horse, and rode beside her, looking and he well knew it a very perfect knight. Soon they began to talk. What had brought Alfrida to Peterborough, of all places on earth?

'A woman's lot! Because I am rich—and some say fair. I am a puppet, a slave, a prey. I was going back to my—to Dulfen.'

'Have you been away from him, then?'

'What? Do you not know?'

'How should I know, lady?'

'Yes, most true. How should Hereward know anything about Alfrida? But I will tell you. Maybe you may not care to hear.'

'About you? Anything I have often longed to know how what you were doing?'

'Is it possible? Is there one human being left on earth who cares to hear about Alfrida? Then listen. You know that when Gospatric fled to Scotland his sons went with him— young Gospatric, Waltheof,¹ and he, Dollin. Ethelred's, his girl, went too—and she is to marry, they say, Duncan, Malcolm's eldest son by Ingelborg, so Gospatric will find himself, some day, father-in-law of the King of Scots.'

'I will warrant him to find his nest well lined, wherever he be. But of yourself?'

'I refused to go. I could not face again that bleak black North. But that is no concern of Hereward's—'

Hereward was on the point of saying, 'Can anything concern you, and not be interesting to me?'

But she went on.

'I refused, and—'

'And he unsewed you?' asked he fiercely.

'Better if he had. Better if he had tied me to his stirrup, and scourged me along into Scotland, than have left me to new dangers, and to old temptations.'

'What temptations?'

Alfrida did not answer. But went on—

'He told me in his lofty Scots fashion, that I was free to do what I list. That he had long since seen that I cared not for him, and that he would find many a fairer lady in his own land.'

'There he lied. So you did not care for him? He is a noble knight.'

'What is that to me? Women's hearts are not to be bought and sold with their bodies,

¹ This Waltheof Gospatricson must not be confused with Waltheof Stewardson, the young earl. He became a wild border chieftain, then Baron of Atterdale, and then gave Atterdale to his sister, Queen Ethelred's, and turned monk, and at last abbot, of Crowland, crawling home, poor fellow, like many another, to die in peace in the sanctuary of the Danes.

as I was sold. Care for him? I care for no creature upon earth. Once I cared for Hereward, like a silly child. Now I care not even for him.'

Hereward was sorry to hear that. Men are vainer than women, just as peacocks are vainer than peahens, and Hereward was—alas for him!—a specially vain man. Of course, for him to fall in love with Alfrida would have been a shameful sin, he would not have committed it for all the treasures of Constantinople; but it was a not unpleasant thought that Alfrida should fall in love with him. But he only said, tenderly and courteously—

'Alas! poor lady!'

'Poor lady! Too true, that last. For whither am I going now? Back to that man once more.'

'To Dolfin?'

'To my master, like a innaway slave. I went down south to Queen Matilda. I knew her well, and she was kind to me, as she is to all things that breathe. But now that Gospatric is come into the king's grace again, and has bought the earldom of Northumbria, from Tesc to Tyne—'

'Bought the earldom?'

'That has he, and paid for it right heavily.'

'Traitor and fool! He will not keep it seven years. The Frenchman will pick a quarrel with him, and cheat him out of earldom and money too.'

'The which William did, within three years.'

'May it be so! But when he came into the king's grace, he must needs demand me back in his son's name.'

'What does Dolfin want with you?'

'His father wants my money, and stipulated for it with the king. And besides, I suppose I am a pretty plaything enough still.'

'You? You are divine, perfect. Dolfin is right. How could a man who had once enjoyed you live without you?'

Alfrida laughed, a laugh full of meaning, but what that meaning was, Hereward could not divine.

'So now,' she said, 'what Hereward has to do, as a true and courteous knight, is to give Alfrida safe conduct, and, if he can, a guard, and to deliver her up loyally and knightly to his old friend and fellow-warrior, Dolfin (his patrimonial earl of whatever he can lay hold of for the current month).'

'Are you in earnest?'

Alfrida laughed one of her strange laughs, looking straight before her. Indeed she had never looked Hereward in the face during the whole ride.

'What are those open holes? Graves?'

'They are Barnack stone quarries, which Waltheof the Wittol has just given away to Crowland. Better that, though, than keep them for his new French cousins to build castles withal.'

'So? That is a pity. I thought they had been graves, and then you might have covered

me up in one of them, and left me to sleep in peace.'

'What can I do for you, Alfrida, my old playfellow, Alfrida, whom I saved from the bear?'

'If Alfrida had foreseen the second monster into whose jaws she was to fall, she would have prayed you to hold that terrible hand of yours, which never since, men say, has struck without victory and renown. You won your first honour for my sake. But who am I now, that you should turn out of your glorious path for me?'

'I will do anything—anything. But why unweave this noble prince a monster?'

'If he were fairer than St John, more wise than Solomon, and more valiant than King William, he is to me a monster, for I loathe him, and I know not why. But do your duty as a knight, and convey the lawful wife to her lawful spouse.'

'What cares an outlaw for law, in a land where law is dead and gone? I will do what I—what you like. Come with me to Torfrida at Bourne, and let me see the man who dares try to take you out of my hand.'

Alfrida laughed again.

'No, no. I should interrupt the doves in their nest. Besides, the biding and coming might make me envious. And I, alas! who carry misery with me round the land, might make you Torfrida jealous.'

Hereward was of the same opinion, and rode silent and thoughtful through the great woods which are now the noble park of Brighthelm.

'I have found it!' said he at last. 'Why not go to Gilbert of Ghent, at Lincoln?'

'Gilbert? Why should he befriend me?'

'He will do that or anything else, which is for his own profit.'

'Profit? All the world seems determined to make profit out of me. I presume you would, if I had come with you to Bourne.'

'I do not doubt it. This is a very wild sea to swim in, and a man must be forgiven if he catches at every bit of drift timber.'

'Selfishness, selfishness everywhere,—and I suppose you expect to gain by sending me to Gilbert of Ghent?'

'I shall gain nothing, Alfrida, save the thought that you are not so far from me—from us—but that we can hear of you—and succour to you if you need.'

Alfrida was silent. At last—

'And you think that Gilbert would not be afraid of angering the king?'

'He would not anger the king. Gilbert's friendship is more important to William, at this moment, than that of a dozen Gospatrics. He holds Lincoln town, and with it the key of Waltheof's earldom, and things may happen, Alfrida—I tell you—but if you tell Gilbert, may Hereward's curse be on you!'

'Not that! Any man's curse save yours!' said she in so passionate a voice that a thrill of fire ran through Hereward. And he recollected her scoff at Bruges—'So he could not wait for

me!' And a storm of evil thoughts swept through him. 'Would to heaven!' said he to himself, crushing them gallantly down, 'I had never thought of Lincoln. But there is no other plan.'

But he did not tell Alfrida, as he had meant to do, that she might see him soon in Lincoln Castle as its conqueror and lord. If he half hoped that when that day came, Alfrida might be somewhere else.

'Gilbert can say,' he went on, stealing himself again, 'that you feared to go north on account of the disturbed state of the country, and that, as you had given yourself up to him of your own accord, he thought it wisest to detain you, as a hostage for Dolfin's allegiance.'

'He shall say so. I will make him say so.'

'So be it. Now here we are at Stamford town, and I must to my trade. Do you like to see fighting, Alfrida—the man's game, the royal game, the only game worth a thought on earth?' For you are like to see a little in the next ten minutes.

'I should like to see you fight. They tell me none is so swift and terrible in the battle as Hereward. How can you be otherwise, who slew the bear—when we were two happy children together? But shall I be safe?'

'Safe! of course,' said Hereward, who longed, peacock-like, to show off his prowess before a lady who was—there was no denying it—far more beautiful than even Torhild.

But he had no opportunity to show off that prowess. For, as he galloped in over Stamford Bridge, Abbot Thorold galloped out at the opposite end of the town through Casterton, and up the Roman road to Grantham.

After whom Hereward sent Alfrida (for he heard that Thorold was going to Gilbert at Lincoln) with a guard of knights, bidding them do him no harm, but saying that Hereward knew him to be a brave chevalier and lover of fair ladies, that he had sent him a right fair one to bear him company to Lincoln, and hoped that he would sing to her on the way the song of Roland.

And Alfrida, who knew Thorold, went willingly, since it could no better be.

After which, according to custom, Hereward tarried three days at Stamford, laying a heavy tribute on the burghesses for harbouring Thorold and his Normans, and also surprised at a drinking bout a certain special enemy of his, and chased him from room to room sword in hand, till he took refuge shamefully in an out-house, and begged his life. And when his knights came back from Grantham, he marched to Bourne.

'The next night,' says Richard of Ely, or it may be Leofric himself, 'Hereward saw in his dreams a man standing by him of mestimable beauty, old of years, terrible of countenance, in all the raiment of his body more splendid than all things which he had ever seen, or conceived in his mind, who threatened him with a great club which he carried in his hand, and with a fearful

doom, that he should take back to his church all that had been carried off the night before, and have them restored utterly, each in its place, if he wished to provide for the salvation of his soul, and escape on the spot a pitiable death. But when awakened, he was seized with a divine terror, and restored in the same hour all that he took away, and so departed, going onward with all his men.'

So says the chronicler, wishing, as may be well believed, to advance the glory of St. Peter, and to purge his hero's name from the stain of sacrilege. Besides, the monks of Peterborough, no doubt, had no wish that the world should spy out their nakedness, and become aware that the Golden Borough was stripped of all its gold.

Nevertheless, truth will out. Golden Borough was Golden Borough no more. The treasures were never restored, they went to sea with the Danes, and were scattered far and wide—to Norway, to Ireland, to Denmark, 'all the spoils,' says the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 'which reached the latter country being the pallium and some of the shrouds and crosses, and many of the other treasures they brought to one of the king's towers, and laid them up in the church. But one night, through their carelessness and drunkenness, the church was burned, with all that was therein. Thus was theminster of Peterborough burned and pillaged. May Almighty God have pity on it in His great mercy. And thus Abbot Thorold came to Peterborough. When Bishop Egbert heard this, he excommunicated the men who had done this evil. There was a great famine this year.'

Hereward, when blamed for the deed, said always that he did it 'because of his allegiance to the monastery.'

And some of the treasure, at least, he must have surely given back, he so appeased the angry shade of St. Peter. For on that night, when many long past Stamford, he and his lost their way. 'To whom a certain wonder happened, and a miracle, if it can be said that such would be worked in favour of men of blood. For while in the wild night and dark they wandered in the wood, a huge wolf met them, wagging his tail like a tame dog, and went before them on a path. And they, taking the gray beast in the darkness for a white dog, cheered on each other to follow him to his farm, which ought to be hard by. And in the silence of the midnight, that they might see their way, suddenly candles appeared, burning and clinging to the lances of all the knights—not very bright, however, but like those which the folk called *candela nupharum*—wills of the wisp. But none could pull them off, or altogether extinguish them, or throw them from their hands. And thus they saw their way, and went on, although astonished out of mind, with the wolf leading them until day dawned, and they saw, to their great astonishment, that he was a wolf. And as they questioned among themselves about what had befallen, the wolf

and the candles disappeared, and they came whither they had been minded, beyond Stamford town, thanking God, and wondering at what had happened.

After which Hereward took Torfrida, and his child, and all he had, and took ship at Bordeney, and went for Ely. Which when Earl Warrenne heard, he laid wait for him, somnigly near Littleport but got nothing thereby, according to Richard of Ely, but the pleasure of giving and taking a great deal of bad language, and (after his men had refused, reasonably enough, to swim the Onse and attack Hereward) an arrow, which Hereward, *multum se inclinans*, stooping forward, says the chronicler—who probably saw the deed shot at him across the Onse, as the earl stood cursing on the top of the dyke. Which arrow flew so stout and strong, that though it sprang back from Earl Warrenne's hauberk, it knocked him almost senseless off his horse, and forced him to defer his purpose of avenging Sir Frederick his brother.

After which Hereward threw himself into Ely, and assumed, by consent of all, the command of the English who were therein.

CHAPTER XXVII

HOW THEY HAD A GREAT MEETING IN THE HALL OF ELY

THERE sat round the hall of Ely all the magnates of the east land and east sea. The abbot was on his high seat, and on a seat higher than his, prepared specially, Swegn Olsson, King of Denmark and England. By them sat the bishops, Egelwin the Englishman and Clousterien the Dane, Ashorn the young Earl Edwin and Marcar, and Swegn's two sons, and, it may be, the sons of Tosti Godwinsson, and Arkulf the greatthane, and Sward Barn, and Hereward himself. Below them were knights, Vikings, captains, great holders from Denmark, and the prior and inferior officers of Ely minster. And at the bottom of the misty hall, on the other side of the column of blue vapour which went trembling up from the great heap of burning turf amidst, were lioncavalles, monks, wild men from the Baltic shores, crowded together to hear what was done in that parliament of their betters.

They spoke like free Danes, the better from the upper end of the hall, but every man as he chose. They were well Thang, in parliament, as their forefathers had been wont to be for countless ages. Their House of Lords and their House of Commons were not yet defined from each other but they knew the rules of the house, the courtesies of debate, and, by practice of free speech, had educated themselves to bear and forbear, like gentlemen.

But the speaking was loud and earnest, often angry that day. 'What was to be done?' was the question before the house.

'That depended,' said Swegn, the wise and prudent king, 'on what could be done by the English to co-operate with them.' And what that was has been already told.

'When Tosti Godwinsson, ye bishops, jarls, knights, and holders, came to me five years ago, and bade me take my rights in this land of England, I answered him that I had not wit enough to do the deeds which Canute my uncle did, and so sat still in peace. I little thought that I should have lost in five years so much of those small wits to which I confessed, that I should come after all to take my rightful kingdom of England, and find two kings in it already, both more to the English mind than I am. While William the Frenchman is king by the sword, and Filgar the Englishman king by proclamation of earls and thanes, there seems no room here for Swegn, nephew of Canute, king of kings.'

'We will make room for you! We will make a red road from here to Winchester!' shouted the meeting, with one voice.

'It is too late. What say you, Hereward Teofresson, who go for a wise man among men?'

Hereward rose, and spoke gracefully, earnestly, eloquently. But he could not deny Swegn's plain words.

'The Wake beats about the bush,' said Jarl Ashorn, rising when Hereward sat down. 'None knows better than he that all is over. Earl Edwin and Earl Marcar, who should have helped us along Watling Street, are here fugitives. Earl Gospatric and Earl Walth of are William's men now, soon to raise the landsfolk against us. We had better go home before we have eaten up the monks of Ely.'

Then Hereward rose again, and without an openly insulting word poured forth his scorn and rage upon Ashorn. Why had he not kept to the agreement which he and Countess Gyda had made with him through Tosti's sons? Why had he wasted time and men from Dover to Porwich, instead of coming straight into the fen, and in wading inland to succour Marcar and Edwin? Ashorn had ruined the plan, and he only, if it was ruined.

'And who was I, to obey the Wake?' asked Ashorn fiercely.

'And who wert thou, to disobey me?' asked Swegn in a terrible voice. 'Hereward is right. We shall see what thou sayest to all this, in full Thang at home in Denmark.'

Then Edwin rose, entreating peace. 'They were beaten. The hand of God was against them. Why should they struggle any more? Or, if they struggled on, why should they involve the Danes in their own ruin?'

Then man after man rose, and spoke rough Danish common sense. They had come hither to win England. They had found it won already. Let them take what they had got from Peterborough, and go.

Then Winter sprang up. 'Take the pay, and

¹ Ashorn is said to have been outlawed on his return home.

sail off with it, without having done the work? That would be a noble tale to carry home to your fair wives in Jutland. I shall not call you middeging, being a man of peace, as all know. Whereat all laughed, for the doughty little man had not a hand's breadth on head or arm without its scar. 'But if your ladies call you me, you must have a shrewd answer to give, beside knocking them down.'

Sweyn spoke without rising. 'The good knight forgets that this expedition has cost Denmark already nigh as much as Harold Hardraade's cost Norway. It is hard upon the Danes, if they are to go away empty handed as well as disappointed.'

'The king has right!' cried Hereward. 'Let them take the plunder of Peterborough as pay for what they have done, and what besides they would have done if Ashorn the jarl may, men of England, let us be just!—what Ashorn himself would have done if there had been heart and wit, one mind and one purpose, in England. The Danes have done their best. They have shown themselves what they are, our blood and kin. I know that some talk of treason, of bribes. Let us have no more such vain and foul suspicions. They came as our friends, and as our friends let them go, and leave us to fight out our own quarrel to the last drop of blood.'

'Wohl! God!' said Sweyn, 'thou wouldst go too, thou good knight. Here, earls and gentlemen of England! Sweyn Ulsson offers to every one of you, who will come to Denmark with him, shelter and hospitality till better times shall come.'

Then arose a mixed cry. Some would go, some would not. Some of the Danes took the proposal cordially, some feared bringing among themselves men who would needs want land, of which there was none to give. If the English came, they must go up the Baltic, and conquer fresh lands for themselves from heathen Letts and Finns.

Then Hereward rose again, and spoke so nobly and so well that all ears were cheered.

They were Englishmen, and they would rather die in their own merry England than win new kingdoms in the cold north-east. They were sworn, the leaders of them, to die or conquer, fighting the accursed Frenchman. They were bound to St. Peter and to St. Guthlac, and to St. Felix of Ramsey, and St. Etheldreda the holy virgin beneath whose roof they stood, to defend against Frenchmen the saints of England whom they despised and blasphemed, whose servants they cast out, thrust into prison, and murdered, that they might bring in Frenchmen from Normandy, Italians from the Pope of Rome. Sweyn Ulsson spoke as became him, as a prudent and a generous prince, the man who alone of all kings defied and fought the great Hardraade till neither could fight more, the true nephew of Canute the king of kings: and they thanked him, but they would live and die Englishmen.

And every Englishman shouted, 'Hereward is right! We will live and die fighting the French.'

And Sweyn Ulsson rose again, and said with a great oath, 'That if there had been three such men as Hereward in England, all would have gone well.'

Hereward laughed. 'Thou art wrong for once, wise king. We have failed, just because there were a dozen men in England as good as I, every man wanting his own way, and too many cooks have spoiled the broth. What we wanted is not a dozen men like me, but one like thee, to take us all by the back of the neck and shake us soundly, and say, "Do that or die!"'

And so, after much talk, the meeting broke up. And when it broke up, there came to Hereward in the hall a noble-looking man of his own age, and put his hand within his, and said—

'Do you not know me, Hereward Leofricsson?'

'I know thee not, good knight, more pity, but by thy dress and carriage, thou shouldst be a true Vikingsson.'

'I am Sigtryg Ramaldsson, now king of Waterford. And my wife said to me, "If there be in wherry or saint-leasiness, remember this: that Hereward Leofricsson slew the ogre, and Hannibal of Munster likewise, and brought me safe to thee. And, therefore, if thou provest false to him, murthering thou art, and no murthering is spouse of mine."

'Thou art Sigtryg Ramaldsson!' cried Hereward, clasping him in his arms, as the scenes of his wild youth rushed across his mind. 'Better is old wine than new, and old friends like-wise.'

'And I, and my five ships are thine to do with. Let who will go back.'

'They must go,' said Hereward, half perversely. 'Sweyn has right, and Ashorn too. The game is played out. Sweep the chessmen off the board, as Earl Ul did by Canute the king.'

'And lost his life thereby. I shall stand by, and see thee play the last pawn.'

'And lose thy life in like wise.'

'What matter? I heard thee sing—

'''A bed-death, a priest death,
A stew death, a cow death,
Such death like a cat too.'''

Nor likes it me either, Hereward Leofricsson.'

So the Danes sailed away, but Sigtryg Ramaldsson and his five ships remained.

Hereward went up to the minister tower, and watched the Ouse flashing with countless oars northward toward Southey Fen. And when they were all out of sight, he went back, and lay down on his bed, and wept—once and for all. Then he arose, and went down into the hall to abbots and monks, and earls and knights, and was the boldest, cheeriest, wittiest of them all.

'They say,' quoth he to Torfrida that night, 'that some men have gray heads on green'

shoulders. I have a gray heart in a green body.'

'And my heart is growing very gray too,' said Torfrida.

'Certainly not thy heart! And he played with her raven locks.

'That may come, too, and too soon.'

For, indeed, they were in very evil case.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOW THEY FOUGHT AT ALDRETH

WHEN William heard that the Danes were gone, he marched on Ely, as on an easy prey.

Ivo Taillebois came with him, hungry after those Spalding lands, the rents whereof Hereward had been taking for his men for now twelve months. William de Warrene was there, vowed to revenge the death of Sir Frederick, his brother. Ralph Guader was there, flushed with his success at Norwich. And with them were all the Frenchmen of the east, who had been either expelled from their lands or were in fear of expulsion.

With them, too, was a great army of mercenaries, ruffians from all France and Flanders, hired to fight for a certain term, on the chance of plunder or of fiefs in land. Their brains were all aflame with the tales of monstrous riches hidden in Ely. There were there the jewels of all the monasteries round, there were the treasures of all the fugitive English nobles, there were there—what was there not? And they grumbled when William halted them and huddled them at Cambridge, and began to feel cautiously the strength of the place—which must be strong, or Hereward and the English would not have made it their camp of refuge.

Perhaps he rode up to Madingley windmill, and saw fifteen miles away, clear against the sky, the long line of what seemed nought but a low upland park, with the minster tower among the trees, and between him and them, a rich champaign of grass, over which it was easy enough to march all the armies of Europe, and thought Ely an easy place to take. But men told him that between him and those trees lay a black abyss of mud and peat and reeds, Haddenham fen and Suthly fen, with the deep sullen West water or 'Ald-recho'¹ of the Ouse winding through them. The old Roman road to Strettham was sunk and gone long since under the bog, whether by English neglect, or whether (as some think) by actual and bodily sinking of the whole land. The narrowest space between dry land and dry land was a full half-mile, and how to cross that half mile, no man knew.

¹ I give the supposed etymologies of one of the various spellings of 'Aldreth', now Aldreth. A better is Aldreth, the Alderthore, a better still, perhaps, St. Etheldreda, or Audrey, herself. St. Audrey's Causeway leads to the spot, St. Audrey's well is, or was, on the slope above, and the name of the place may be simply Audrey's Hythe.

What were the approaches on the west? There were none. Beyond Earith, where now run the great washes of the Bedford Level, was a howling wilderness of meres, eas, reed-beds, and floating alder-beds, through which only the few men wandered, with leaping-pole and log-canoes.¹

What in the east? The dry land neared the island on that side. And it may be that William rowed round by Burwell to Fordham and Soham, and thought of attempting the island by way of Burroway, and saw beneath him a labyrinth of islands, meres, fens, with the Cam, increased by the volume of the Ouse, spreading far deeper and broader than now between Burroway and Thetford-in-the-Isle, and saw, too, that a disaster in that labyrinth might be a destruction.²

So he determined on the near and straight path, through Long Stanton and Willingham, down the old bridle-way from Willingham ploughed field,—every village there, and in the isle likewise, had and has still its 'field,' or ancient clearing of ploughed land—and then to try that terrible half mile, with the courage and wit of a general to whom human lives were as those of the gnats under the hedge.

So all his host carried themselves in Willingham field, by the old earthwork which men now call Belar's Hills, and down the bridle-way poured countless men, bearing timber and faggots, out from all the hills, that they might bridge the black half-mile.

They made a narrow firm path through the reeds, and down to the brink of the Ouse, if bank it could be called, where the water, rising and falling a foot or two each tide, covered the floating peat for many yards, before it sank into a brown depth of bottomless slime. They would make a bottom for themselves by driving piles.

The piles would not hold, and they began to make a floating bridge with long beams, say the chronicles, and blown-up cattle-hides to float them.³

Soon they made a floating-sow, and thrust it on before them as they worked across the stream, for they were getting under shot from the island.

Meanwhile the besieged had not been idle. They had thrown up a tuff rampart on the island shore, and *antemuralia et propugnacula*—doubtless overhanging 'hoardings,' or scaffolds, through the floor of which they could shower down missiles.⁴ And so they awaited the attack.

¹ The 'bridge two miles long,' which the *Lib. Eliensis* says that William made to the west of the isle, is surely only a traditional exaggeration of his repairs of Aldreth Causeway to the south-west. On the west, the isle must have been utterly unapproachable.

² It may be well to explain to those who do not know the fens, that the Ouse formerly parted at the Isle of Ely, half its waters running eastward by Aldreth into the Cam, half wandering northward to inundate vast morasses to the west of the isle. Through those morasses (now fertile fields), and above their level, the great works of the Bedford Level now convey the Ouse straight to the tide at Denver sluice.

³ Was this 'Hereward's Fort,' which was still shown in the fens in the days of Roger of Wendover?

contenting themselves with gliding in and out of the reeds in their canoes, and annoying the builders with arrows and cross-bow bolts.

At last the bridge was finished, and the sow safe across the Westwater, and thrust in, as far as it would float, among the reeds on the high tide. They in the fort could touch it with a pole.

The English would have destroyed it if they could. But The Wake bade them leave it alone. He had watched all their work, and made up his mind to the event.

'The rats have set a trap for themselves,' he said to his men, 'and we shall be fools to break it up, till the rats are safe inside.'

So there the huge sow lay, black and silent, showing nothing to the enemy but a side of strong plank, covered with hide to prevent its being burned. It lay there for three hours, and The Wake let it lie.

He had never been so cheerful, so confident. 'Play the man this day, every one of you, and ere nightfall you will have taught the Frenchman once more the lesson of York. He seems to have forgotten that. It is time to remind him of it.'

And he looked to his bow and to his arrows, and prepared to play the man himself, as was the fashion in those old days, when a general proved his worth by hitting harder and more surely than any of his men.

At last the army was in motion, and Willingham field opposite was like a crawling ant's nest. Brigade after brigade moved down to the reed beds and the assault began.

And now advanced along the causeway, and along the bridge, a dark column of men, surmounted by glittering steel, knights in complete mail, footmen in leather coats and jerkins, at first orderly enough, each under the banner of his lord, but more and more mingled and crowded, as each hurried forward, eager for his selfish share of the inestimable treasures of Ely. They pushed along the bridge. The mass became more and more crowded, men stumbled over each other, and fell off into the mire and water, calling vainly for help, but their comrades hurried on unheeding, in the mad thirst for spoil.

On they came in thousands, and fresh thousands streamed out of the fields, as if the whole army intended to pour itself into the isle at once.

'They are numberless,' said Torfrida, in a serious and astonished voice, as she stood by Hereward's side.

'Would they were!' said Hereward. 'Let them come on, thick and threefold. The more their numbers, the fatter will the fish below be, before to-morrow morning. Look there, already!'

And already the bridge was awaying and sinking beneath their weight. The men, in places, were ankle deep in water. They rushed on all the more eagerly, filled the sow, and swarmed up to its roof.

Then, what with its own weight, what with the weight of the laden bridge which dragged upon it from behind, the huge sow began to tilt backwards, and slide down the slimy bank.

The men on the top tried vainly to keep their footing, to hurl grapnels into the rampart, to shoot off their quarrels and arrows.

'You must be quick, Frenchmen,' shouted Hereward in derision, 'if you mean to come on board here.'

The French knew that well, and as Hereward spoke, two panels in the front of the sow creaked on their hinges, and dropped landward, forming two drawbridges, over which reeled to the attack a close body of knights, mingled with soldiers bearing scaling ladders.

They reeled between the ends of the drawbridges and the foot of the rampart was some two fathoms' breadth of black ooze. The catastrophe which The Wake had foreseen was come, and a shout of derision arose from the unseen defenders above.

'Come on, leap it like men! Send back for your horses, knights, and ride them at it like bold huntsmen!'

The front rank could not but push on, for the pressure behind forced them forward, whether they would or not. In a moment they were wallowing waist deep, trampled on, disappearing under their struggling comrades, who disengaged in their turn.

'Look, Torfrida! If they plant their scaling ladders, it will be on a foundation of their comrades' corpses.'

To the rear, through the openings of the drawbridges, a withering mass below, and turned away in horror. The men were not so merciful. Down between the boarding beams rained stones, javelins, arrows, increasing the agony and death. The scaling ladders would not stand in the mire, if they had stood a moment, the struggles of the dying would have thrown them down. And still fresh victims passed on from behind, shouting 'Dex Ave! On to the gold of Ely!' and still the sow, under the weight, slipped farther and farther back into the stream, and the foul gulf widened between besiegers and besegged.

At last one scaling ladder was planted upon the bodies of the dead, and hooked firmly on the gunwale of the boarding. Ere it could be hauled off again by the English, it was so crowded with men that even Hereward's strength was insufficient to hit it off. He stood at the top, ready to hew down the first comer, and he hewed him down.

But the French were not to be daunted. Man after man dropped dead from the ladder top,—man after man took his place, sometimes scrambling over each other's backs.

The English, even in the insolence of victory, cheered them with honest admiration. 'You are fellows worth fighting, you French!'

'So we are,' shouted a knight, the first and last who crossed that parapet, for, thrusting Hereward back with a blow of his sword-hilt,

he staggered past him over the hoarding, and fell on his knees.

A dozen men were upon him but he was up again and shouting—

'To me, men-at-arms! A Deda! A Deda!'

But no man answered.

'Yield!' quoth Hereward.

Sir Deda answered by a blow on Hereward's helmet, which felled The Wake to his knees, and broke the sword into twenty splinters.

'Well hit!' said Hereward, as he rose. 'Don't touch him, men! this is my quarrel now. Yield, sir! you have done enough for your honour. It is madness to throw away your life.'

The knight looked round on the fierce ring of faces, in the midst of which he stood alone.

'To none but The Wake.'

'The Wake am I.'

'Ah,' said the knight, 'had I but hit a little harder!'

'You would have broke your sword into more splinters. My weapon is enchanted. So yield like a reasonable and valiant man.'

'What care I?' said the knight, stopping on to the earthwork, and sitting down quietly. 'I vowed to St. Mary and King William that into Ely I would get this day, and on Ely I am, so I have done my work.'

'And now you shall taste—as such a gallant knight deserves—the hospitality of Ely.'

It was Thurfrida who spoke.

'My husband's prisoners are mine, and I, when I had them such gallant knights as you are, have no lighter chains for them than that which a lady's power can afford.'

Sir Deda was going to make an equally courteous answer, when over and above the shouts and curses of the combatants rose a yell so keen, so dreadful, as made all hurry forward to the rampart.

That which The Wake had foreseen was come at last. The bridge, strained more and more by its living burden, and by the falling tide, had parted,—not at the Ely end, where the sliding of the sow took off the pressure, but at the end nearest the camp. One skyline roll it gave, and then, turning over, engulfed in that foul stream the flower of Norman chivalry, leaving a line—a full quarter of a mile in length—of wretches drowning in the dark water, or, more hideous still, in the bottomless slime of peat and mud.

Thousands are said to have perished. Their armour and weapons were found at times by delvers and dykers's adventures after; are found at times unto this day, beneath the rich drained cornfields which now fill up that black half-mile, or in the bed of the narrow brook to which the Westwater, robbed of its streams by the Bedford Level, has dwindled down at last.

William, they say, struck his tents and departed forthwith, 'groaning from deep grief of heart.' Eastward he went, and encamped the remains of his army at Brandon, where he seems to have begun that castle, the ruins of which

still exist in Westing Park hard by. He put a line of sentinels along the Reach-lyke, which men now call the Devil's Ditch, and did his best to blockade the isle, as he could not storm it. And so ended the first battle of Aldreth.

CHAPTER XXIX

HOW SIR DEDA BROUGHT NEWS FROM ELY.

A MONTH after the fight, there came into the camp at Brandon riding on an ambling palfrey, himself fat and well-looking, none other than Sir Deda.

Boisterously he was received, as one alive from the dead, and questioned as to his adventures and sufferings.

'Adventures I have had, and strange ones, but as for sufferings instead of fetter-galls, I bring back, as you see, a new suit of clothes, instead of an empty and starved stomach, a surfeit from good victuals and good liquor, and whereas I went into Ely on foot, I came out on a fast hackney.'

So into William's tent he went, and there he told his tale.

'So, Deda, my friend?' quoth the duke in high good humour, for he loved Deda. 'You seem to have been in good company.'

'Never in better, sir, save in your presence. Of the earls and knights in Ely, all I can say is, God's pity that they are rebels, for more gallant and courteous knights or more perfect warriors never saw I either in Normandy or at Constantinople, among the Varangers themselves.'

'Eh? and what are the names of these gallants, for you have used your eyes and ears, of course?'

'Edwin and Morcar, the earls—two fine young lads.'

'I know it. Go on,' and a shade passed over William's brow as he thought of his own falsehood, and of his fair daughter, weeping in vain for the fair bridegroom whom he had promised to her.

'Sward Barn, as they call him, the boy Orsur, and Thurkil Barn. Those are the knights. Egolwin, Bishop of Durham, is there too, and besides them all, and above them all, Hereward the Wake. The like of that knight I may have seen. His better I saw I never.'

'Sir fool!' said Earl Warraine, who had not yet small blame to him for forgotten his brother's death. 'They have soured thy brains with their muddy ale, till thou knowest not friend from foe. What, hast thou to come hither praising up to the king's majesty such an outlawed villain as that, with whom no honest knight would keep company?'

'If you, Earl Warraine, ever found Deda drunk or lying, it is more than the king here has done.'

'Let him speak, earl,' said William. 'I have

not an honest man in my camp, and he speaks for my information, not for yours.'

'Then for yours will I speak, sir king. These men treated me knightly, and sent me away without ransom.'

'They had an eye to their own profit, it seems,' grumbled the earl.

'But force me they did to swear on the holy Gospels that I should tell your majesty the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And I keep my oath,' quoth Deda.

'Go on, then, without fear or favour. Are there any other men of note in the island?'

'No.'

'Are they in want of provisions?'

'Look how they have fattened me.'

'What do they complain of?'

'I will tell you, sir king. The monks, like many more, took fright at the coming over of our French men of God to set right all their filthy barbarous ways, and that is why they threw Ely open to the rebels.'

'I will be even with the sats,' quoth William.

'However, they think that danger blown over just now, for they have a story among them, which, as my lord the king never heard before, he may as well hear now.'

'Eh?'

'How your majesty should have sent across the sea a whole shipload of French monks.'

'That have I, and will more, till I reduce these swine into something like obedience to his Holiness of Rome.'

'Ah, but your majesty has not heard how one Bruman, a valiant English knight, was sailing on the sea and caught those monks. Whereon he tied a great sack to the ship's head, and cut the bottom out, and made every one of those monks get into that sack and so fall through into the sea, whereby he rid the monks of Ely of their rivals.'

'Fish! why tell me such an old wives' fable, knight?'

'Because the monks believe that old wives' fable, and are stout-hearted and stiff-necked accordingly.'

'The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church,' said William's chaplain, a pupil and friend of Lanfranc. 'and if these men of Belial drowned every man of God in Normandy, ten would spring up in their places to convert this blighted and besotted land of Simontes and Balaamites, whose priests, like the brutes which perish, scruple not to defile themselves, and the service of the altar, with things which they unjudiciously call their wives.'

'We know that, good chaplain,' quoth William impatiently. He had enough of that language from Lanfranc himself, and, moreover, was thinking more of the Isle of Ely than of the celibacy of the clergy.

'Well, Sir Deda?'

'So they have got together all their kin, for among these monks every one is kin to a thano, or knight, or even an earl, and there they are, brother by brother, cousin by cousin, kins to

knee, and back to back, like a pack of wolves, and that in a hold which you will not enter yet awhile.'

'Does my friend Deda doubt his duke's skill at last?'

'Sir duke—sir king I mean now, for king you are and deserve to be—I know what you can do. I remember how we took England at one blow on Senlac field. But see you here, sir king, how will you take an island with four such saints to guard it as St. Etheldreda, St. Wiltberga, St. Sexberga, and St. Ermenilda?'

'By promising the holy ladies,' said William, with a smile, 'to honour them better than ever did yet an English swine.'

'Amien! but again, how will you take an island where four kings such as you (if the world would hold four such at once) could not stop one churl from ploughing the land, or one bird-catcher from setting lime-twigs?'

'And what if I cannot stop the lardcatchers? Do they expect to lime Frenchmen as easily as sparrows?'

'Sparrows! It is not sparrows that I have been fattening on this last month. I tell you, sire, I have seen wild fowl alone in that island enough to feed them all the year round. I was there in the moulting time, and saw them take—one day one hundred, one two hundred, and once, as I am a belted knight, a thousand duck out of one single mere. There is a wood there, with herons spawning about the tree-tops. I did not think there were so many in the world, otters and weasels, ermines and pole-cats, for the robes, and fish for Lent and Fridays in every puddle and lot, pike and perch, roach and eels, on every old wife's table, while the knights think scorn of anything worse than snail and burbot.'

'Splendour Dex!' quoth William, who, Norman-like, did not dislike a good dunce. 'I must keep Lent in Ely before I die.'

'Then you had best make peace with the burbot-eating knights, my lord.'

'But have they flesh meat?'

'The island is half of it a garden—rich land, they say, is none in these realms, and I believe it. But besides that, there is a deer-park there with a thousand head in it, red and fallow, beside hares, and plenty of swine and goats in woods, and sheep and cattle, and if they fail there are plenty more to be got, they know where.'

¹ I have followed Deda's account of Ely and its folk, as given both in the *Petrilureough MSS.* and in the *Libri Phoenias*, almost word for word throughout.

² *Medula* (hecaton), by which the good monk means wheatears and such small birds, coots, divers, 'water-crows,' cranes and ducks.

³ 'Innumerable eels, great water wolves and pickerel, perches, roach, burbot, and murrenas, which we call water-serpents.' (These last seem to be on threat, unless the *sturnus glanis* still lingered as it may have done, in the waters of the Ouse.) 'Sometimes also well' (amplified), I presume, as they are still abundant in the Ouse, 'and the royal fish rambus' (turbot) surely a misnomer for the sturgeon.

⁴ That the goat as well as the stag was common in the fens the horns found in peat and gravel testify.

'They know where? Do you, sir knight?' asked William keenly.

'Out of every little island in their fens, for forty miles on end. There are the herds fattening themselves on the richest pastures in the land, and no man willing to herd them, for they are all safe among dykes and meres.'

'I will make my boats sweep their fens clean of every head—'

'Take care, my lord king, lest never a boat come back from that errand! With their narrow flat-bottomed punts, cut out of a single log, and their leaping poles, wherewith they fly over dykes of thirty feet in width—they can ambuscade in those reed-beds and alder-beds, kill whom they will, and then flee away through the marsh, like so many horse flies. And if not, one trick have they left, which they never try save when driven into a corner—but from that may all saints save us!'

'What then?'

'Killing the reeds.'

'And destroying their own cover?'

'True; therefore they will only do it in the spare.'

'Then to despair will I drive them, and try their worst. So these monks are as stout rebels as the earls?'

'I only say what I saw. At the hall-table there dined each day maybe some fifty belted knights, with every one a monk next to him, and at the high table the abbot, and the cul, and Herward and his lady. And behind each knight, and each monk likewise, hung against the wall lance and shield, helmet and hauberk, sword and axe.'

'To monk as well as knight?'

'As I am a knight myself, and were as well used, too, for aught I saw. The monks took turns with the knights as sentries, and as buskers likewise, and the knights themselves told me openly, the monks were as good men as they.'

'As wicked, you mean,' growled the chaplain, 'O accursed and bloodthirsty race, why does not the earth open and swallow you, with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram?'

'They would not care,' quoth Deda. 'They are born and bred in the bottomless pit already. They would jump over, or flounder out, as they do to their own legs every day.'

'You speak irreverently, my friend,' quoth William.

'Ask those who are in camp, and not me. As for whether they went, or how, the English were not likely to tell me. All that I know is, that I saw fresh cattle come in every few days, and fresh farns burnt, too, on the Norfolk side. There were farns burning only last night, between here and Cambridge. Ask your sentinels on the Rech-dyke how that came about!'

¹ See § 23 of the *De Gestis Herewardi*, presumed to be by Richard of Ely. 'And while he had hardly finished his speech, etc.' Those who love to investigate the growth of myths, may profitably amuse themselves by comparing that account with § 106 of the *Liut Ellensis*. The omissions will be as instructive as the insertions.

'I can answer that,' quoth a voice from the other end of the tent. 'I was on the Rech-dyke last night, close down to the fen—worse luck and shame for me.'

'Answer, then!'

quoth William, with one of his fiercest oaths, glad to have some one on whom he could turn his rage and disappointment.

'There came seven men in a boat up from Ely yestereven, and five of them were monks, they came up from Burwell fen, and plundered and burnt Burwell town.'

'And where were all your mighty men of war?'

'Ten of ours ran down to stop them, with Richard, Viscount Osbert's nephew, at their head. The villains came at a foot's pace up the Rech-dyke, and attacked them at lance-point, and before we could get to them—'

'They men had run, of course.'

'They were every one dead or wounded, save Richard, and he was fighting single-handed with an Englishman, while the other six stood around, and looked on.'

'Then they fought fairly?'

'As fairly, to do them justice, as if they had been Frenchmen, and not English churls. As we came down along the dyke, a little man of them steps between the two, and strikes up their swords as if they had been two reeds. "Come!" cries he, "enough of this. You are two stout knights well matched, and you can fight out this any other day," and away he and his men go down the dyke end to the water.'

'Leaving Richard safe?'

'Wounded a little—but safe enough.'

'And then?'

'We followed them to the boat as hard as we could, killed one of their boatmen with a javelin, and caught another.'

'Knightly done,' and William swore an awful oath, 'and worthy of valiant Frenchmen. These English set you the example of chivalry by letting your comrade fight his own battle fairly, instead of setting on him all together, and you repay them by hunting them down with darts, because you dare not go within sword's-stroke of better men than yourselves. Go! I am ashamed of you. No, stay. Where is your prisoner? For, Splendeur Dex, I will send him back safe and sound in return for Deda, to tell the knights of Ely that if they know so well the courtesies of war, William of Rennes does too.'

'The prisoner, sir,' quoth the knight, trembling, 'is—'

'You have not murdered him?'

'Heaven forbid! But—'

'He broke his bonds and escaped?'

'Gnawed them through, sir, as we supposed, and escaped through the mire in the dark, after the fashion of these accursed frogs of Girians.'

'But did he tell you nought ere he had you good murning?'

'He told us the names of all the seven. He that beat down the sword was Herward himself.'

'I thought as much. When shall I have that fellow at my side?'

'He that fought Richard was one Wenoch.'

'I have heard of him.'

'He that we took was Azer the Hardy, a monk of Nicole-Jacole. And the rest were Turstan the Younger, one Sward, another monk, Leufin the deacon, Hereward's minstrel, and Biter, the traitor monk of St. Edmund's.'

'And if I catch them,' quoth Wilham, 'I will make an abbot of every one of them.'

'Sure!' quoth the chaplain, in a deprecating tone.

CHAPTER XXV

HOW HEReward PLAYED THE POTTER, AND HOW HE CHAINED THE KING

THEY of Ely were now much straitened, being shut in both by land and water, and what was to be done, either by themselves or by the king, they knew not. Would Wilham simply starve them, or at least inflict on them so perpetual a Lent—for of fish there could be no lack, even if they ate or drove away all the fowl—as would tame down their proud spirits, which a diet of fish and vegetables, from some ludicrous theory of monastic physicians, was supposed to do? Or was he gathering vast armies, from they knew not whence, to try, once and for all, another assault on the island—it might be from several points at once?

'They must send out a spy, and find out news from the outer world, if news were to be gotten. But who would go?'

So asked the bishop, and the abbot, and the earls, in council in the abbot's lodging.

Torfrida was among them. She was always among them now. She was then Ahnna-wife, their wise woman, whose counsels all received as more than human.

'I will go,' said she, rising up like a goddess on Olympus. 'I will cut off my hair, and put on boy's clothes, and smutch myself brown with walnut leaves, and I will go. I can talk their French tongue. I know their French ways, and as for a story to cover my journey, and my doings, trust a woman's wit to invent that.'

They looked at her, with delight in her courage, but with doubt.

'If Wilham's French grooms get hold of you, Torfrida, it would not be a little walnut brown which would hide you,' said Hereward. 'But it is like you to offer—worthy of you, who have no peer.'

'That she has not,' quoth churchmen and soldiers alike.

'Nevertheless—to send you would be to send The Wake's praying half, and that would be bad religion. The Wake's fighting half is going, while you pray here as well as watch.'

¹ The Cornish—the stoutest, tallest, and most prolific race of the South—live on hardly anything else but fish and vegetables.

'Uncle, uncle!' said the young earls, 'send Winter, Gery, Leofwin Prat, any of your good men—but not yourself. If we lose you, we lose our head and our king.'

And all begged Hereward to let any man go, rather than himself.

'I am going, lords and knights; and what Hereward says he does. It is one day to Brandon. It may be two days back, for if I miscarry—as I most likely shall—I must come home round about. On the fourth day, you shall hear of me or from me. Come with me, Torfrida.'

And he strode out.

He cropped his golden locks, he cropped his golden beard, and Torfrida wept, as she cropped them, half with fear for him, half for sorrow over his stormy glories.

'I am no Samson, my lady, my strength lieth not in my locks. Now for some rascal's clothes—as little dirty as you can get me for fear of company.'

And Hereward put on filthy garments, and taking mare Swallow with him, got into a barge and went across the river to Soham.

He could not go down the Great Ouse, and up the Little Ouse, which was his easiest way, for the French held all the river below the isle, and, besides, to have come straight from Ely might cause suspicion. So he went down to Fordham, and crossed the Lark at Mildenhall, and just before he got to Mildenhall, he met a pouter carrying pots upon a pony.

'Halt, my stout churl,' quoth he, 'and put thy pots on my mare's back.'

'The man who wants them must fight for them,' quoth that stout churl, raising a heavy stall.

'Then here is he that wilt,' quoth Hereward, and, jumping off his mare, he twisted the stall out of the pouter's hands, and knocked him down therewith.

'That will teach thee to know an Englishman when thou seest him.'

'I have met my master,' quoth the churl, rubbing his head. 'But dog does not eat dog, and it is hard to be robbed by an Englishman, after being robbed a dozen times by the French.'

'I will not rob thee. There is a silver penny for thy pots and thy coat—for that I must have likewise. And if thou tellest to mortal man aught about this, I will find those who will cut thee up for dogs' meat, but if not, then turn thy horse's head and ride back to Ely, if thou canst cross the water, and say what has befallen thee, and thou wilt find there an abbot who will give thee another penny for thy news.'

So Hereward took the pots, and the pouter's clay-greased coat, and went on through Mildenhall, 'crying,' with the chronicler, 'after the manner of pouters, in the English tongue, "Pots! pots! good pots and pans!"'

But when he got through Mildenhall, and well into the rabbit-warrens, he gave mare Swallow a kick, and went over the heath so fast

northward, that his pots danced such a dance as broke half of them before he got to Brandon.

'Never mind,' quoth he, 'they will think that I have sold them.' And when he neared Brandon he pulled up, sorted his pots, kept the whole ones, threw the shreds at the rabbits, and walked on into Brandon solemnly, leading the mare, and crying 'Pots!'

So '*seniper macula et deformis aspectu*' lean and ill-looking—was that famous mare, says the chronicler, that no one would suspect her splendid powers, or take her for anything but a potter's nag, when she was caparisoned in proper character. Hereward felt thoroughly at home in his part, as able to play the Englishman which he was by rearing, as the Frenchman which he was by education. He was full of heart and happy. He enjoyed the keen fresh air of the warrens, he enjoyed the ramble out of the mile, in which he had been cooped up so long, he enjoyed the jest of the thing—disguise, stratagem, adventure, danger. And so did the English, who adored him. None of The Wake's crafty deeds is told so carefully and lovingly, and none, doubt it not, was so often sung in after years by farm-house hearths, or in the outlaws' lodge, as this. Robin Hood himself may have troiled out many a time, in doggerel strain, how Hereward played the potter.

And he came to Brandon, to the 'king's court,' from which William could command the streams of Wissey and Little Ouse, with all their fens, and saw with a curse the new buildings of Weeting Castle—like the rest, of which Sir F. Palgrave eloquently says—'New, and strong, and cruel in their strength—how the Englishman must have loathed the damp smell of the fresh mortar, and the sight of the heaps of rubble, and the chippings of the stone, and the blurring of the lime upon the green sward, and how hopeless he must have felt when the great gates opened, and the wains were drawn in, heavily laden with the salted beaves, and the sacks of corn and meal furnished by the royal demesnes, the manors which had belonged to Edward the Confessor, now the spoil of the stranger and when he looked into the castle court, thronged by the soldiers in bright mail, and heard the carpenters working upon the ordnance—every blow and stroke, even of the hammer or mallet, speaking the language of defiance.'

These things The Wake saw and felt, like others, hopeless for the moment. And there rang in his ears his own message to William: 'When thou art king of all England, I will put my hands between thine, and be thy man.'

'He is not king of all England yet!' thought he again, and drew himself up so proudly, that one passing by jeered him—

'There goes a bold swaggoner enough, to be selling pots abroad.' The Wake slouched his shoulder, and looked as mean a clown as ever. Next he cast about for a night's lodging, for it was dark.

Outside the town was a wretched cabin of

mud and turf—such a one as Irish folk live in to this day, and Hereward said to himself, 'This is bad enough to be good enough for me.'

So he knocked at the door, and knocked till it was opened and a hideous old crone put out her head.

'Who wants to see me at this time of night?'

'Any one would, who had heard how beautiful you are. Do you want any pots?'

'Pots? What have I to do with pots, thou saucy fellow? I thought it was some one wanting a charm.' And she shut the door.

'A charm?' thought Hereward. 'Maybe she can tell me news, if she be a witch. They are shrewd souls, these witches, and know more than they tell. And if I can get any news, I care not if Satan brings it in person.'

So he knocked again, till the old woman looked out once more, and bade him angrily be off.

'But I am belated here, good dame, and afraid of the French. And I will give thee the best bit of clay on my mare's back—pot—pan—panshin—rux—jug, or what thou wilt, for a night's lodging.'

'Have you any little jars, jars no longer than my hand?' asked she, for she used them in her trade, and had broken one of late but to pay for one, she had neither money nor mind. So she agreed to let Hereward sleep there, for the value of two jars—'But what of that ugly brute of a horse of thine?'

'She will do well enough in the turf-shed.'

'Then thou must pay with a panshin.'

'Ugh!' groaned Hereward, 'thou drivest a hard bargain, for an Englishman, with a poor Englishman.'

'How knowest thou that I am English?'

'So much the better if thou art not,' thought Hereward, and bargained with her for a panshin against a lodging for the horse in the turf-house, and a bottle of bad hay.

Then he went in, bringing his panniers with him with ostentatious care.

'Thou canst sleep there on the rushes. I have nought to give thee to eat.'

'Nought needs nought,' said Hereward, threw himself down on a bundle of rush, and in a few minutes snored loudly.

But he was never less asleep. He looked round the whole place, and he listened to every word.

The devil, as usual, was a bad paymaster, for the witch's cabin seemed only somewhat more miserable than that of other old women. The floor was mud, the rafters unceiled, the stars shone through the turf roof. The only hint of her trade was a hanging shelf, on which stood five or six little earthen jars, and a few packets of leaves. A parchment, scrawled with characters which the owner herself probably did not understand, hung against the cob wall, and a human skull probably used only to frighten her patients—dangled from the roof-tree.

But in a corner, stuck against the wall, was something which chilled Hereward's blood a

little,—a dried human hand, which he knew must have been stolen off the gallows, gripping in its fleshless fingers a candle, which he knew was made of human fat. That candle, he knew, duly lighted and carried, would enable the witch to walk unseen into any house on earth, yea, through the court of King William himself, while it drowned all men in preternatural slumber.

Hereward was very much frightened. He believed devoutly in the powers of a witch.

So he trembled on his rushes, and wished himself safe through that adventure, without being turned into a hare or a wolf.

'I would sooner be a wolf than a hare, of course—but—who comes here?'

And to the first old crone, who sat winking her bleared eyes, and waving her bleared hands over a little heap of peat in the middle of the cabin, entered another crone, if possible uglier.

'Two of them! If I am not roasted and eaten this night, I am a lucky man.'

And Hereward crossed himself devoutly, and invoked St. Ethelfrida of Ely, St. Guthlac of Crowland, St. Felix of Ramsey—to which last saint, he recollected, he had been somewhat remiss; but above all, St. Peter of Peterborough, whose treasures he had given to the Danes. And he argued stoutly with St. Peter and with his own conscience, that the means sanctify the end, and that he had done it all for the best.

'If thou wilt help me out of this strait, and the rest, blessed apostle, I will give thee. I will go to Constantinople but what I will win it—a golden table, twice as fine as those villains carried off, and one of the Bourne manors—Witham—or Toft or Malthorpe whichever pleases thee best, in full fee, and a—and a—'

But while Hereward was casting in his mind what gewgaw further might suffice to appease the apostle, he was recalled to business and common sense by hearing the two old hags talk to each other in French.

'His heart leaped for joy, and he forgot St. Peter utterly.'

'Well, how have you speed? Have you seen the king?'

'No, but Ivo Taillebois. Eh? Who the foul fiend have you lying there?'

'Only an English brute. He cannot understand us. Talk on only don't wake the hog. Have you got the gold?'

'Never mind.'

Then there was a grumbling and a quarrelling, from which Hereward understood that the gold was to be shared between them.

'But it is a bit of a chain. To cut it will spoil it.'

The other insisted, and he heard them clasp the gold chain in two.

'And is this all?'

'I had work enough to get that. He said, no play no pay, and he would give it me after the Isle was taken. But I told him my spirit was a Jewish spirit, that used to serve Solomon the Wise, and he would not serve me, much

less come over the sea from Normandy, unless he smelt gold, for he loved it like any Jew.'

'And what did you tell him then?'

'That the king must go back to Aldreth again, for only from thence would he take the Isle, for—and that was true enough—I dreamt I saw all the water of Aldreth full of wolves, clambering over into the island on each other's backs.'

'That means that some of them will be drowned.'

'Let them drown. I left him to find out that part of the dream himself. Then I told him how he must make another causeway, bigger and stronger than the last, and a tower on which I could stand and curse the English. And I promised him to bring a storm right in the faces of the English, so that they could neither fight nor see.'

'But if the storm does not come?'

'It will come. I know the signs of the sky who better?—and the weather will break up in a week. Therefore I told him he must begin his works at once, before the rain came on, and that we would go and ask the guardian of the well¹ to tell us the fortunate day for attacking.'

'That is my business, and the other, and my spirit likes the smell of gold as well as yours. Little you would have got from me, if you had not given me half the chain.'

Then the two rose.

'Let us see whether the English hog is asleep.'

One of them came and listened to Hereward's breathings, and put her hand upon his chest. His hair stood on end, a cold sweat came over him. But he snored more loudly than ever.

The two old crones went out satisfied. Then Hereward rose, and glided after them.

They went down a meadow to a little well, which Hereward had marked as he rode thither, hung round with bits of rag and flowers, as similar 'holy wells' are decorated in Ireland to this day.

He hid behind a hedge, and watched them stooping over the well, mumbling he knew not what of canting.

Then there was a silence, and a tinkling sound as of water.

'Once—twice—thrice,' counted the witches. Nine times he counted the tinkling sound.

'The ninth day—the ninth day, and the king shall take Ely,' said one in a cracked scream, rising and shaking her fist towards the Isle.

Hereward was more than half-minded to have put his dagger—the only weapon which he had into the two old beldames. But the fear of an outcry kept him still. He had found out already so much, that he was determined to find out more. So to-morrow he would go up to the court itself, and take what luck sent.

He slipped back to the cabin, and lay down again, and as soon as he had seen the two old crones safe asleep, fell asleep himself, and was so tired that he laid till the sun was high.

¹ 'Cúirtleán fontium,' the guardian spirit.

'Get up!' screamed the old dame at last, kicking him, 'or I shall make you give me another cruck for a double night's rest.'

He paid his lodging, put the panniers on the mare, and went on crying pots.

When he came to the outer gateway of the court, he tied up the mare, and carried the crockery in on his own back boldly. The scullions saw him, and called him into the kitchen to see his crockery, without the least intention of paying for what they took.

A man of rank belonging to the court came in, and stared fixedly at Hereward.

'You are mightily like that villain Hereward, man,' quoth he.

'Aun?' asked Hereward, looking as stupid as he could.

'If it were not for this brown face and his short hair, he is as like the fellow as a churl can be to a knight.'

'Bring him into the hall,' quoth another, 'and let us see if any man knows him.'

Into the great hall he was brought, and stared at by knights and squires. He bent his knees, rounded his shoulders, and made himself look as mean as he could.

Ivo Taillebois and Earl Warrenne came down and had a look at him.

'Hereward!' said Ivo. 'I will warrant that little slouching cur is not he. Hereward must be half as big again, if it be true that he can kill a man with one blow of his fist.'

'You may try the truth of that for yourself some day,' thought Hereward.

'Does any one here talk English? Let us question the fellow,' said Earl Warrenne.

'Hereward! Hereward! Who wants to know about that villain?' answered the potter, as soon as he was asked in English. 'Would to heaven he were here, and I could see some of you noble knights and earls paying him for me, for I owe him more than ever I shall pay myself.'

'What does he mean?'

'He came out of the isle ten days ago, nigh on to evening, and drove off a cow of mine and four sheep, which was all my living, noble knights, save these pots.'

'And where is he since?'

'In the isle, my lords, well-nigh starved, and his folk falling away from him daily, from hunger and ague-fits. I doubt if there be a hundred sound men left in Ely.'

'Have you been in thither, then, villain?'

'Heaven forbid! I in Ely! I in the wolf's den! If I went in with naught but my skin, they would have it off me before I got out again. Ah, if your lordships would but come down, and make an end of him once for all, for he is a great tyrant, and terrible, and devours us poor folk like so many mites in his cheese.'

'Take this babbling into the kitchen, and feed him,' quoth Earl Warrenne, and so the colloquy ended.

Into the kitchen again the potter went. The king's luncheon was preparing, so he listened

to the chatter; and picked up this, at least, which was valuable to him—that the witches' story was true, that a great attack would be made from Aldreth that boats had been ordered up the river to Cottinglade,¹ and pioneers and entrenching tools were to be sent on that day to the old causeway.

But soon he had to take care of himself. Earl Warrenne's commands to feed him were construed by the cook-boys and scullions into a command to make him drunk likewise. To make a laughing-stock of an Englishman was too tempting a jest to be resisted, and Hereward was drenched (says the chronicler) with wine and beer, and sorely baited and badgered. At last one rascal hit upon a notable plan.

'Pluck out the English hog's hair and beard, and put him blindfold in the midst of his pots, and see what a smash we shall have.'

Hereward pretended not to understand the words, which were spoken in French, but when they were interpreted to him, he grew somewhat red about the ears.

Submit he would not. But if he defended himself, and made an uproar in the king's court, he might very likely find himself riding Odin's horse before the hour was out. However, haply for him, the wine and beer had made him stout of heart, and when one fellow laid hold of his beard, he resisted sturdily.

The man struck him, and that hard Hereward, hot of temper, and careless of life, struck him again, right under the ear.

The fellow dropped for dead.

Up leapt cook-boys, scullions, 'k'cheurs' (who hung about the kitchen to 'k'chee,' i.e. the platters), and all the foul mouthed rascality of a great medieval household, and attacked Hereward 'cum turris et tridentibus,' with forks and flesh hooks.

Then was Hereward aware of a great broach, or spit, before the fire, and recollecting how he had used such an one as a boy against the monks of Peterborough, was minded to use it against the cooks of Brandon, which he did so heartily, that in a few moments he had killed one, and driven the others backward in a heap.

But his case was hopeless. He was soon overpowered by numbers from outside, and dragged into the hall, to receive judgment for the mortal crime of slaying a man within the precincts of the court.

He kept up heart. He knew that the king was there, he knew that he should most likely get justice from the king. If not, he could but discover himself, and so save his life, for that William would kill him willingly, he did not believe.

So he went in boldly and willingly, and up the hall, where, on the dais, stood William the Norman.

William had finished his luncheon, and was standing at the board-side. A page held water

¹ Seemingly a lake, but, or canal through-Cottenham Fen to the Westwater, probably a Roman work, now obliterated.

in a silver basin, in which he was washing his hands. Two more knelt, and laced his long boots, for he was, as always, going a-hunting.

Then Hereward looked at the face of the great man, and felt at once that it was the face of the greatest man whom he had ever met.

'I am not that man's match,' said he to himself. 'Perhaps it will all end in being his man, and he my master.'

'Silence, knaves!' said William, 'and speak one of you at a time. How came this?'

'A likely story, forsooth!' said he, when he had heard. 'A poor English potter comes into my court, and murders my men under my very eyes for mere sport. I do not believe you, rascal! You, churl,' and he spoke through an English interpreter, 'tell me your tale, and justice you shall have or take, as you deserve. I am the king of England, man, and I know your tongue, though I speak it not yet, more fully.'

Hereward fell on his knees.

'If you are indeed my lord the king, then I am safe, for there is justice in you—at least so all men say.' And he told his tale manfully.

'Splendeur Dex!' but this is a far likelier story, and I believe it. Hark you, you ruffians! Here am I, trying to conciliate these English by justice and mercy, whenever they will let me, and here are you outraging them, and driving them mad and desperate, just that you may get a handle against them, and thus rob the poor wretches and drive them into the forest from the lowest to the highest—from Ivo Taillebois there, down to your cook boys—you are all at the same game. And I will stop it! The next time I hear of outrage to married man or harmless woman, I will hang that culprit, were he Odo my brother himself!

This excellent speech was enforced with oaths so strange and terrible, that Ivo Taillebois shook in his boots, and the chaplain prayed fervently that the roof might not fall in on their heads.

'Thou sorest, man!' said William quickly, to the kneeling Hereward. 'So thou understandest French?'

'A few words only, most gracious king, which we potters pick up, wandering everywhere with our wares,' said Hereward, speaking in French, for so soon was William's eye, that he thought it safer to play no tricks with him.

Nevertheless, he made his French so execrable, that the very scullions grinned, in spite of their fear.

'Look you,' said William, 'you are no common churl, you have fought too well for that. Let me see your arm.'

Hereward drew up his sleeve.

'Potters do not carry sword scars like those, neither are they tattooed like English thanes. Hold up thy head, man, and let us see thy throat.'

Hereward, who had carefully hung down his head to prevent his throat-palms being seen, was forced to lift it up.

'Aha! So I expected. There is fair ladies'

work there. Is not this he who was said to be so like Hereward? Very good. Put him in ward till I come back from hunting. But do him no harm. For' and William fixed on Hereward eyes of the most intense intelligence—'were he Hereward himself, I should be right glad to see Hereward safe and sound, my man at last, and earl of all between Humber and the fens.'

But Hereward did not rise at the hint. With a face of stupid and ludicrous terror, he made reply in broken French.

'Have mercy, mercy, lord king! Make not that head sail over us. Even Ivo Taillebois there would be better than he. Send him to be earl over the mips in hell, or over the wild Welsh who are worse still—but not over us, good lord king, whom he hath pulled and peeled till we are—'

'Silence!' said William, laughing, as did all round him. 'Thou art a cunning rogue enough, whoever thou art. Go into limbo, and behave thyself till I come back.'

'All saints send you grace good sport, and thereby men good deliverance,' quoth Hereward, who knew that his life might depend on the temper in which William returned. So he was thrust into an outhouse, and there lucked up.

He sat on an empty barrel, meditating on the chances of his submitting to the king after all, when the door opened, and in strode one with a drawn sword in one hand, and a pair of leg-shackles in the other.

'Hold out thy shins, fellow! Thou art not going to sit at thine ease there like an abbot, after killing one of us grooms, and bringing the rest of us into disgrace. Hold out thy legs, I say!'

'Nothing ensue,' quoth Hereward cheerfully, and held out a leg. But when the man stooped to put on the fetters, he received a kick which sent him staggering.

After which he recollected very little, at least in this world. For Hereward cut off his head with his own sword.

After which (says the chronicler) he broke away out of the house, and over garden walls and palings, by lung and running, till he got to the front gate, and leaped upon mure Swallow.

And none saw him, save one unlucky groom-boy, who stood yelling and cursing in front of the mure's head, and went to seize her huddle.

Whereon, between the imminent danger and the bad language, Hereward's blood rose, and he smote that unlucky groom-boy—but whether he slew him or not, the chronicler had rather not say.

Then he shook up mure Swallow, and with one great shout of 'A Wake! A Wake!' rode for his life, with knights and squires (for the hue and cry was raised) galloping at her heels.

Who then were astonished but those knights, as they saw the ugly potter's garzon gaining on them, length after length, till she and her rider had left them far behind!

Who then was proud but Hereward, as the

mare tucked her great thighs under her, and swept on over heath and rabbit-hurrow, over rush and fen, sound ground and rotten all alike to that enormous stride, to that keen bright eye which foresaw every footfall, to that raking shoulder which picked her up again at every stagger?

Herward laid the bridle on his neck, and let her go. Fall she could not, and tire she could not, and he half wished she might go on for ever. Where could a man be better than on a good horse, with all the cares of this life blown away out of his brains by the keen air which rushed round his temples? And he galloped on, as cheery as a boy, shouting at the rabbits as they scuttled from under his feet, and laughing at the doctrel as they postured and anticked on the mole hills.

But when he got through Mildenhall, he began to think how he should get home to Ely.

The linc and cry would be out against him. The ports and ferries to the east of the isle as far south as Cambridge would be guarded, and all the more surely, on account of the approaching attack. True, he knew many a path and ford which the French could not know, but he feared to trust himself in the labyrinth of fens and meres, with a mob of pursuers at his heels. A single mistake might pound him among morasses, and force him, even if he escaped himself through the reeds, to leave the mare behind. And to do that was shame and loss intolerable. No! *Mare Swallow*, for her own sake, must do a deed that day.

He would go south by the Roman roads. He would go right round the fens, round *Cum-bulge* itself, into the western forests. There he could he hid till some friend at *Summersham* or *Earth* should ferry him over to the western side of the isle. The distance was great, well-nigh fifty miles, but the land was light and sound, and the going safe and good. It must be done. It should be done.

He gathered the mare together, as he rose the slope of *Kennet Heath*. She was going steadily and soundly, breathing like a sleeping child. His pursuers were two miles behind, black dots among the barrows on *Barton Hill*. He had time to rest her, and trotted on steadily, keeping to the uplands and the high road, from whence he could see far and wide over the land.

On by *Newmarket Heath*—nameless and desert then—over smooth chalk soil, through glades of fern and thorn, past barrows where slept the heroes of old times, Briton, Roman, Saxon, Dane, forefathers of his own, perhaps, among them. Ay—that was the place for a hero to sleep in. Not choked in a minster charnel-house, amid green damp and drowning monks, but out under the free sky, with his weapons round him, his horse, his dog, the antlers of his game, where he might come up out of his barrow on moonlight nights, and stare at the flying clouds, and scent the rushing breeze. Ah, that he could be buried there, but then *Torfrida*—he should like to be by her.

He was at the *Rech-dyke* now, and warily he looked eastward, as he led the mare up the steep bank, for French scouts between him and the fens, but none were within sight.

He paused upon the top of that great earth-work. Dangerous as it was to stop in that exposed height, making himself a beacon against the sky, he could not but look down, and back, at all which remained of free English soil.

He looked down over *Swaffham*, *Quy*, and *Waterleach*, and the rest of the tree-embowered hamlets which fringed the fen, green knolls on the shore of a boundless sea of pale-blue mist, and above that sea, to the far north, a line of darker blue, which was the sacred isle. As the sun sank lower, higher rose the mist, and the isle grew more and more faint, vaporous, dreamy, as *fen-distances* are wont to be. Was it not about to fade away in reality, to become a vapour, and a dream, and leave him alone and free? Earls, knights, housecarles, monks, seemed all becoming phantoms, fading with their fading cause. Was it worth while to fight, to die, for them, for anything? What was *William* to him? What was *England*? Why play out the lost game to the last? Why not leave all behind, and ride down south—to the sea—the free sea, and the wild joys of the Viking's life? And he led the mare down the *Rech-dyke*, and up again on to the down, faltering, stopping, his head sunken on his breast, his heart sunken within.

But *Torfrida*—*Torfrida* and the little girl. They at least were not phantoms. They could not vanish, could not even die—to him. His they were for ever. What hand had been putting boy's dreams into his head?

And he sprang hastily into the saddle, as one that flees from a temptation. 'Home, mare! Home to prison again! We have been out far too long, old lass! too long!'

He held on over the *Fleam-dyke*, but he feared to turn downwards into the *Cambridge* flats, and kept his vantage-ground upon the downs, till, on the top of the *Gogmagog*, he struck the old Roman road, which men call '*Wort's Causeway*' at this day. Down that he turned, short to the right, toward the green meadows, and the long line of mighty elms, and the little village which clustered, unconscious of its coming glories, beneath the new French keep, beside the Roman bridge.

The setting sun gilded the white fints of the keep, and *Hereward* looked on them with a curse. But it gilded, too, the tree-tops of the great forest beyond, and *Hereward* uttered something like a prayer to *St. Etheldreda* and her ladies three. For if he could but reach that forest, he was safe.

The *Wake* was, of course, too wise to go through *Cambridge* street, under the eyes of the French garrison. But he saw that the Roman road led straight to a hamlet some mile above the town, and at the road end, he guessed, there must be either a bridge or a ford. There he could cross the *Cam*. And he rode slowly

downward, longing for it to grow dark, and saving the mare, in case she should be needed for a sudden rush.

And a rush was soon needed. For on the hill behind him he saw armour glitter in the red light, and a brace of knights. They paused for a moment, and then espied him. One galloped down the road toward him, the other spurred to the right, straight for Cambridge.

'I shall have the whole pack of wolves out, and on me, in half an hour,' thought Hereward, and struck spurs into the mare.

Into the ford—by Chaucer's after famous mill—he dashed, making more splash than ever did ~~grooms~~ in Shelford Fen, and out again, and on to the clay wold, and away for Coton and Madingley rise, and the black wall of oak, and ash, and elm.

And as he entered the forest at Madingley, he rose in his stirrups, with a shout of 'A Wako! A Wako!' which was heard, for aught he cared, in Cambridge Castle, and then rode on leisurely toward the Drytoons, and the ferry over the Ouse at Holywell, for well he knew that they who could not catch The Wake in the held, were still less like to catch him in the wood.

And so through the forest, by a clean moonlight (says the chronicler), he came in the early morning to the Isle Somersham, which was then all deep wood (as the names of Woodlunst and Somersham Parks still testify), and was fenced over at Earith by one of his many friends into the Isle of Ely.

And of all those knights that followed him, none ever saw or heard sign of him, save one, and his horse came to a standstill in 'the aforesaid wood,' and he rolled off and lay breathless under a tree, looking up at his horse's heaving flanks and wagging tail, and wondering how he should get out of that place before the English found him and made an end of him.

Then there came up to him a ragged Churl, and asked him who he was, and offered to help him.

'For the sake of God and courtesy,' quoth he, his French pride being well-nigh beat out of him, 'if thou hast seen or heard anything of Hereward the Wako, good fellow, tell me, and I will repay thee well.'

'As thou hast asked me for the sake of God and of courtesy, sir knight, I will tell thee. I am The Wake. And in token thereof, thou shalt give me thy lance and sword, and take instead this sword which I earned off from the king's court at Brandon, and promise me, on the faith of a knight, to bear it back to King William; and tell him, that Hereward and he have met at last, and that he had best beware of the day when they shall meet again.'

So that knight, not having recovered his wind, was fain to submit, and go home a sadder and a wiser man. And King William laughed a royal laugh, and commanded his knights that they should in no wise harm The Wake, but

take him alive, and bring him in, and they should have great rewards.

Which seemed to them more easily said than done.

CHAPTER XXXI

HOW THEY FOUGHT AGAIN AT ALDRETH

HERWARD came back in fear and trembling after all. He believed in the magic powers of the witch of Brandon, and he asked Torfrida, in his simplicity, whether she was not cunning enough to defeat her spells by counter spells.

Torfrida smiled and shook her head.

'My knight, I have long since given up such vanities. Let us not fight evil with evil, but rather with good. Bitten are payers than chains, for the former are heard in heaven above, and the latter only in the pit below. Let us and all the women of Ely go rather in procession to St. Etheldreda's well, there above the fens at Aldreth, and pray St. Etheldreda to be with us when the day shall come, and defend her own Isle, and the honour of us women who have taken refuge in her holy arms.'

So all the women of Ely walked out barefoot to St. Etheldreda's well, with Torfrida at their head, clothed in sackcloth, and with letters on her wrists, and waist, and ankles, which she viewed, after the strange, sudden, earnest fashion of those times, never to take off again till she saw the French host flee from Aldreth before the Lac of St. Etheldreda. So they prayed, while Hereward and his men worked at the fens below. And when they came back, and Torfrida was washing her feet, sore and bleeding from her pilgrimage, Hereward came in.

'You have numbed your poor soft feet, and taken nothing thereby, I fear.'

'I have. If I had walked on sharp razors all the way, I would have done it gladly, to know what I know now. As I prayed I looked out over the fen, and St. Etheldreda put a thought into my heart. But it is so terrible a one, that I fear to tell it to you. And yet it seems our only chance.'

Hereward threw himself at her feet, and prayed her to tell. At last she spoke, as one half afraid of her own words.

'Will the reeds burn, Hereward?'

Hereward kissed her feet again and again, calling her his prophetic, his saviour.

'Burn! yes, like tinder, in this March wind, if the drought only holds. Pray that the drought may hold, Torfrida.'

'There, there, say no more. How hard-hearted war makes even us women! There, help me to take off this rough sackcloth, and dress myself again.'

Meanwhile William had moved his army again to Cambridge, and on to Willingham-field, and there he began to throw up those 'globes and montans,' of which Leofric's paraphraser talks, but of which now no trace

remains. Then he began to rebuild his causeway, broader and stronger, and commanded all the fishermen of the Ouse to bring their boats to Cottinglade, and ferry over his materials. 'Among whom came Hereward in a very narrow canoe, with head and head shaven lest he should be known, and worked diligently among the rest. But the sun did not set that day without mischief, for before Hereward went off, he finished his work by setting the whole on fire, so that it was all burnt, and some of the French killed and drowned.'

And so *The Wake* went on, with stratagems and ambushes, till 'after seven days' continual fighting, they had hardly done one day's work, save ten globes of wood, in which they intended to put their artillery. But on the eighth day they determined to attack the isle, putting in the midst of them that pythoness woman on a high place, where she might be safe freely to exercise her art.'

It was not Hereward alone who had entreated *Torfrida* to exercise her magic in their behalf. But she steadily refused, and made good Abbot *Thurstan* support her refusal by a strict declaration that he would have no fiends' games played in Ely, as long as he was abbot alive on land.

Torfrida, meanwhile, grew utterly wild. Her conscience smote her, in spite of her belief that *St. Etheldreda* had inspired her, at the terrible resource which she had hunted to her husband, and which she knew well he would carry out with terrible success. Pictures of agony and death floated before her eyes, and kept her awake at night. She watched long hours in the church in prayer, she fasted, she disciplined her tender body with sharp pains, she tried, after the fashion of those times, to atone for her sin, if sin it was. At last she had worked herself up into a religious frenzy. She saw *St. Etheldreda* in the clouds, towering over the isle, menning the French host with her virgin palm-branch. She uttered wild prophecies of ruin and defeat to the French, and then, when her frenzy collapsed, moaned secretly of ruin and defeat hereafter to themselves. But she would be bold, she would play her part, she would encourage the heroes who looked to her as one inspired, wiser and bolder than themselves.

And so it befell, that when the men marched down to *Haddenham* that afternoon, *Torfrida* rode at their head on a white charger, robed from throat to ankle in sackcloth, her fetters clanking on her limbs. But she called on the English to see in her the emblem of England captive yet unconquered, and to break her fetters and the worse fetters of every woman in England who was the toil and slave of the brutal invaders, and so fierce a triumph sparkled from her wild hawk-eyes that the Englishmen looked up to her weird beauty as to that of an inspired saint, and when the French came on to the assault there stood on the grassy mound behind the English fort a figure clothed in sackcloth, barefooted and bareheaded, with fetters shining

on waist, and wrist, and ankle—her long black locks streaming in the wind, her long white arms stretched cross-wise toward heaven, in imitation of *Moses* of old above the battle with *Amalek*, invoking *St. Etheldreda* and all the powers of heaven, and chanting doom and defiance to the invaders.

And the English looked on her, and cried, 'She is a prophetess! We will surely do some great deed this day, or die around her feet like heroes!'

And opposite to her, upon the French tower, the old hag of *Brandon* howled and gibbered with filthy gestures, calling for the thunder-storm which did not come, for all above the sky was cloudless blue.

And the English saw and felt, though they could not speak it, dumb nation as they were, the contrast between the spirit of cruelty and darkness, and the spirit of freedom and light.

So strong was the new bridge that *William* trusted himself upon it on horseback, with *Ivo Taillebois* at his side.

William doubted the powers of the witch, and felt rather ashamed of his new helpmate, but he was confident in his bridge, and in the heavy artillery which he had placed in his sun tower.

Ivo Taillebois was utterly confident in his witch, and in the bridge likewise.

William waited for the rising of the tide, and when the tide was near its height, he commanded the artillery to open, and clear the fort opposite of the English. Then with crash and twang, the balistas and catapults went off, and great stones and heavy lances hurtled through the air.

'Back!' shouted *Torfrida*, raised almost to madness by fasting, self-torture, and religious frenzy. 'Out of you fort, every man! Why waste your lives under that artillery? Stand still this day, and see how the saints of heaven shall fight for you.'

So utter was the reverence which she commanded for the moment, that every man threw back, and crowded round her feet outside the fort.

'The cowards are fleeing already. Let you men go, sir king!' shouted *Taillebois*.

'On to the assault! Strike for Normandy!' shouted *William*.

'I fear much,' said he to himself, 'that this is some stratagem of that *Wake's*. But compelled they must be.'

The evening breeze curled up the reach. The great pike splashed out from the weedy shores, sending the whitefish flying in shoals into the low glare of the setting sun, and heedful not, stupid things, the barges packed with mailed men, which swarmed in the reeds on either side the bridge, and began to push out into the river.

The stailings swung in thousands round the reed-ronds, looking to settle in their wonted place but dare not, and rose and swung round again, telling each other, in their manifold pipings, how all the reed-ronds teemed with

mailed men. And all above the sky was cloudless blue.

And then came a trample, a roll of many feet on the soft spongy peat, a low murmur which rose into wild shouts of 'Dex Aie!' as a human tide poured along the causeway, and past the witch of Brandon Heath.

'Dex Aie!' quoth William, with a sneer. 'Debbles Aie!' would fit better.

'If, sire, the powers above would have helped us, we should have been happy enough to. But if they will not, it is not our fault if we try below,' said Ivo Taillebois.

William laughed. 'It is well to have two strings to one's bow, sir. Forward, men! forward!' shouted he, riding out to the bridge-end, under the tower.

'Forward!' shouted Ivo Taillebois.

'Forward!' shouted the hideous hag overhead. 'The spirit of the well fights for you.'

'Fight for yourselves,' said William.

There were fifty yards of deep clear water between Frenchman and Englishman. Only fifty yards. Not only the arrows and atlast quarrels, but heavy hand-javelins, flew across every moment, every now and then a man toppled forward, and plunged into the blue depth among the eels and pike, to find his comrades of the summer before, and then the stream was still once more. The eels and water-lilies swam in and out of the reeds, and wondered what it was all about. The water-lilies flapped upon the ripple, as lonely as in the loneliest mere. But their floats were soon broken, their white cups stained with human gore. Fifty yards of deep clear water. And treasure unestimable to win by crossing it.

They thrust out barks, canoes, pontoons, they crawled upon them like ants, and thrust out more yet beyond, heedless of their comrades, who slipped, and splashed, and sank, holding out vain hands to hands too busy to seize them. And always the old witch jabbered overhead with her canting, pointing, mumbling, jaying for the storm, while all above, the sky was cloudless blue.

And always on the mound opposite, while darts and quarrels whizzed round her head, stood Torfrida, pointing with outstretched scornful finger at the strugglers in the river, and chanting loudly what the Frenchmen could not tell, but it made their hearts, as it was meant to do, melt like wax within them.

'They have a counter witch to yours, Ivo, it seems, and a fairer one. I am afraid the devils, especially if Anglo-Saxons be at hand, are more likely to listen to her than to that old brown-stick-rider aloft.'

'Fair is, that fair cause has, sir king.'

'A good argument for honest men, but none for fiends. What is the fair fiend pointing at so earnestly there?'

'Somewhat among the reeds. Hawk to her now! She is singing, somewhat more like an angel than a fiend, I will say for her.'

And Torfrida's song, coming clear and sweet

across the water, rose louder and shriller till it almost drowned the jabbering of the witch.

'She sees more than we do.'

'But I see!' cried William, snatching his hand upon his thigh. 'Par le splendour Dex! She has been showing them where to fire the reeds, and they have done it.'

A puff of smoke, a wisp of flame, and then another and another, and a canoe shot out from the reeds on the French shore, and glided into the reeds of the island.

'The reeds are on her, men! Have a care,' shouted Ivo.

'Silence, fool! Frighten them once, and they will leap like sheep into that gulf. Men! right about! draw off—slowly and in order. We will attack again to-morrow.'

The cool voice of the great captain arose too late. A line of flame was leaping above the red bed, crackling and howling before the evening breeze. The column on the causeway had seen their danger but too soon, and fled, but whither?

A shower of arrows, quarrels, javelins, fell upon the head of the column as it tried to turn about and retreat, reinforcing it more and more. One arrow, shot by no common arm, went clean through William's shield, and pinned it to the mailed flesh. He could not stifle a cry of pain.

'You are wounded, sire. Ride for your life! It is worth that of a thousand of these churls,' and Ivo seized William's bridle and dragged him, in spite of himself, through the cowering, shrieking, struggling crowd.

On came the flame, leaping and crackling, laughing and shrieking, like a live head. The archers and slingers in the boats covered before it, and fell, scorched corpses, as it swept on. It reached the causeway, surged up, recoiled from the mass of human beings, then sprang over their heads and passed onwards, guarding them with flame.

The reeds were burning around them; the timbers of the bridge caught fire; the peat and faggots smouldered beneath their feet. They sprang from the burning footway, and plunged into the fathomless bog, covering their faces and eyes with scorched hands, and then sank in the black gurgling slush.

Ivo dragged William on, regardless of curses and prayers from his soldiery, and they reached the shore just in time to see between them and the water a long black smouldering withering line the morass to right and left, which had been a mound before deep reed, an open stinky pool, dotted with boatsful of shrieking and cursing men, and at the causeway end the tower, with the flame climbing up its posts, and the witch of Brandon throwing herself desperately from the top, and falling dead upon the embers, a motionless heap of rage.

'Fool that thou art! Fool that I was!' cried the great king, as he rolled off his horse at his tent door, cursing with rage and pain.

Ivo Taillebois sneaked off, sent over to

Brandon for the second witch, and hanged her, as some small comfort to his son! Neither did he forget to search the cabin, till he found buried in a crock the bits of his own gold chain, and various other treasures, for which the wretched old women had bartered their souls. All which he contrived to his own use, as a much-injured man.

The next day William withdrew his army. The men refused to face again that blood-stained pass. The English spells, they said, were stronger than theirs, and than the daring of brave men. Let William take Torfrida and burn her, as she had burned them, with reeks out of Willingham fen, then might they try to storm Ely again.

Torfrida saw them turn, flee, die in agony. Her work was done; her passion exhausted, her self-torture, and the mere weight of her fetters, which she had sustained during her passion, weighed her down, she dropped senseless on the turf, and lay in a trance for many hours.

Then she arose, and, casting off her fetters and her sackcloth, was herself again—but a sadder woman till her dying day.

CHAPTER XXXII

HOW KING WILLIAM TOOK COUNSEL OF A CATHOLIC

If Torfrida was exhausted, so was Hereward likewise. He knew well that a repulse was not a defeat. He knew well the indomitable persistence, the boundless resources, of the man-triumph whom he defied, and he knew well that another attempt would be made, and then another, till—though it took seven years in the doing—Ely would be won at last. To hold out doggedly as he could was his plan to obtain the best terms he could for his comrades. And he might obtain good terms at last. William might be glad to pay a fair price in order to escape such a thorn in his side, as the camp of refuge, and might deal—or, at least, promise to deal—mercifully and generously with the last remnant of the English gentry. For himself, yield he would not when all was over, he would flee to the sea, with Torfrida and his own housecarles, and turn Viking, or go to Sweyn Ulfsen in Denmark, and die a free man.

The English did not foresee these things. Their hearts were lifted up with their victory, and they laughed at William and his French, and drank Torfrida's health much too often for their own good. Hereward did not care to undecieve them. But he could not help speaking his mind in the abbot's chamber, to Thurstan, Egelwin, and his nephews, and to Sigtryg Ragnaldson, who was still in Ely, not only because he had promised to stay there, but because he could not get out if he would.

Blockaded they were utterly, by land and

water. The isle furnished a fair supply of food, and what was wanting they obtained by foraging. But they had laid the land waste for so many miles round, that their plundering raids brought them in less than of old, and if they went far, they fell in with the French, and lost good men, even though they were generally successful. So provisions were running somewhat short, and would run shorter still.

Moreover, there was a great cause of anxiety. Bishop Egelwin, Abbot of Hurstan, and the monks of Ely were in rebellion, not only against King William, but more or less against the Pope of Rome. They might be excommunicated. The minister lands might be taken away.

Bishop Egelwin set his face like a flint. He expected no mercy. All he had ever done for the French was to warn Robert Cornyn that if he stayed in Durham, evil would befall him. But that was as little worth to him as it was to the mad Robert. And no mercy he craved. The less a man had, the more fit he was for heaven. He could but die, and that he had known ever since he was a chanter-boy. Whether he died in Ely or in prison mattered little to him, provided they did not refuse him the sacraments, and that they would hardly do. But call the Duke of Normandy his rightful sovereign he would not, because he was not—nor anybody else just now, as far as he could see.

Valiant likewise was Abbot Thurstan, for himself. But he had—unlike Bishop Egelwin, whose diocese had been given to a Frenchman—an abbey, monks, and broad lands, whereof he was father and steward. And he must do what was best for the abbey, and also what the monks would let him do. For severe as was the discipline of a monastery in time of peace, yet in time of war, when life and death were in question, monks had ere now turned valiant from very far, like Cato's monks, and minted and so taught the monks of Ely.

And Edwin and Morcar!

No man knows what they said or thought, perhaps no man cared much, even in their own days. No hint does any chronicler give of what manner of men they were, or what manner of deeds they did. Fair, gentle, noble, beloved even by William, they are mere names, and nothing more, in history, and it is to be supposed, therefore, that they were nothing more in fact. The race of Leofric and Godiva had worn itself out.

One night the confederates had sat late, talking over the future more earnestly than usual. Edwin, usually sad enough, was especially sad that night.

Hereward jested with him, tried to cheer him—but he was silent, would not drink, and went away before the rest.

The next morning he was gone, and with him half a dozen of his private housecarles.

Hereward was terrified. If defections once began, they would be endless. The camp would fall to pieces, and every man among them would

be hanged, mutilated, or imprisoned, one by one, helplessly. They must stand or fall together.

He went raging to Morcar. Morcar knew nought of it. On the faith and honour of a knight, he knew nought. Only his brother had said to him a day or two before that he must see his betrothed before he died.

'He is gone to William, then? Does he think to win her now—an outcast and a beggar—when he was refused her with broad lands and a thousand men at his back? Fool! See that then play not the fool likewise, nephew, or—'

'Or what?' said Morcar defiantly.

'Or thou wilt go, whither Edwin is gone—to betrayal and ruin.'

'Why so? He has been kind enough to Waltheof and Gospatric, why not to Edwin?'

'Because,' laughed Hereward, 'he wanted Waltheof, and he does not want you and Edwin. He can keep Mercia quiet without your help. Northumbria and the fens he cannot without Waltheof's. They are a rougher set as you go east and north, as you should know already, and must have one of themselves over them to keep them in good humour for a while. When he has used Waltheof as his stalking horse long enough to build a castle every ten miles, he will throw him away like a worn bowstring. Earl Morcar, nephew mine.'

Morcar shook his head.

In a week more he was gone likewise. He came to William at Brandon.

'You are come in at last, young earl?' said William sternly. 'You are come too late.'

'I throw myself on your knightly faith,' said Morcar. But he had come in an angry and unlucky hour.

'How well have you kept your own, twice a rebel, that you should appeal to mine? Take him away.'

'And hang him?' asked Ivo Taillebois.

'Fish! No—thou old butcher! Put him in irons, and send him into Normandy.'

'Send him to Roger de Beaumont, knave! Roger's son is safe in Morcar's castle at Warwick, so it is but fair that Morcar should be safe in Roger's.'

And to Roger de Beaumont he was sent, while young Roger was Lord of Warwick, and all around that once was Leofric and Godiva's.

Morcar lay in a Norman keep till the day of William's death. On his deathbed the tyrant's heart smote him, and he sent orders to release him. For a few short days, or hours, he breathed free air again. Then Rufus shut him up once more, and for ever.

And that was the end of Earl Morcar.

A few weeks after, three men came to the camp at Brandon, and they brought a head to the king. And when William looked upon it, it was the head of Edwin.

The human heart must have burst up again in the tyrant as he looked on the fair face of him he had so loved, and so wronged for they say he wept.

The knights and earls stood round, amazed and awed, as they saw iron-tears run down Pluto's cheek.

'How came this here, knaves?' thundered he at last.

They told a rambling story, how Edwin always would needs go to Winchester to see the queen, for she would stand his friend, and do him right. And how they could not get to Winchester for fear of the French, and wandered in woods and walds, and how they were set upon, and hunted, and how Edwin still was mad to go to Winchester. But when he could not, he would go to Brethwallon and his Welsh, and how Earl Randal of Chester set upon them, and how they got between a stream and the tide-way of the Dee, and were cut off. And how Edwin would not yield. And how then they slew him in self defence, and Randal let them bring the head to the king.

Thus, or something like it, was their story. But who could believe traitors? Where Edwin wandered, what he did during those months, no man knows. All that is known is, three men brought his head to William, and told some such tale. And so the old nobility of England died up and down the mts and sloughs, like wounded birds, and, as of wounded birds, none knew or cared how far they had run, or how their broken bones had ached before they died.

'Out of their own mouths they are condemned,' says Holy Writ,' thundered William. 'Hang them on high.'

And hanged on high they were, on Brandon heath.

Then the king turned on his courtiers, glad to ease his own conscience by cursing them.

'This is your doing, sirs! If I had not listened to your base counsels, Edwin might have been now my faithful hegemon and my son-in-law, and I had had one more Englishman left in power, and one sin less upon my soul.'

'And one thou less in thy side,' quoth Ivo Taillebois.

'Who spoke to thee? Ralph Guader, thou gavest me the counsel thou wilt answer it to God and His saints.'

That did I not. It was Earl Roger, because he wanted the man's Shropshire lands.'

Whereon high words ensued and the king gave the earl the lie in his teeth, which the earl did not forget.

'I think,' said the rough wharfed voice of Ivo, 'that instead of crying over spilt milk,—for milk the lad was, and never would have grown to good beef, had he lived to my age—'

'Who spoke to thee?'

'No man, and for that reason I spake myself. I have lands in Spalding, by your royal grace, and wish to enjoy them in peace, leaving worked for them hard enough—and how can I do that, as long as Hereward sits in Ely?'

'Splendour Dex!' said William, 'thou art right, old butcher.'

So they laid their heads together to slay Hereward. And after they had talked a while, then spoke William's chaplain for the nonce, an Italian, a friend and pupil of Lanfranc of Pavia, an Italian also, then Archbishop of Canterbury, scourging and imprisoning English monks in the south. And he spoke like an Italian of those times, who knew the ways of Rome.

'If his majesty will allow my humility to suggest—'

'What? Thy humility is proud enough under the rose, I will warrant. But it has a Roman wit under the rose likewise. Speak!'

'That when the secular and carnal arm has failed, as it is written—'He poureth contempt upon princes, and letteth them wander out of the way in the wildness, or fens,—for the Latin word, and I doubt not the Hebrew, has both meanings.'

'Splendeur Dex!' cried William bitterly, 'that hath he done with a vengeance! Thou art right so far, clerk!'

'Yet helpeth He the poor, vilest, His church and the religious, who are vowed to holy poverty, out of misery, vilest, the oppression of barbarous customs, and maketh them households like a flock of sheep.'

'They do that for themselves already, here in England,' said William, with a sneer at the faunted morals of the English monks and clergy.

'But Heaven and the Church do it for the true poor, whom your majesty is bringing in, to your endless glory.'

'But what has all this to do with taking Ely?' asked William impatiently. 'I asked thee for reason, and not sermons.'

'Thus. That it is in the power of the Holy Father—and that power he would doubtless allow you, as his dear son and most faithful servant, to enjoy for yourself, without sending to Rome, which might cause painful delays to—'

It might seem strange that William, Taillebois, Proot, Guader, Warwinc, short spoken, hard-headed, hard-swearing warrior, could allow complacently a smooth churchman to dawdle on thus, counting his periods on his fingers, and seemingly never coming to the point.

But they knew well that the churchman was a far cunninger, as well as a more learned, man than themselves. They knew well that they

¹ I do not laugh at Holy Scripture myself, I only insist on this as a specimen of the usual medieval 'cant'—a name and a practice, which are both derived, not from Prynne, but from monks.

² The alleged profligacy and sensuality of the English Church before the Conquest rests surely on a few violent and vague expostions of the Norman monks who displaced them. No facts, as far as I can find, have ever been alleged. And without facts on the other side, an impartial man will hold by the one fact which is certain, that the Church of England, popish as it was, was, unfortunately for it, not popish enough, and, from its insular freedom, obnoxious to the Church of Rome and the ultramontane clergy of Normandy, and was therefore to be believed capable—and therefore again accused—of any and every crime.

could not hurry him, and that they need not, that he would make his point at last, hunting it out step by step, and letting them see how he got thither, like a practised hound. They knew that if he spoke, he had thought long and craftily, till he had made up his mind, and that therefore he would very probably make up then minds likewise. It was the conquest—not of a heavenly spirit, though it boasted itself such—but of a cultivated mind over brute flesh.

They might have said all this aloud, and yet the churchman would have gone on, as he did, where he left off, with unaltered blandness of tone.

'To convert to other uses the goods of the Church. To convert them to profane uses would, I need not say, be a sacrilege as horrible to heaven, as impossible to so pious a monarch.'

Ivo Taillebois winced. He had just stolen a man from the monks at Crowland, and meant to keep it.

'To convert, I say, church lands belonging to abbays or sees, whose abbots or bishops are continuously disobedient to the Holy See, or to their lawful monarch, he being in the communion of the Church and at peace with the said Holy See. If, therefore, to come to that point at which my incapacity, through the devious windings of my simplicity, has been tending, but with halting steps, from the moment that your majesty deigned to hear—'

'Put in the spur, man!' said Ivo, tired at last, 'and run the deer to soil.'

'Hurry in man's cattle, especially thine own,' answered the churchman, with so shrewd a wink, and so cheery a voice, that Ivo, when he recovered from his surprise, cried

'Why thou art a good huntsman thyself, I believe now.'

'All things to all men, in by any means. But to return. If your majesty should think fit to proceed to the requisitions of Ely, that unless they submit themselves to your royal grace—and to that, of course, of His Holiness our Father—within a certain day, you will convert to other uses, premising, to avoid scandal, that those uses shall be for the benefit of Holy Church—all lands and manors of theirs lying without the precincts of the Isle of Ely—those lands being, as is known, large and of great value. Quid plura? Why burden your exalted intellect by detailing to you consequences which it has long ere now foreseen?'

quoth William, who was nearly as sharp as the Italian, and had seen it all. 'I will make thee a bishop!'

'Spare to burden my weakness,' said the chaplain, and slipped away into the shade.

'You will take his advice?', asked Ivo.

'I will.'

'Then I shall see that Torfrida burn at last.'

'Burn her!' and William swore.

'I promised my soldiers to burn the witch with reeds out of Haddenham fen, as she had

burned them, and I must keep my knightly word.

William swore yet more. Ivo Taillebois was a butcher and a churl.

'Call me not churl and butcher too often, lord king, ere thou hast found whether thou needest me or not. Rough I may be, false was I never.'

'That thou wert not,' said William, who needed Taillebois much, and feared him somewhat, and remarked something meaning in his voice, which made him calm himself, diplomat as he was, instantly. 'But burn Torfrida thou shalt not.'

'Well, I care not. I have seen a woman burnt ere now, and had no fancy for the screeching. Besides, they say she is a very fair dame—and has a fair daughter, too, coming on—and she may very well make a wife for a Frenchman.'

'Hurry her thyself!'

'I shall have to kill this Wake first.'

'Then do it, and I will give thee his lands.'

'I may have to kill others before The Wake.'

'You may!'

And so the matter dropped. But William caught Ivo alone after an hour, and asked him what he meant.

'No pay, no play. Lord king, I have served thee well, rough and smooth.'

'Thou hast, and hast been well paid. But if I have said aught hasty—'

'Pish, king. I am a plain-spoken man, and like a plain-spoken master. But instead of marrying Torfrida or her daughter, I have more mind to her niece, who is younger, and has no Hereward to be killed first.'

'Her niece? Who?'

'Lucia, as we call her, Edwin and Morcar's sister, Hereward's niece, Torfrida's niece.'

'No pay, no play, sudsst thou? so say I. What meant you by having to kill others before Hereward?'

'Beware of Waltheof,' said Ivo.

'Waltheof? Pish. This is one of thy inventions for making me hunt every Englishman to death, that thou mayest know their bones.'

'Is it? Then thus I say more. Beware of Ralph Guader.'

'Pish!'

'Pish on, lord king.' Etiquette was not yet discovered by Norman barons and earls, who thought themselves all but as good as their king, gave him then advice when they thought fit, and if he did not take it, attacked him with all their might. 'Pish on, but listen. Beware of Roger.'

'And what more?'

'And give me Lucia. I want her. I will have her.'

William laughed. 'Thou of all men? To mix that ditch-water with that wine?'

'They were mixed in thy blood, lord king, and thou art the better man for it, so says the world. Old wine and old blood throw any lees

to the bottom of the cask, and we shall have a son worthy to ride behind—'

'Take care!' quoth William.

'The greatest captain upon earth.'

William laughed again, like Odin's self.

'Thou shalt have Lucia, for that word.'

'And thou shalt have the plot on it breaks. As it will.'

'To this have I come at last,' said William to himself. 'To murder these English nobles, to marry their daughters to my groom. Heaven forgive me! They have brought it upon themselves, by contumacy to Holy Church. Call my secretary, some one.'

The Italian re-entered.

'The valiant and honorable and illustrious knight, Ivo Taillebois, Lord of Holland and Kisteven, wedd Lucia, sister of the late Eadulf Edwin and Morcar, now with the queen, and with her, her maids. You will prepare the papers.'

'I am yours to death,' said Ivo.

'To do thee justice, I think thou wert that already. Stay—here, sir priest, do you know any man who knows this Torfrida?'

'I do, king,' said Ivo. 'There is one Sir Asehu, a man of Gilling's, in the camp.'

'Send for him.'

'His Torfrida,' said William, 'haunts me.'

'Pity heaven she have not bewitched your grace.'

'Tut, I am too old a campaigner to take much harm by woman's sharpshooting, at fifteen score yards off, beside a deep stream between. No. The woman has courage and beauty too, you say.'

'What of that, O prince?' said the Italian. 'Who more beautiful shapshot be true—than those lost women who slange nightly in the forests with Venas and Herodias, as it may be this Torfrida has done many a time.'

'You priests are apt to be hard upon poor women.'

'The fox found that the grapes were sour,' said the Italian, laughing at himself and his cloth—or at anything else, by which he could curry favour.

'And this woman was no vulgar witch. That sort of personage suits Taillebois's taste, rather than Hereward's.'

'Hungry dogs eat dirty pudding,' said Ivo pertinently.

'The woman believed herself in the right. She believed that the saints of heaven were on her side. I saw it in her attitude, in her gestures. Perhaps she was right.'

'Sire!' said both by standards in astonishment.

'I would I saw that woman, and see her husband too. They are folks after my own heart. I would give them an earldom to win them.'

'I hope that in that day you will allow your faithful servant Ivo to retire to his ancestral manors in Angou, for England will be too hot for him. Sire, you know not this man—a har, a bully, a robber, a swash-buckling ruffian, who

—' and Ivo ran on with furious invective, after the fashion of the Normans, who considered no name too bad for an English rebel.

'Sir Ascelin,' said William, as Ascelin came in, 'you know Hereward.'

Ascelin bowed assent.

'Are these things true which Ivo alleges?'

'The Lord Taillebois may know best what manner of man Sir Hereward has become since he himself came into this English an, which changes some folks mightily, with a hardly disguised sneer at Ivo, 'but in Flanders he was a very perfect knight, beloved and honoured of all men, and especially of your father-in-law, the great marquis.'

'He is a friend of yours, then?'

'No man less. I owe him more than one grudge, though all in fair quarrel, and one at least, which can only be wiped out in blood.'

'Eh? What?'

Ascelin hesitated.

'Tell me, sir,' thundered William, 'unless you have aught to be ashamed of.'

'It is no shame, as far as I know, to confess that I was once a sutor, as were all knights for miles round, for the hand of the once peerless Torfrida. And no shame to confess, that when Hereward knew thereof, he sought me out at a tournament, and served me as he has served many a better man before and since.'

'Over thy horse's croup, eh?'

'I am not a bad horseman, as all know, Lord King. But heaven save me, and all I love, from that Hereward. They say he has seven men's strength, and I verily can testify to the truth thereof.'

'That may be by enchantment,' interposed the Italian.

'True, sir priest. Thus I know, that he wears enchanted armour, which Torfrida gave him before she married him.'

'Enchantments again,' said the secretary.

'Tell me now about Torfrida,' said William.

Ascelin told him all about her, not forgetting to say — what, according to the chronicler, was a common report — that she had compassed Hereward's love by magic arts. She used to practise sorcery, he said, with her sorceress mistress, Richilda of Hamault. All men knew it. Arnoul, Richilda's son, was as a brother to her. And after old Baldwin died, and Baldwin of Mons and Richilda came to Bruges, Torfrida was always with her, while Hereward was at the wars.

'The woman is a manifest and notorious witch,' said the secretary.

'It seems so indeed,' said William, with something like a sigh. And so were Torfrida's early follies visited on her, as all early follies are. 'But Hereward, you say, is a good knight and true?'

'Doubtless. Even when he committed that great crime at Peterborough—'

'For which he and all his are duly excommunicated by the bishop,' said the secretary.

'He did a very courteous and honourable

thing.' And Ascelin told how he had saved Alfrida, and instead of putting her to ransom, had sent her safe to Gilbert.

'A very knightly deed! He should be rewarded for it.'

'Why not burn the witch, and reward him with Alfrida instead, since your majesty is in so gracious a humour?' said Ivo.

'Alfrida? Who is she? Ay, I recollect her. Young Dolfin's wife. Why, she has a husband already.'

'Ay, but his Holiness at Rome can set that right. What is there that he cannot do?'

'There are limits, I fear, even to his power. Eh, priest?'

'What his Holiness's powers as the viceroy of Divinity on earth might be, did he so choose, it were reverent to inquire. But as he condescends to use that power only for the good of mankind, he condescends, like Divinity, to be bound by the very laws which he has promulgated for the benefit of his subjects, and to make himself only a life-giving sun, when he might be a destructive thunderbolt.'

'He is very kind, and we all owe him thanks,' said Ivo, who had a confused notion that the Pope might strike him dead with lightning, but was good-natured enough not to do so. 'Still, he might think of this plan, for they say that the lady is an old friend of Hereward's, and not over fond of her Scotch husband.'

'That I know well,' said William.

'And besides — it aught untoward should happen to Dolfin and his kin —'

'She might, with her broad lands, be a fine bait for Hereward. I see. Now, do this, by my command. Send a trusty monk into Ely. Let him tell the monks that we have determined to seize all their outlying lands, unless they surrender within the week. And let him tell Hereward, by the faith and oath of William of Normandy, that if he will surrender himself to my grace, he shall have his lands in Bourne, and a free parson for himself and all his comrades.'

The men assented, much against their will, and went out on their errand.

'You have played me a scurvy trick, sir,' said Ascelin to Ivo, 'in advising the king to give the Lady Alfrida to Hereward.'

'What? Did you want her yourself? On my honour I knew not of it. But have patience. You shall have her yet, and all her lands, if you will hear my counsel, and keep it.'

'But you would give her to Hereward?'

'And to you too. It is a poor bait, say these frugs of sun-men, that will not take two pike running. Listen to me. I must kill this accursed fox of a Wake. I hate him. I cannot eat my meat for thinking of him. Kill him I must.'

'And so must I.'

'Then we are both agreed. Let us work together, and never mind if one's blood be old and the other's new. I am neither fool nor weakly, as thou knowest.'

Ascelin could not but assent.

'Then here. We must send the king's message. But we must add to it.'

'That is dangerous.'

'So is war, so is eating, drinking; so is everything. But we must not let The Wake come in. We must drive him to despair. Make the messenger add but one word—that the king exempts from the amnesty Torfrida on account of—You can put it into more scholarly shape than I can.'

'On account of her abominable and notorious sorceries, and demands that she shall be given up forthwith, to be judged as she deserves.'

'Just so. And then for a load of reeds out of Haddenham fen!'

'Heaven forbid!' said Ascelin, who had loved her once. Would not perpetual imprisonment suffice?'

'What care I? That is the king's affair, not ours. But I fear we shall not get her. Even so Hereward will flee with her—mayhe escape to Flanders or Denmark. He can escape through a rat's hole if he will. However, then we are at peace. I had sooner kill him and have done with it, but out of the way he must be put.'

So they sent a monk in with the message, and commanded him to tell the article about the Lady Torfrida, not only to Hereward, but to the abbot and all the monks.

A curt and herce answer came back, not from Hereward, but from Torfrida herself—that William of Normandy was no knight himself, or he would not offer a knight his life, on condition of leaving his lady.

William swore horribly. 'What is all this about?' They told him—as much as they chose to tell. He was very wroth. Who was Ivo Taillebois, to add to his message? He had said that Torfrida should not burn. Taillebois was stout, for he had won the secretary over to his side meanwhile. He had said nothing about burning. He had merely supplied an oversight of the king's. The woman, as the secretary knew, could not, with all deference to his majesty, be included in an amnesty. She was liable to ecclesiastical censure, and the ecclesiastical courts.

'Ecclesiastical courts? What is this new doctrine, churchman?' asked William.

'The superstitious of sorcery, my lord king, is neither more nor less than that of heresy itself, seeing that the demons whom it invokes are none other than the old Pagan gods—and as heresy—'

William exploded with fearful oaths. He was always jealous (and wroth) for his own prerogatives. And the doctrine was novel, at least in England. Witches were here considered as offenders against the private person enchanted, rather than against the Church, and executions for witchcraft rarely, if ever, took place, unless when the witch was supposed to have injured life or property.

'Have I not given you churchmen enough already, that you must assume my king's power

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of life and death? Do I not shyn and torment enough, heaven forgive me! without needing you to help me?'

The Italian saw that he had gone too far. 'Heaven forbid,' he said, 'that the Church should stain her hands with the blood of the worst of sinners. All she could do was, having proved guilt, to deliver the offender over to the secular arm, doubtless with merciful entreaties that there might be no shedding of blood.'

'There is none, I presume, when folks are burned alive,' quoth William with a sneer. 'So you are to be the judges, and me your executioner, eh? An honorable office, truly. Beware, an clerk! Beware!'

'If the fire of my zeal has for a moment too rashly melted the ice of my modesty—'

'Of thy craft, say—'

'My humility humbly entreats forgiveness. I do not press the matter. Only it seemed it seemed at least to me, that after the slight scandal—forgive my indecity the world to the faithful caused by your highness's unhappy employment of the witch of Bandon—'

William cursed under his breath.

'Your highness might nobly atone therefor by executing justice on a far more flagitious offender, who has openly compassed and effected the death of hundreds of your highness's otherwise invincible warriors—'

'And throw good money after bad,' said William, laughing. 'I tell thee, priest, she is too pretty to burn, were she the witch of Endor herself.'

'Be it so. Your royal clemency can always remit her sentence, even so far as to pardon her entirely, if your mercurial temper should so incline you. But meanwhile, what better could we have done, than to remind the monks of Ely that she was a sorceress, that she had committed grave crimes, and was liable to punishment herself, and they to punishment also, as her shelterers and accomplices?'

'What your highness wanted,' quoth Taillebois, 'was to bring over the monks, and I believe that message had been a good stroke toward that. As for Hereward, you need not think of him. He never will come in alive. He has sworn an oath, and he will keep it.'

And so the matter ended.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOW THE MONKS OF ELY DID AFTER THEIR KIND

WILLIAM's bolt, or rather meeting with the Greek fire, could not have fallen into Ely at a more propitious moment.

Hereward was away, with a large body of men and many ships, foraging in the north-eastern fens. He might not be back for a week.

Ablot Thurstan—for what cause is not said—had lost heart a little while before, and fled to

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'Angerhale, taking with him the ornaments and treasure of the church.'

Hereward had discovered his flight with deadly fear but provisions he must have, and forth he must go, leaving Ely in charge of half a dozen independent English gentlemen, each of whom would needs have his own way, just because it was his own.

Only Torfrida he took, and put her hand into the hand of Sigtryg Raulderson, and said, 'Thou true comrade and perfect knight, as I did by thy wife, do thou by mine, if aught befall.'

And Sigtryg swore first by the white Christ, and then by the head of Sleipnir, Odin's horse, that he would stand by Torfrida till the last, and then, if need was, slay her.

'You will not need, King Sigtryg. I can slay myself,' said she, as she took the Ost-Dane's hard honest hand.

And Hereward went, seemingly by Mepal or Sutton. Then came the message, and all men in Ely knew it.

Torfrida stormed down to the monks, in honest indignation, to demand that they should send to William, and purge her of the calumny. She found the chapter-door barred and bolted. They were all gabbling inside, like starlings on a foggy morning, and would not let her in. She hurried back to Sigtryg, fearing treason, and foreseeing the effect of the message upon the monks.

But what could Sigtryg do? To find out their counsels was impossible for him, or any man in Ely. For the monks could talk Latin, and the men could not. Torfrida alone knew the sacred tongue.

If Torfrida could but listen at the keyhole. Well—all was fair in war. And to the chapter-house door she went, guarded by Sigtryg and some of his housecarles and listened, with a beating heart. She heard words now incomprehensible. That men who most of them lived no better than their own sorfs, who could have no amount of wealth, not even the hope of leaving that wealth to their children—that such men should cling to wealth, strangle, forge, lie, do anything for wealth, to be used almost entirely not for themselves, but for the honour and glory of the convent—indicates an intensity of corporate feeling unknown in the outer world then or now.

The monastery would be ruined. Without this manor, without that wood, without that stone quarry, that fishery—what would become of them?

But mingled with those words were other words, unfortunately more intelligible to this day—those of superstition.

What would St. Etheldreda say? What St. Sexburga, St. Withburga, St. Ermeulda? How dare they provoke their wrath? Would they submit to lose their lands? They might do—what might they not do? Their bones would refuse ever to work a miracle again. They had been but too slack in miracle-working for many

years. They might strike the isle with barrenness, the minster with lightning. They might send a flood up the fens. They might—

William the Norman, to do them justice, those valiant monks feared not, for he was man, and could but kill the body. But St. Etheldreda, a virgin goddess, with her three maidens, and indeed, all the host of heaven to back her—might she not, by intercession with powers still higher than her own, destroy both body and soul in hell?

'We are betrayed. They are going to send for the abbot from Angerhale,' said Torfrida at last, reeling from the door. 'All is lost.'

'Shall we burst open the door and kill them all?' asked Sigtryg simply.

'No, king—no. They are God's men; and we have blood enough on our souls.'

'We can keep the gates, lest any go out to the king.'

'Impossible. They know the isle better than we, and have a thousand arts.'

So all they could do was to wait in fear and trembling for Hereward's return, and send Martin Lightfoot off to warn him, wherever he might be.

The monks remained perfectly quiet. The organ droned, the chants wailed as usual, nothing interrupted the stated order of the services, and in the hall, each day, they met the knights as cheerfully as ever. Greed and superstition had made cowards of them—and now traitors.

It was whispered that Abbot Thurstan had returned to the minster but no man saw him and so three or four days went on.

Martin found Hereward after incredible labours, and told him all, clearly and shrewdly. The man's manifest insanity only seemed to quicken his wit, and increase his powers of bodily endurance.

Hereward was already on his way home, and never did he and his good men row harder than they rowed that day back to Sutton. 'Ho landed, and hurried on with half his men, leaving the rest to disembark the booty. He was anxious as to the temper of the monks. He foresaw all that Torfrida had foreseen. And as for Torfrida herself, he was half mad. Ivo Taillebois's addition to William's message had had its due effect. He vowed even deadlier hate against the Frenchman than he had ever felt before. He ascended the heights to Sutton. It was his shortest way to Ely. He could not see Aldreth from thence, but he could see Willingham field and Belsar's hills, round the corner of Haddenham Hill.

The sun was setting long before they reached Ely: but just as he sank into the western fen, Winter stopped, pointing.—Was that the flash of arms? There, far away, just below Willingham town. Or was it the setting sun upon the ripples of some long water?

'There is not wind enough for such a ripple,' said one. But ere they could satisfy themselves, the sun was down, and all the fen was gray.

Hereward was still more uneasy. If that had been the flash of arms, it must have come off a very large body of men, moving in column, on the road between Cambridge and Ely. He hastened on his men. But ere they were within sight of the minster-tower, they were aware of a horse galloping violently towards them through the dusk. Hereward called a halt. He heard his own heart beat as he stopped. The horse was pulled up short among them. On its back was a lad, with a smaller boy behind him, clasping his waist.

'Hereward! Thank God, I am in tune! And the child is safe too. Thanks, thanks, dear saints!' a voice sobbed out.

It was the voice of Torfrida.

'Treason!' she gasped.

'I knew it.'

The French are in the island. They have got Aldreth. The whole army is marching from Cambridge. The whole fleet is coming up from Southrey. And you have time——'

'To burn Ely over the monks' heads. Men! Get bogwood out of yon cottage, make yourselves torches, and onward!'

Then rose a babel of questions, which Torfrida answered as she could. But she had nothing to tell. 'Clerks' cunning,' she said bitterly, 'was an overmatch for woman's wit.' She had sent out a spy, but he had not returned till an hour since. Then he came back breathless, with the news that the French army was on the march from Cambridge, and that, as he came over the water at Aldreth, he found a party of French knights in the fort on the Ely side, talking peaceably with the monks on guard.

She had run up to the borough hill—which men call Cherry Hill at this day—and one look to the north-east had shown her the river swarming with ships. She had rushed home, put boys' clothes on herself and her child, hid a few jewels in her bosom, saddled Swallow, and ridden for her life thither.

'And King Sigtryg!'

He and his men had gone desperately out towards Haddenham, with what English they could muster, but all were in confusion. Some were getting the women and children into boats, to hide them in the reeds, others baiting the minster gates, vowing vengeance on the monks.

'Then Sigtryg will be cut off! Alas for the day that ever brought his brave heart hither!'

And when the men heard that, a yell of fury and despair burst from all throats.

Should they go back to their boats?

'No! onward,' cried Hereward. 'Revenge first, and safety after. Let us leave nothing for the accursed Frenchmen but smoking ruins, and then gather our comrades, and cut our way back to the north.'

'Good counsel,' cried Winter. 'We know the roads, and they do not, and in such a dark night as is coming, we can march out of the island without their being able to follow us a mile.'

They hurried on, but stopped once more, at the galloping of another horse.

'Who comes, friend or foe?'

'Alwyn, son of Orgar!' cried a voice under breath. 'Don't make such a noise, men! The French are within half a mile of you.'

'Then one traitor monk shall die ere I retreat,' cried Hereward, seizing him by the throat.

'For heaven's sake, hold!' cried Torfrida, seizing his arm. 'You know not what he may have to say.'

'I am no traitor, Hereward, I have fought by your side as well as the best, and if any but you had called Alwyn——'

'A curse on your boasting. Tell us the truth.'

'The abbot has made peace with the king. He would give up the island, and St. Etheldreda should keep all her lands and honours. I said what I could, but who was I to resist the whole chapter? Could I alone brave St. Etheldreda's wrath?'

'Alwyn, the valiant, afraid of a dead girl!'

'Blaspheme not, Hereward! She may lead you at this moment! Look there!' and pointing up, the monk covered in terror, as a meteor flashed through the sky.

'That's St. Etheldreda shooting at us, eh? Then all I can say is, she is a very bad marksman. And the French are in the island!'

'They are.'

'Then forward, men, for one half-hour's pleasure, and then to die like Englishmen.'

'On!' cried Alwyn. 'You cannot go on. The king is at Whichford at this moment with all his army, half a mile off! Right across the road to Ely!'

Hereward grew bolder. 'On! men!' shouted he, 'we shall kill a few Frenchmen apiece before we die!'

'Hereward,' cried Torfrida, 'you shall not go on! If you go, I shall be taken. And if I am taken, I shall be burned. And I cannot burn—I cannot! I shall go mad with terror before I come to the stake. I cannot go strip to my smock before those Frenchmen. I cannot be roasted piecemeal! Hereward, take me away! Take me away! or kill me, now and here!'

He paused. He had never seen Torfrida thus overcoining.

'Let us flee! The stars are against us. God is against us! Let us hide—escape abroad, beg our bread, go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem together—for together it must be always—but take me away!'

'We will go back to the boats, men,' said Hereward.

But they did not go. They stood there, irresolute, looking towards Ely.

The sky was pitchy dark. The minster-roofs, lying north-east, were utterly invisible against the blackness.

'We may at least save some who escape out,' said Hereward. 'March on quickly to the left, under the hill to the plough-field.'

'They did so.'

'Lao down, mon. There are the French, close on our right. Down among the bushes.'

And they heard the heavy tramp of men within a quarter of a mile.

'Cover the mare's eyes, and hold her mouth lest she neigh,' said Winter.

Hereward and Torfrida lay side by side upon the heath. She was shivering with cold and horror. He laid his cloak over her, put his arm round her.

'Your stars did not foretell you this, Torfrida.' He spoke not bitterly, but in utter sadness.

She burst into an agony of weeping.

'My stars at least foretold me nothing but woe, since first I saw your face.'

'Why did you marry me then?' asked he, half angrily.

'Because I loved you. Because I love you still.'

'Then you do not regret?'

'Never, never, never! I am quite happy—quite happy. Why not?'

A low murmur from the men made them look up. They were near enough to the town to hear—only too much. They heard the tramp of men, shouts and yells. Then the shrill cries of women. All dull and muffled the sounds came to them through the still night, and they lay there spell bound, as in a nightmare, as men assisting at some horrible tragedy, which they had no power to prevent. Then there was a glare, and a wisp of smoke against the black sky, and then a house began burning brightly, and then another.

'This is the Frenchman's faith!'

And all the while, as the sack raged in the town below, the minister stood above, glowing in the firelight, silent and safe. The church had provided for herself by sacrificing the children beneath her fostering shadow.

They waited nearly an hour, but no fugitives came out.

'Come, men,' said Hereward wearily, 'we may as well to the boats.'

And so they went, walking on like men in a dream, as yet too stunned to realise to themselves the hopeless horror of their situation. Only Hereward and Torfrida saw it all, looking back on the splendid past—the splendid hopes for the future—glory, honour, an emulum, a free Danish England—and this was all that was left!

'No, it is not!' cried Torfrida suddenly, as if answering her own unspoken thoughts, and his. 'Love is still left. The gallows and the stake cannot take that away.' And she clung closer to her husband's side, and he again to hers.

They reached the shore, and told then tale to their comrades. 'Whither now?'

To Well. To the wide mere,¹ said Hereward.

¹ Probably near Upwell and Outwell, in the direction of Wisbeach. There the old Mere and the old Welney Rivers, joining, formed vast inclosures, now laid dry by the Middle Level and Marshland Drains. The burning of

'But their ships will hunt us out there.'

'We shall need no hunting. We must pick up the men at Cussham. You would not leave them to be murdered, too, as we have left the Ely men?'

No, they would go to Well. And then?

'The Brunsewald, and the merry greenwood,' said Hereward.

'Hey for the merry greenwood!' shouted Leof to the dead on. And the men, in the sudden delight of finding any place, any purpose, any sacred with a lusty cheer.

'Brave hearts!' said Hereward. 'We will live and die together like Englishmen.'

'We will, we will, Viking.'

'Where shall we stow the mare?' asked Gery, 'the boats are full already.'

'Leave her to me. On board, Torfrida.'

He got on board last, leading the mare by the bridle.

'Swim, good lass!' said he, as they pushed off, and the good lass, who had done it many a time before, waded in, and was soon swimming behind. Hereward turned, and bent over the side in the darkness. There was a strange gurgle, a splash, and a swirl. He turned round, and sat upright again. They rowed on.

'That mare will never swim all the way to Well,' said one.

'She will not need it,' said Hereward.

'Why?' said Torfrida, feeling in the darkness, 'she is loose. What is this in your hand? Your dagger? and wet?'

'Mare Swallow is at the bottom of the reach. We could never have got her to Well.'

'And you have—' cried a dozen voices.

'Do you think that I would let a cursed Frenchman—ay, even William's self—say that he had bestridlen Hereward's mare?'

None answered, but Torfrida, as she laid her head upon her husband's bosom, felt the great tears running down from his cheek on to her own.

None spoke a word. The men were awe-stricken. There was something despairing and all ominous in the deed. And yet there was a savage grandeur in it, which bound their savage hearts still closer to their chief. And so mare Swallow's bones lie somewhere in the peat unto this day.

They got to Well. They sent out spies to find the men who had been 'wasting Cussham with fire and sword' and at last brought them in. Ill news, as usual, had travelled fast. They had heard of the fall of Ely, and hidden themselves 'in a certain very small island which is called Stumtuch,'—where, thinking that the friends in search of them were Frenchmen in pursuit, they hid themselves amongst the high reeds. There two of them—one Starkwulf by name, the other Brolier—lying near each other,

of the Middle Level Sluice in the year 1861 restored for a while a vast tract in these fens to its primeval state of 'the Wide Mere.' From this point, Hereward could escape north into Lincolnshire, either by Wisbeach and the Wash, or by Crowland and Bourne.

'thought that, as they were monks, it might conduce to their safety if they had shaven crowns, and set to work with their swords to shave each other's heads as well as they could. But at last, by their war-cries and their speech, recognising each other, they left off fighting, and went after Hereward.

So jokes, grimly enough, the old chronicler, who may have seen them come in the next morning with bleeding carcasses, and could laugh over the thing in after years. But he was in no humour for jesting in the days in which they lay at Well. Nor was he in jesting humour when, a week afterwards, limited by the French from Well, and forced to take to mires and waterways known only to them, and too shallow and narrow for the French ships, they found their way across into the old Fen, and so on toward Crowland, leaving Peterborough far on the left. Far as they neared Crowland, they saw before them, rowing slowly, a huge full of men. And as they neared that huge, behold, all they who rowed were blind of both their eyes, and all they who sat and guided them were lame of both their hands. And as they came alongside, there was not a man in all that ghostly crew but was an ancient friend, by whose side they had fought full many a day, and with whom they had drunk deep full many a night. They were the firstfruits of William's vengeance, thrust into that boat, to tell the rest of the ten-men what those had to expect who dared oppose the Norman. And they were going to Crowland, to the sanctuary of the Danish fen men, that they might cast themselves down before St. Guthlac, and ask of him that mercy for their souls which the Conqueror had denied to their bodies. Alas for them! They were but a handful among hundreds, perhaps thousands, of mutilated cripples, who swarmed all over England, and especially in the north and east, throughout the reign of the Norman conquerors. They told their comrades' fate, slaughtered in the first attack, or hanged afterwards as rebels and traitors to a foreigner whom they had never seen, and to whom they owed no fealty by law of God or man.

'And Sigtryg Randalsson!

None knew aught of him. He never got home again to his Irish princess.

'And the poor women?' asked Timfrida.

But she received no answer.

And the men swore a great oath, and kept it never to give quarter to a Frenchman, as long as there was one left on English ground.

Neither were the monks of Ely in jesting humour, when they came to count up the price of their own baseness. They had obeyed the apostolic injunction, 'to submit to the powers that be because they are ordained,' etc. But they found their return (as the Book of Ely calls it) to 'a more wholesome counsel' beset with thorns. The king barred them out of the monastery, lest the monks should come out with crosses and relics to implore his mercy. Going into the minster, he stood afar off from the holy

body of St. Etheldreda, and cast a mark of gold on the altar, as a peace-offering to that terrible lady, and then retired to Whitheld, leaving his soldiers to work their wicked will. So terrified were the poor monks, that no mass was celebrated that day—but as the hours wore on, they needs must eat. And as they ate, there entered to them into the refectory Gilbert of Clare—

'Ye English swine, could ye had no other time to feed? The king is in the minster.'

Out hurried the monks, but too late. The king was gone, and hardly, by humbling themselves to their old enemy Gilbert, did they obtain grace of the king for seven hundred marks of silver. The which money they took as they had promised, to protect the Viscount of Cambridge. He weighed it and finding it an ounce short, accused them of cheating the king, and sentenced them to pay three hundred marks more. Then was lost all the gold and silver which was left in Ely—the image of St. Mary with her child, sitting on a throne, wrought with wondrous skill, which Ely the abbot had made of gold and silver, was broken up, and the images of the guardian virgins stripped of their precious ornaments. After which the royal commissioners came, plundered the abbey of all that was left of those treasures which had been brought hom every quarter into the camp of refuge, of which a curious inventory remains to this day.

Thurstan, the trustee abbot, died in a few months. Egelwin, the Bishop of Dunham, was taken in the abbey. He was a bishop, and they dared not kill him. But he was a patriot, and must have no mercy. They accused him of stealing the treasures of Dunham, which he had brought to Ely, for the service of his country, and shut him up in Alvington. A few months after, the brave man was found slain and dead, 'whether of his own will, or untold,' and so ended another patriot prelate. But we do not read that the Normans gave back the treasures to Dunham. And so, yielding an immense mass of booty, and many a fair woman, as the Normans' prey, ended the camp of refuge, and the glory of the isle of Ely.

But not the wrath of St. Etheldreda. What ever she might have done when on earth, she was not inclined, as patroness of Ely, to obey the apostolic injunction, and 'take joyfully the spoiling of her goods', and she fell upon those who had robbed her of her gay garments and rich manors, and left her to go in russet for many a year, with such strokes as proved that the monks had chosen the less of two evils, when they preferred falling into the hands of an angry king to falling into those of an angry saint. Terrible was the fate of Roger Pient's man (Gervase, who dared to harry and bind St. Etheldreda's men, who even brought an action at law against the abbot himself. The very night before the trial, St. Etheldreda, and her two sisters St. Withburga and Sexburga, stabbed him to the heart with the spikes of

their pastoral staves, and he died, to the terror of all bystanders.

Worse, even, was the fate of Roger Picot himself, the hungry lion, the prowling wolf, the crafty fox, the filthy swine, the shameless dog, who had said, 'Who is this Etheldreda, whose lands ye say that I have taken? I know not Etheldreda, and I will not give up her lands.'

'Listen, ye isles, and attend, ye people from afar off, what her spouse hath done for the Lady of Ely. His sin, saith Scripture, is sought, and shall not be found. By whom is it sought? By Him from whom nothing is hidden. By whom shall it be found? By no man, since none know His day. Whither he is gone, why he fled, or how he has died, whether he has descended alive into the pit with Dathan and Abiyrom, or become a beast with Nabuchadonossor, hath vanished utterly, or by any other mode hath perished, to be damned without end. But one thing we know for certain, that in our bounds he has appeared no more, but has disappeared for ever to day. Glory to Him who has given us the victory over our enemy.'

Worse again (according to those of Ely) was the fate of Earl William de Warrenne, who violently withheld some farms from St. Etheldreda. For on the night on which he died, the then abbot heard his soul carried off by demons, crying in vain to heaven for mercy. Therefore when his lady, Gundreda (William the Conqueror's stepdaughter), a few days after, sent a hundred shillings for his soul to the minster at Ely, the abbot and his monks sent them back, neither designing nor daring to take the money of a damned man. So there is no hope for Earl Warrenne, were it not that the Chuniac monks, whom he had established at Lewes, holding naturally a different opinion of him and his deeds, buried him there in splendour, and put up over his tomb a white marble slab, on which were set forth his virtues, and the present protection and future rewards which St. Pancras was to procure for him in return for the minster which he had raised in honour of that mighty avenger of perjury.¹

After which—whether St. Pancras did or did not deliver Earl William from the wrath of St. Etheldreda—the Lady of Ely was appeased, and when almost all the monks were either sick or dying (possibly from one of those fevers which so often devastated the fens), she was seen, after long fastings and vigils, by a holy man named Goderic, staying the hand of some mighty being, who was in act to shoot an arrow from heaven against the doomed borough. After which, watching and praying still more fervently, he beheld St. Etheldreda and her maidens rise from their tombs by night, and walk majestic through choir and cloister, and so to the sick-house and the dying monks. And there the Lady of Ely went round to every bed, and laid her pure hand upon the throbbing forehead and wiped the typhus-gore from the faded lips with

¹ *Ordericus Vitalis*, book viii. c. 9

her sacred sleeve, and gave the sufferers sudden health and strength, and signified to Goderic, who had followed her trembling afar off, that all was forgiven and forgotten.¹

CHAPTER XXXIV

HOW HERWARD WENT TO THE GREENWOOD

AND now is Hereward to the greenwood gone, to be a bold outlaw, and not only an outlaw himself, but the father of all outlaws, who held those forests for two hundred years, from the fens to the Scottish border. Utlages, forestiers, lastrunculi, sicarii, sanvages, who prided themselves upon sleeping on the bare ground—they were accursed by the conquerors, and beloved by the conquered. The Norman viscount or sheriff commanded to hunt them from hundred to hundred with hue and cry, horse and blood hound. The English yeoman left for them a keg of ale, or a basket of loaves, beneath the hollyus green, as sauce for their meal of 'nombles of the dero.'

'For hart and hind, and doe and roe,
Were in that forest greet plentie,'

and

'Swannes and fasantes they had full good,
And foules of the riverse
There fayled never so lytell a byrde,
That ever was bred on brene.'

With the same friendly yeoman 'that was a good felawe,' they would lodge by twos and threes during the sharp frosts of mid-winter, in the lonely farmhouse which stood in the 'field' or forest-clearing, but for the greater part of the year their 'lodging was on the cold ground' in the holly thickets, or under the hanging rock, or in a lodge of boughs.

And then, after a while, the life which began in terror, and despair, and poverty, and loss of land and kin, became not only tolerable, but pleasant. Bold men and hardy, they cared less and less for

'The thornie wayes, the deep valleys,
The snowe, the frost, the rayne,
The colde the hete, for dry or wete
We must lodge on the plaine,
And us above, none other rooffe
But a brake bushe, or twayne.'

And they found fair lasses, too, in time, who, like Torfrida and Maid Marian, would answer with the nut-brown maid, to their warnings against the outlaw life, that—

'Amonge the wild dero, such an archere
As men say that ye be,
He may not fayne of good vitayle,
Where is so greet plentie.
And water cleare of the riverse,
Shall be full swete to me,
With which in helle, I shall right wele,
Endure, as ye may see.'

Then called they themselves 'merry men'; and the forest the 'merry greenwood'; and sang, with Robin Hood,

¹ For all these tales (the last is told with much pathos), see the *Liber Eliensis*, book ii. §§ 119-123.

'A merrier man than I, belyve
There lives not in Christgentle.'

They were coaxed back, at times, to civilised life, they got their grace of the king, and entered the king's service, but the craving after the greenwood was upon them. They dreaded and hated the four stone walls of a Norman castle, and, like Robin Hood, slipped back to the forest and the deer.

Gradually, too, law and order arose among them, lawless as they were, that instinct of discipline and self-government side by side with that of personal independence, which is the peculiar mark and peculiar strength of the English character. Who knows not how, in the 'Lytell Geste of Robin Hood,' they shot at 'pluck-buffot,' the king among them disguised as an abbot, and every man who missed the rose-garland, 'his tackle he should tynce',

'And bore a buffet on his head,
I wys ryght all here,
And all that fell on Robyn's lode,
He smote them wonder sair

'Till Robyn fayled of the garlande
Three fyngers and mai'

Then good Gilbert bids him in his turn

"Stand forth and take his pay"

"If it be so," sayd Robyn,
"That may no better be,
Syr Abbot, I delyver thee myn arrowe,
I pray thee, Syr, serve thou me"

"It falleth not for myne orler," saith the kynge,
"Robyn, by thy leve,
For to smyte no good yeman,
For doute I should hym greve"

"Smyte on boldly" sayd Robyn,
"I give thee large leve.
Anou our kynge, with that word,
He folde up his leve"

'And such a buffet he gave Robyn,
To grounde he yode full nere.
"I make myno avowe," sayd Robyn,
"Thou art a stalwarke frere."

"There is pyth in thyn arme," sayd Robyn,
"I trowe thou canst well shoote"
*Thus our kynge and Robyn Holde
Together they are met.

Hard knocks in good humour, strict rules, fair play, and equal justice for high and low, this was the old outlaw spirit, which has descended to their unlawed descendants, and makes, to this day, the life and marrow of an English public school.

One fixed idea the outlaw had—hatred of the invader. If 'his herd were the king's deer,' 'his treasure was the earl's purse', and still oftener the purse of the foreign churchman, Frenchman or Italian, who, had expelled the outlaw's English cousins from their convents, scourged and imprisoned them, as the blessed Archbishop Lanfrano did at Canterbury, because they would not own allegiance to a French abbot, or murdered them at the high altar, as did the new Abbot of Glastonbury, because they would not change their old Gregorian chant for that of William of Pécamp.¹

¹ See the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

On these mitred tyrants the outlaw had no mercy as far as their purses were concerned. Their persons, as consecrated, were even to him sacred and inviolable—at least, from wounds and death, and one may suppose Hereward himself to have been the first author of the laws afterwards attributed to Robin Hood. As for 'robbing and reveng, beting and bynding,' free warren was allowed against the Norman.

"Thereof no fers," said Robyn,
"We shall do well enow
But look ye do no housebonde harme,
That tytleth wyth his plough"

"No more ye shall no good yemau,
That walketh by grene wood shawe,
No no knyght, no no squyer,
That will be good felawe"

"These byshoppes, and theke archbyshoppes,
Ye shall them lete and laude,
The hys sheryff of Nottingham
Hysn holde in your mynde"

'Robyn loved our dear Ladye,
For doubt of dedely synur,
Wolds he never do company harme
That any woman was ynnur'

And even so it was with 'The Wake' when he was in the Brunsewald, if the old chroniclers are to be believed.

And now Torfrida was astonished. She had given way utterly at Ely, from woman's fear and woman's disappointment. All was over. All was lost. What was left, save to die?

But—and it was a new and unexpected fact to one of her exorable southern blood, easily raised, and easily depressed—she discovered that neither her husband, nor Winter, nor Gery, nor Wonech, nor Ranald of Ramsey, nor even the romancing harping Leofric, thought that all was lost. She argued it with them, not to persuade them into base submission, but to satisfy her own surprise.

'But what will you do?'

'Live in the greenwood'

'And what then?'

'Burn every town which a Frenchman holds, and kill every Frenchman we meet.'

'But what plan have you?'

'Who wants a plan, as you call it, while he has the green hollock overhead, the dun deer on the lawn, bow in his hand, and sword by his side?'

'But what will be the end of it all?'

'We shall live till we die'

'But Wilham is master of all England'

'What is that to us? He is not our master'

'But he must be some day. You will grow fewer and fewer. His government will grow stronger and stronger'

'What is that to us? When we are dead, there will be brave yeomen in plenty to take our place. You would not turn traitor?'

'I! never! never! I will live and die with you in your greenwood, as you call it. Only—I did not understand you English'

Torfrida did not. She was discovering the fact, which her nation have more than once discovered since, that the stupid valor of the Englishman never knows when it is beaten,

and sometimes, by that self-satisfied ignorance, succeeds in not being beaten after all.

So *The Wake*—if the chroniclers speak truth—assembled a formidable force, well-nigh, at last, four hundred men. Winter, Gery, Wenoch, Grogan, one of the Azors of Lincoln, were still with him. Ruald the Seneschal still carried his standard. Of Dut and Outi, the famous brothers, no more is heard. A valiant Matelgar takes their place. Alfrie and Sexwold and many another gallant fugitive cast up, like scattered hounds, at the sound of *'The Wake's'* war-horn. There were those among them (says Gannar) who scorned to fight single-handed less than three Frenchmen. As for *The Wake*, he would fight seven,

'*Les quatre occist, les trois furent,
Vaffrez, sanglant, cil a en partement
En plusurs lius mal avint.
K encontre sont tres bien se tuit.
De seit hommes avint vertu,
Un plus hardi ne fu veu*

They ranged up the Bruneswald, dashing out in the war cry of 'A Wake! A Wake!' and laying all waste with fire and sword, that is, such towns as were in the hands of Frenchmen. A noble range they must have had, for gallant sportsmen. Away south, between the Nene and Welland, stretched from Stamford and Peterborough the still vast forests of Rockingham, nigh twenty miles in length as the crow flies, down beyond Rockingham town, and Geddington Chase. To the west, they had the range of the 'hunting counties,' dotted still, in the more eastern part, with innumerable coyses and shaghs, the remnants of the great forest out of which, as our of Rockinghamshire, have been cut those fair parks and

'*Haudsome houses,
Wher the wealthy nobles dwell*

past which the Lord of Burghley led his Welsh bride to that Burghley House by Stamford town, well-nigh the noblest of them all, which was in Hereward's time deep wood and freestone down Round Exton, and Normanton, and that other Burley on the Hill on through those Moikery woods, which still retain the name of Hereward's ill-fated nephew, north by Iritham and Corby, on to Belton and Syston (*par noble*), and southwest again to those still wooded heights, whence all-but royal Belvoir looks out over the rich green vale below, did Hereward and his men range far and wide, harrying the Frenchman, and hunting the dun deer. Stags and fallow deer there were in plenty. There remain to this day, in Grims-thorpe Park by Bourne, the descendants of the very deer which Earl Isoufre and Karl Algar, and after them Hereward the outlaw, hunted in the Bruneswald.

Deep tangled forest filled the lower claylands, swarming with pheasant, roe, badger, and more wolves than were needed. Broken park-like glades covered the upper freestones, where the red deer came out from harbour for their evening graze, and the partridges and plovers whirled

up, and the hares loped away, innumerable, and where hollies and ferns always gave dry lying for the night. What did men need more, whose bodies were as stout as their hearts?

They were poachers and robbers—and why not? The deer had once been theirs, the game, the land, the serfs, and if Godric of Corby slew the Iritham deer, and burned Iritham hall over the head of the new French lord, and thought no harm, he did but what he would with that which had been once his own.

Easy it was to dash out by night, and make a raid, to harry the places which they once had owned themselves, in the vale of Belvoir to the west, or to the east in the strip of fertile land which sloped down into the fen, and levy blackmail in Folkingham, or Aslackby, or Sleasford, or any other of the 'Vills' (now thriving villages) which still remain in Domesday-book, and written against them the ugly and significant

'*In Tatenai habuerunt Turgale et Suen IIII carrucas terre,*' etc. '*Hoc Ivo Tailleboze in habet in dommo*'—all, that is, that the wars had left of them.

The said Turgale (Torkill or Tarketil nusspelt by Frenchmen) and Sweyn, and many a good man more—for Ivo's possessions were enormous—were thorns in the sides of Ivo and his men, which must be extracted, and the Bruneswald a nest of hornets which must be smoked out at any cost.

Wherefore it befell, that once upon a day, there came riding to Hereward in the Bruneswald, a horseman all alone.

And meeting with Hereward and his men, he made signs of amity, and bowed himself low, and pulled out of his purse a letter, protesting that he was an Englishman, and a 'good fellow,' and that though he came from Lincoln town, a friend to the English had sent him.

That was believable enough, for Hereward had his friends, and his spies, far and wide.

And when he opened the letter, and looked first, like a wary man, at the signature—a sudden thrill went through him.

It was Alfrida's.

If he was interested in her, considering what had passed between them from her childhood, it was nothing to be ashamed of. And yet, somehow, he felt ashamed of that same sudden thrill.

And Hereward had reason to be ashamed. He had been faithful to Torfrida—a virtue most rare in those days. Few were faithful then, save, it may be, Baldwin of Mons to his tyrant and idol, the sorceress Richilda, and William of Normandy—whatever were his other sins—to his wise, and sweet, and beautiful Matilda. The stories of his coldness and cruelty to her seem to rest on no foundation. One need believe them as little as one does the myth of one chronicler, that when she tried to stop him from some expedition, and clung to him as he sat upon his horse, he smote his spur so deep into her breast that she fell dead. The man had self-control, and feared God, in his own wild

way therefore it was, perhaps, that he conquered!

And Hereward had been faithful likewise to Torfrida, and loved her with an overwhelming adoration—as all true men love. And for that very reason he was the more aware, that his feeling for Alfrida was strangely like his feeling for Torfrida, and yet strangely different.

There was nothing in the letter that he should not have read. She called him her best and dearest friend, twice the saviour of her life. What could she do in return, but, at any risk to herself, try and save his life? The French were upon him. The *posse comitatus* of seven counties was raising. ‘Northampton, Cambridge, Lincoln, Holland, Leicester, Huntingdon, Warwick,’ were coming to the Brunescwald to root him out.

‘Lincoln?’ thought Hereward. ‘That must be Gilbert of Ghent, and Oger the Breton. No! Gilbert is not coming, Sir Ascelin is coming for him. Holland? That is my friend Ivo Taillebois. Well, we shall have the chance of paying off old scores. Northampton? The earl thereof just now is the pious and loyal Walthof, as he is of Huntingdon and Cambridge. Is he going to join young Fitz-Osbern from Warwick and Leicester, to root out the last Englishman? Why not? That would be a deed worthy of the man who married Judith, and believes in the powers that be, and eats dirt daily at William’s table.’

Then he read on.

Ascelin had been mentioned, he remarked, three or four times in the letter, which was long, as from one lingering over the paper, wishing to say more than she dared. At the end was a hint of the reason.

‘Oh, that having saved me twice, you could save me once more. Know you that Gospatric has been driven from his earldom on charge of treason, and that Walthof has Northumbria in his place, as well as the parts round you? And that Gospatric is fled to Scotland again, with his sons—my man among them? And now the report comes, that my man is slain in battle on the Border, and that I am to be given away—as I have been given away twice before—to Ascelin. This I know, as I know all, not only from him of Ghent, but from him of Peterborough, Ascelin’s uncle.’

Hereward laughed a laugh of cynical triumph, pardonable enough in a broken man.

‘Gospatric! the wittol! the woodcock! looking at the springs, and then coolly putting his head therein. Throwing the hatchet after the helve, selling his soul, and never getting the price of it! I foresaw it, foretold it, I believe to Alfrida herself—foretold that he would not keep his bought earldom three years. What a people we are, we English, if Gospatric is—as he is—the shrewdest man among us, with a dash of canny Scots blood too. “Among the blind, the one-eyed is king,” says Torfrida, out of her wise ancestors, and blind we are, if he is our best. No. There is one better man left, I

trust, one that will never be sleepy enough to put his head into the wolf’s mouth, and trust the Frenchman, and that is, I The Wako.’

And Hereward boasted to himself, at Gospatric’s expense, of his own superior wisdom, till his eye caught a hue or two, which finished the letter.

‘Oh, that you would change your mind, much as I honour you for it. Oh, that you would come in to the king, who loves and trusts you, having seen your constancy and faith proved by so many years of affliction. Great things are open to you, and great joys, I dare not tell you what. But I know them, if you would come in. You, to waste yourself in the forest, an outlaw and a savage! Opportunity once lost, never returns, time flies fast, Hereward, my friend, and we shall all grow old—I think at times that I shall soon grow old. And the joy of life will be impossible, and nothing left but vain regrets.’

‘Hey?’ said Hereward, ‘a very cloying letter I did not think she was so good a scholar. Almost as good a one as Torfrida.’

That was all he said, and as for thinking, he had the *posse comitatus* of seven counties to think of. But what could those great fortunes and joys be, which Alfrida did not dare to describe?

She growing old, too? Impossible that was woman’s vanity. It was but two years since she was as fair as a saint in a window. ‘She shall not marry Ascelin. I will cut his head off. She shall have her own choice for once, poor child.’

And Hereward found himself worked up to a great height of paternal solicitude for Alfrida, and righteous indignation against Ascelin. He did not confess to himself that he disliked much, in his selfish vanity, the notion of Alfrida’s marrying any one at all. He did not want to marry her himself, of course not. But there is no dog in the manger so churlish on such points as a vain man. There are those who will not willingly let their own sisters, their own daughters, their own servants marry. Why should a woman wish to marry any one but them?

But Hereward, however vain, was no dreamer or sluggard. He set to work, joyfully, cheerfully, scouting battle afar off, like Job’s war-horse, and plying for the battle. He sent back Alfrida’s messenger, with this answer—

‘Tell your lady that I kiss her hands and feet. That I cannot write, for outlaws carry no pen and ink. But that what she has commanded, that will I perform.’

It is noteworthy, that when Hereward showed Torfrida (which he did frankly) Alfrida’s letter, he did not tell her the exact words of his answer, and stumbled and varied much, vexing her thereby, when she, naturally, wished to hear their word for word.

Then he sent out spies to the four airs of heaven. And his spies, finding a friend and a

meal in every hovel, brought home all the news he needed.

He withdrew Torfrida and his men into the heart of the forest—no hint of the place is given by the chronicler—out down trees, formed an abatis of trunks and branches, and awaited the enemy.

CHAPTER XXXV

HOW ANNOI THOROLD WAS PUT TO RANSOM

THOUGH Hereward had as yet no feud against 'bysschoppes and archbysschoppes,' save Egelsin of Selsey, who had excommunicated him, but who was at the other end of England, he had feud, as may be supposed, against Thorold, Abbot of Peterborough, and Thorold feud likewise against him. When Thorold had entered the 'Gordon Borough,' hoping to fatten himself with all its treasures, he had found it a smoking ruin, and its treasures gone to Ely to pay Swoyn and his Daues. And such a sacrilege, especially when he was the loser thereby, was the unpardonable sin itself in the eyes of Thorold, as he hoped it might be in the eyes of St. Peter. Joyfully therefore he joined his friend Ivo Taillebois, when 'with his usual pompous verbosity,' saith Peter of Blois, writing on this very matter, he asked him to join in destroying Hereward.

Nevertheless, with all the French chivalry at their back, it behoved them to move with caution, for (so says the chronicler) 'Hereward had in these days very many foreigners, as well as landfolk, who had come to him to practise and learn war, and fled from their masters and friends when they heard of his fame, some of them even the king's courtiers, who had come to see whether those things which they heard were true, whom Hereward nevertheless received cautiously, on pledged troth and oath.'

So Ivo Taillebois summoned all his men, and all other men's men who would join him, and rode forth through Spalding and Bourne, having announced to Lucia, his bride, that he was going to slay her one remaining relative, and when she wept, cursed and kicked her, as he did once a week. After which he came to Thorold of Peterborough.

So on the two worthies rode from Peterborough to Stamford, and from Stamford into the wilderness, no man knows whither

'And far they rode by bush and abagh,
And far by moss and mire'

but never found a track of The Wake or his men. And Ivo Taillebois left off boasting how he would burn Torfrida over a slow fire, and confined himself to cursing, and Abbot Thorold left off warbling the song of Roland as if he had been going to a second battle of Hastings, and washed himself in warm bed at Peterborough.

But at the last they struck upon a great horse-track, and followed it at their best pace

for several miles, and yet no sign of Hereward.

'Catch an Englishman,' quoth the abbot.

But that was not so easy. The poor folk had hidden themselves, like Israel of old, in thickets, and dens, and caves of rocks, at the far-off sight of the foreign tyrants, and not a living soul had appeared for twenty miles. At last they caught a ragged wretch herding swine, and hailed him up to Ivo.

'Have you seen Hertward, villain!' asked he, through an interpreter.

'Nay.'

'You lie. These are his fresh horse-tracks, and you must have seen him pass.'

'Nay!'

'Thrust out one of his eyes, and he will hnd his tongue.'

It was done.

'Will you answer now?'

The poor wretch only howled.

'Thrust out the other.'

'No, not that! Mercy I will tell. He has gone by this four hours. How have you not met him?'

'Fool! The hoofs point onward there.'

'Ay'—and the fellow could hardly hide a grin—'but he had shod all his horses backwards.'

A storm of execration followed. They might be thrown twenty miles out of their right road by the stratagem.

'So you had seen Hereward, and would not tell! Put out his other eye,' said Taillebois, as he went to his own feelings.

And they turned their horses' heads, and rode back, leaving the man blind in the forest.

The day was waning now. The fog hung heavy on the tree-tops, and dripped upon their heads. The horses were getting tired, and slipped and tumbled in the deep clay paths. The footmen were more tired still, and, cold and hungry, straggled more and more. The horse-tracks led over an open lawn of grass and fern, with here and there an ancient thorn, and round it on three sides thick wood of oak and beech, with under copse of holly and hazel. Into that wood the horse-tracks led, by a path on which there was but room for one horse at a time.

'Here they are at last!' cried Ivo. 'I see the fresh footmarks of men, as well as horses. Push on, knights and men-at-arms.'

The abbot looked at the dark, dripping wood, and meditated.

'I think that it will be as well for some of us to remain here; and, spreading our men along the wood-side, prevent the escape of the villains. *A moi, hommes d'armes!*'

'As you like. I will go in, and bolt the rabbit, and you shall snap him as he comes out.'

And Ivo, who was as brave as a bull-dog, thrust his horse into the path, while the abbot sat shivering outside. 'Certain nobles of higher rank,' says Peter de Blois, 'followed his example, not wishing to rust their armour, or tear their fine clothes, in the damp copse.'

The knights and men-at-arms straggled slowly into the forest, some by the path, some elsewhere, grumbling audibly at the black work before them. At last the crashing of the branches died away, and all was still.

Abbot Thorold sat there upon his shivering horse, shivering himself as the cold pierced through his wet mail, and as near an hour passed, and no sign of foe or friend appeared, he cursed the hour in which he took off the beautiful garments of the sanctuary to endure those of the battlefield. He thought of a warm chamber, warm bath, warm footcloths, warm phasant, and warm wine. He kicked his freezing iron feet in the freezing iron stirrup. He tried to blow his nose with his freezing iron hand, but dropt his handkerchief (an almost unique luxury in those days) into the mud, and his horse trod on it. He tried to warble the song of Roland but the words exploded in a cough and a sneeze. And so dragged on the weary hours, says the chronicler, nearly all day, till the ninth hour. But never did they see coming out of the forest the men who had gone in.

A shout from his nephew, Sir Ascelin, made all turn their heads. Behind them, on the open lawn, in the throat between the woods by which they had entered, were some forty knights, galloping towards them.

'Ivo!'

'No!' almost shrieked the abbot. 'There is the Wake banner. It is Hereward.'

'There is Winter on his left,' cried one. 'And there, with the standard, is the accursed monk, Ranald of Ramsey.'

And on they came, having debouched from the wood some two hundred yards off, behind a roll in the lawn, just far enough off to charge as soon as they were in line.

On they came, two deep, with lances high over their shoulders, heads and heels well down, while the green tufts flew behind them. '*A moi, hommes d'armes!*' shouted the abbot. But too late. The French turned right and left. To form was impossible, ere the human whirlwind would be upon them.

Another half minute, and with a shout of 'A Wake! A Wake!' they were struck, ridden through, hurled over, and trampled in the mud.

'I yield. Grace! I yield!' cried Thorold, struggling from under his horse but there was no one to whom to yield. The knights' backs were fifty yards off, their right arms high in the air, striking and stabbing.

The battle was a *fourrance*. There was no quarter given that day.

'And he that came live out thereof
Was he that ran away'

The abbot tried to make for the wood but ere he could gain it, the knights had turned, and one rode straight at him, throwing away a broken lance, and drawing his sword.

Abbot Thorold may not have been the coward

which Peter of Blois would have him, over and above being the bully which all men would have him, but if so, even a worm will turn, and so did the abbot. He drew sword from thigh, got well under his shield, his left foot forward, and struck one blow for his life, at the right place—his foe's bare knee.

But he had to do with a warier man than himself. There was a quick jerk of the rein, the horse swerved round right upon him, and knocked him head over heels, while his blow went into empty air.

'Yield, or die!' cried the knight, leaping from his horse, and kneeling on his head.

'I am a man of God, an abbot, churchman, Thorold.'

'Man of all the devils!' and the knight lunged him up, and bound his arms behind him with the abbot's own belt.

'Ahoi! Here! I have caught a fish. I have got the Golden Borough in my purse!' roared he. 'How much has St. Peter gained since we borrowed of him last, abbot? He will have to pay out the silver pennies bonnily, if he wishes to get back thee.'

'Blaspheme not, godless barbarian!' Whereat the knight kicked him.

'And you have Thorold the soundrel, Winter!' cried Hereward, galloping up. 'And we have three or more dainty French knights, and a viscount of I know not where among them. This is a good day's work. Now for Ivo and his tail.'

And the abbot, with four or five more prisoners, were hoisted on to their own horses, tied firmly, and led away into the forest path.

'Do not leave a wounded man to die,' cried a knight who lay on the lawn.

'Never we. I will come back and put you out of your pain,' quoth some one.

'Siward! Siward Le Blanc! Are you in this mornie?' cried the knight in French.

'That am I. Who calls?'

'For God's sake save him!' cried Thorold. 'He is my own nephew, and I will pay—'

'You will need all your money for yourself,' said Siward the White, riding back.

'Are you Sir Ascelin of Ghent?'

'That am I, your host of old.'

'I wish I had met you in better company. But friends we are, and friends must be.'

And he dismounted, and did his best for the wounded man, promising him to return and fetch him off before night, or send yeomen to do so.

As he pushed on through the wood, the abbot began to see signs of a fight, riderless horses crashing through the copse, wounded men straggling back, to be cut down without mercy by the English. The war had been a *fourrance* for a long while. None gave or asked quarter. The knights might be kept for ransom, they had money. The wretched men of the lower classes, who had none, were slain: as they would have slain the English.

Soon they heard the noise of battle, and

saw horsemen and footmen pell-mell, tangled in an abattis, from behind which archers and cross-bowmen shot them down in safety.

Hereward dashed forward with a shout, and at that the French, taken in the flank, fled, and were smitten as they fled, hip and thigh.

Hereward bade them spare a fugitive, and bring him to him.

'I give you your life, so run, and carry my message. That is Taillebois's banner there forward, is it not?'

'Yes.'

'Then go after him, and tell him, - Hereward has the Abbot of Burgh, and half a dozen knights, safe by the heels. And unless Ivo clears the wood of his men by nightfall, I will hang every one of them up for the crows before morning.'

Ivo got the message, and having had enough fighting for the day, drew off, says the chronicler, for the sake of the abbot and his fellow-captives.

Two hours after the abbot and the other prisoners were sitting, unbound but unarmed, in the forest on campment, waiting for a right good meal, with Torfrida bustling about them, after bunding up the very few wounded amongst their own men.

Every courtesy was shown them; and then hearts were lifted up, as they beheld approaching among the trees great caldrons of good soup, forest salads, red deer and roe roasted on the wood embers, spits of pheasants and partridges, larks and buntings, thrust off one by one by fair hands into the hard-baked loaves which served as platters, and last but not least, jacks of ale and wine, appearing mysteriously from a cool old stone quarry. Abbot Thorold ate to his heart's content, complimented every one, vowed he would forswear all French cooks and take to the greenwood himself, and was as gracious and courteously as if he had been at the new palace at Winchester.

And all the more for this reason - that he had intended to overawe the English barbarians by his polished French manners. He found those of Hereward and Torfrida, at least, as polished as his own.

'I am glad you are content, lord abbot,' said Torfrida, 'I trust you prefer dining with me to burning me, as you meant to do.'

'I burn such peerless beauty! I injure a form made only for the courts of kings! Heaven and all saints, knighthood and all chivalry, forbid! What Taillebois may have said, I know not! I am no more answerable for his intentions than for his parentage, - or his success this day. Let churls be churls, and wood-cutters wood-cutters. I at least, thanks to my ancestors, am a gentleman.'

'And as a gentleman, will of course contribute to the pleasure of your hosts. It will surely please you to gratify us with one stave at least of that song which has made you famous among all knights,' holding out a harp.

'I blush but obey. A harp in the greenwood! A court in the wilderness! What joy!'

And the vain abbot took the harp, and said - 'Those, if you will allow my modesty to choose, are the staves on which I especially pride myself. The staves which Taillebois - you will pardon my mentioning him -'

'Why pardon? A noble minstrel he was, and a brave warrior, though our foe. And often have I longed to hear him, little thinking that I should hear instead the maker himself.'

So said Hereward, and the abbot sang - those wondrous staves, where Roland, left alone of all the Paladins, finds death on him fast. And on the Pyrenean peak, beneath the pine, he lays himself, 'his face toward the ground, and under him his sword and magic horn, that Charles his lord may say, and all his folk, the gentle count he died a conqueror,' and then 'turns his eyes southward toward Spain, betakes himself to remember many things, of so many lands which he conquered valiantly, of pleasant France, of the men of his lineage, of Charlemagne his lord, who brought him up. He could not help to weep and sigh, but yet himself he would not forget. He bewailed his sins, and prayed God's mercy - True Father, who never yet didst he, who raised St. Lazarus from death and guarded Daniel from the lions. Guard my soul from all perils, for the sins which in my life I did. His right glove then he offered to God, St. Gabriel took it from his hand, on his arm the chiel bowed down, with joined hands he went unto his end. God sent down his angel Cherubim, and St. Michael whom men call "del peril." Together with them St. Gabriel he came, the soul of the count they bore to Paradise.'

And the abbot ended, sadly and gently, without that wild 'Aoi!' the war-cry with which he usually ends his staves. And the wild men of the woods were softened and saddened by the melody, and as many as understood French said, when he finished - 'Amen! so may all good knights die!'

'Thou art a great maker, abbot! They told truths of thee. Sing us more of thy great courtesy.'

And he sang them the staves of the Olifant, the magic horn - How Roland would not sound it in his pride, and sounded it at Turpin's bidding, but too late, and how his temples burst with that great blast, and Charles and all his peers heard it through the gorges, leagues away in France. And then his 'Aoi!' rang forth so loud and clear, like any trumpet blast, under the oaken glades, that the wild men leaped to their feet, and shouted 'Health to the gleeman! Health to the Abbot Thorold!'

'I have won them,' thought the abbot to himself. Strange mixture that man must have been, if all which is told of him is true, a very typical Norman, compact of cunning and ferocity, chivalry and poetry, vanity and superstition, and yet able enough to help to conquer England for the Pope.

Then he pressed Hereward to sing, with many compliments; and Hereward sang, and sang

again, and all his men crowded round him as the outlaws of Judaea may have crowded round David in Carmel or Hebron, to hear, like children, old ditties which they loved the better the oftener they heard them.

'No wonder that you can keep these knights together, if you can charm them thus with song. Would that I could hear you singing thus in William's hall.'

'No more of that, sir abbot. The only music which I have for William is the music of steel on steel.'

Hereward answered sharply, because he was half of Thorold's mind.

'Now,' said Torfrida, as it grew late, 'we must ask our noble guest for what he can give us as easily and well as he can sing—and that is news. We hear nought here in the green-wood, and must throw oneself on the kindness of a chance visitor.'

The abbot leapt at the bait, and told them news, court gossip, bringing in great folks' names and his own, as often and as familiarly mingled as he could.

'What of Richilda?' asked Torfrida.

'Ever since young Arnoul was killed at Cassel—'

'Arnoul killed?' shrieked Torfrida.

'Is it possible that you do not know?'

'How should I know, shut up in Ely for years as it seems.'

'But they fought at Cassel three months before you went to Ely.'

'He it so. Only tell me Arnoul killed!'

Then the abbot told, not without itching, a fearful story.

Robert the Frison and Richilda had come to open war, and Gerhoh the Fleming, Earl of Chester, had gone over from England to help Robert. William had sent Fitz-Osborn, Earl of Hereford, the scourge and tyrant of the Welsh, to help Richilda. Fitz-Osborn had married her, there and then. She had asked help of her liege lord, the King of France, and he had sent her troops. Robert and Richilda had fought on St. Peter's Day, 1071—nearly two years before—at Ravinchoven, by Cassel.

Richilda had played the heroine, and routed Robert's left wing, taken him prisoner, and sent him off to St. Omer. Men said that she had done it by her enchantments. But her enchantments betrayed her nevertheless. Fitz-Osborn, her bridegroom, fell dead. Young Arnoul had two horses killed under him. Then Gerhoh smote him to the ground, and Richilda and her troops fled in horror. Richilda was taken, and exchanged for the Frison, at which the King of France, being enraged, had come down and burnt St. Omer. Then Richilda, undaunted, had raised fresh troops to avenge her son. Then Robert had met them at Broquerius by Mons, and smote them with a dreadful slaughter.¹ Then Richilda had turned and fled wildly into a convent, and, so men

¹ The place was called till late, and may be now, 'The Hedges of Death.'

said, tortured herself night and day with fearful penances, if by any means she might atone for her great sins.

Torfrida heard, and laid her head upon her knees, and wept so bitterly, that the abbot entreated pardon for having pained her so much.

The news had a deep and lasting effect on her. The thought of Richilda shivering and starving in the squalid darkness of a convent alone by her thimblecloth. Should she ever find herself atoning in like wise for her sorceries—harsh as they had been, for her ambitions—just as they had been, for her crimes? But she had committed none. No, she had sinned in many things, but she was not as Richilda. And yet in the loneliness and sadness of the forest, she could not put Richilda from before the eyes of her mind.

It saddened Hereward likewise. For Richilda he cared little. But that boy—How he had loved him! How he had taught him to ride, and sing, and joust, and handle sword, and all the art of war. How his own rough soul had been the better for that love. How he had looked forward to the day when Arnoul should be a great prince, and requite him with love. Now he was gone. Gone? Who was not gone, or going? He seemed to himself the last tree in the forest. When should his time come, and the lightning strike him down to rot beside the rest? But he tost the sad thoughts aside. He could not afford to nourish them. It was his only chance of life, to be merry and desperate.

'Well!' said Hereward, ere they bade themselves up for the night. 'We owe you thanks, Abbot Thorold, for an evening worthy of a king's court rather than a solitary bush.'

'I have won him over,' thought the abbot.

'So charming a courtier—so sweet a minstrel—so agreeable a newsmonger—could I keep you in a cage for ever, and hang you on a bough, I were but too happy—but you are too fine a bird to sing in captivity. So you must go, I fear, and leave us to the nightingales. And I will take for your ransom—'

Abbot Thorold's heart beat high.

'Thirty thousand silver mark!'

'Thirty thousand fends!'

'My beau sire, will you undervalue yourself? Will you degrade yourself? I took Abbot Thorold, from his talk to be a man who set even a higher value on himself than other men set on him. What higher compliment can I pay to your vast worth, than making your ransom high accordingly, after the spirit of our ancient English laws? Take it as it is meant, beau sire, be proud to pay the money, and we will throw you Sir Ascelin into the bargain, as he seems a friend of Sward's.'

Thorold hoped that Hereward was drunk, and might forget, or relent—but he was so sore at heart that he slept not a wink that night.

But in the morning he found, to his sorrow, that Hereward had been as sober as himself.

In fine, he had to pay the money, and was a poor man all his days.

'Aha! Sir Ascelin,' said Hereward apart, as he bade them all farewell with many courtesies. 'I think I have put a spoke in your wheel about the fair Alfrida.'

'Eh! How! Most courteous victor!'

'Sir Ascelin is not a very wealthy gentleman.'

Ascelin laughed assent.

'Nodus intravi, nodus exeo—England, and I fear now, this mortal life likewise.'

'But he looked to his rich uncle the abbot, to further a certain marriage-project of his. And of course neither my friend Gilbert of Ghent, nor my enemy William of Normandy, is likely to give away so rich an heiress without some gratification in return.'

'Sir Hereward knows the world, it seems.'

'So he has been told before. And therefore, having no intention that Sir Ascelin—however worthy of any and every fair lady—should marry this one, he took care to cut off the stream at the fountain head. If he hears that the suit is still pushed, he may cut off another head beside the fountain's.'

'There will be no need,' said Ascelin, laughing again. 'You have very sufficiently ruined my uncle and my hopes.'

'My head!' said he, as soon as Hereward was out of hearing. 'If I do not cut off thy head ere all is over, there is no other luck nor craft left among Frenchmen. I shall catch The Wake sleeping some day, let him be never so Wakoful.'

CHAPTER XXXVI

HOW ALFRIDA WROTE TO HEReward

THE weary months ran on, from summer into winter, and winter into summer again, for two years and more, and neither Torfrida nor Hereward was the better for them. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, and a sick heart is but too apt to be a peevish one. So there were fits of despondency, jars, mutual recriminations. 'If I had not taken your advice, I should not have been here.' 'If I had not loved you so well, I might have been very differently off.' And so forth. The words were wiped away the next hour, perhaps the next minute, by sacred kisses; but they had been said, and would be recollected, and perhaps said again.

Then, again, the 'merry greenwood' was merry enough in the summer tide, when shafts were green, and

'The woodwits sang, and would not cease,
Sitting upon the spray,
So loud, it wakened Robin Hood
In the greenwood where he lay.'

But it was a sad place enough, when the autumn fog crawled round the gorse, and dripped off the hollies, and choked alike the breath and the eyesight, when the air sickened with the graveyard smell of rotting leaves, and

the rain-water stood in the clay holes over the poached and sloppy lawns.

It was merry enough, too, when they were in winter quarters in friendly farmhouses, as long as the bright sharp frosts lasted, and they tracked the hares and deer merrily over the frozen snows but it was doleful enough in those same farmhouses in the howling wet weather, when wind and rain lashed in through the unglazed window and ill-made roof, and there were coughs and colds and rheumatisms, and Torfrida ached from head to foot, and once could not stand upright for a whole month together, and every cranny was stuffed up with bits of board and rage, keeping out light and air as well as wind and water, and there was little difference between the short day and the long night, and the men gambled and wrangled amid clouds of peat reek, over draught-boards and chessmen which they had carved for themselves, and Torfrida sat stitching and sewing, making and mending, her eyes bleared with peat smoke, her hands sore and coarse from continued labour, her cheek bronzed, her face thin and hollow, and all her beauty worn away for very trouble. Then sometimes there was not enough to eat, and every one grumbled at her, or some one's clothes were not mended, and she was grumbled at again. And sometimes a foraging party brought home liquor, and all who could got drunk to drive dull care away, and Hereward, forgetful of all her warnings, got more than was good for him likewise, and at night she coiled herself up in her furs, cold and contemptuous, and Hereward coiled himself up, guilty and defiant, and woke her again and again with startings and wild words in his sleep. And she felt that her beauty was gone, and that he saw it, and she fancied him (perhaps it was only fancy) less tender than of yore, and then in very pride declined to take any care of her person, and said to herself, though she dare not say it to him, that if he only loved her for her face, he did not love her at all. And because she fancied him cold at times, she was cold likewise, and grew less and less caressing, when for his sake, as well as her own, she should have grown more so day by day.

Alas! for them. There are many excuses. Sorrow may be a softening medicine at last, but at first it is apt to be a hardening one, and that savage outlaw life which they were leading can never have been a wholesome one for any soul of man, and its graces must have existed only in the brains of harpists and gleemen. Away from law, from self-restraint, from refinement, from elegance, from the very sound of a church-going bell, they were sinking gradually down to the level of the coarse men and women whom they saw, the worse and not the better parts of both their characters were getting the upper hand, and it was but too possible that after a while the hero might sink into the ruffian, the lady into a slattern and a shrew.

But in justice to them be it said, that neither of them had complained of the other to any

living soul. Their love had been as yet too perfect, too sacred, for them to confess to another (and thereby confess to themselves) that it could in any wise fail. They had each idolised the other, and been too proud of their idolatry to allow that their idol could crumble or decay.

And yet at last that point too was reached. One day they were wrangling about somewhat, as they too often wrangled, and Hereward in his temper let fall the words, 'As I said to Winter the other day, you grow harder and harder upon me.'

Torfrida started and fixed on him wide, terrible, scornful eyes. 'So you complain of me to your boon companions!'

And she turned and went away without a word. A gulf had opened between them. They hardly spoke to each other for a week.

Hereward complained of Torfrida! What if Torfrida should complain of Hereward! But to whom? Not to the coarse women round her! her pride revolted from that thought—and yet she longed for counsel, for sympathy—to open her heart but to one fellow-woman. She would go to the Lady Godiva at Crowland, and take counsel of her, whether there was any method (for she put it to herself) of saving Hereward, for she saw but too clearly that he was fast forgetting all her teaching, and falling back to a point lower than that even from which she had raised him up.

To go to Crowland was not difficult. It was mid-winter. The dykes were all frozen. Hereward was out foraging in the Lincolnshire folds. So Torfrida, taking advantage of his absence, proposed another foraging party to Crowland itself. She wanted stuff for clothes, needles, thread, what not. A dozen stout fellows volunteered at once to take her. The friendly monks of Crowland would feast them royally, and send them home heaped with all manner of good things, while as for meeting Ivo Taillebois's men, if they had but three to one against them, there was a fair chance of killing a few, and carrying off their clothes and weapons, which would be useful. So they made a sledge, tied beef bones underneath it, put Torfrida and the girl thereon, well wrapped in deer and fox and badger skin, and then putting on their ekates, swept them over the fen to Crowland, singing like larks along the dykes.

And Torfrida went in to Godiva, and wept upon her knees, and Godiva wept likewise, and gave her such counsel as she could—how if the woman will keep the man heroic, she must keep herself not heroic only but devout likewise, how she herself, by that one deed which had rendered her name famous then, and famous (though she never dreamt thereof) now and it may be to the end of time—had once for all tamed, chained, and, as it were, converted the heart of her fierce young lord, and enabled her to train him in good time into the most wise, most just, most pious, of all King Edward's earls.

And Torfrida said yes, and yes, and yes, and

felt in her heart that she knew all that already. Had not she too taught, entreated, softened, civilised! Had not she too spent her life upon a man, and that man a wolf's head and a landless outlaw, more utterly than Godiva could ever have spent hers on one who lived lapped in luxury, and wealth, and power! Torfrida had done her best, and she had failed—or at least fancied in her haste that she had failed.

What she wanted was not counsel, but love. And she clung round the Lady Godiva, till the broken and ruined widow opened all her heart to her, and took her in her arms, and fondled her as if she had been a babe. And the two women spoke few words after that, for indeed there was nothing to be said. Only at last, 'My child, my child,' cried Godiva, 'better for thee, body and soul, to be here with me in the house of God, than there amid evil spirits and deeds of darkness in the wild woods.'

'Not a cloister, not a cloister,' cried Torfrida, shuddering, and half struggling to get away.

'It is the only place, poor wilful child, the only place this side the grave, in which we wretched creatures, who to our woe are women born, can find aught of rest or peace. By us sin came into the world, and Eve's curse has heavy on us to this day, and our desire is to our lords, and they rule over us, and when the slave can work for her master no more, what better than to crawl into the house of God, and lay down our crosses at the foot of His cross, and die! You too will come here, Torfrida, some day, I know it well. You too will come here to rest.'

'Never, never,' shrieked Torfrida, 'never to these horrid vaults. I will die in the fresh air. I will be buried under the green holms, and the nightingales, as they wander up from my own Provence, shall build and sing over my grave. Never, never!' murmured she to herself all the more eagerly, because something within her said that it would come to pass.

The two women went into the church to matins, and prayed long and fervently. And at the early daybreak the party went back laden with good things and hearty blessings, and caught one of Ivo Taillebois's men by the way, and slew him, and got off him a new suit of clothes in which the poor fellow was going courting, and so they got home safe into the Bruneswald.

But Torfrida had not found rest unto her soul. For the first time in her life since she became the bride of Hereward, she had had a confidence concerning him and unknown to him. It was to his own mother—true. And yet she felt as if she had betrayed him, but then had he not betrayed her! And to Winter of all men!

It might have been two months afterwards that Martin Lightfoot put a letter into Torfrida's hand.

The letter was addressed to Hereward: but there was nothing strange in Martin's bringing it to his mistress. Ever since their marriage,

she had opened and generally answered the very few epistles with which her husband was troubled.

She was going to open this one as a matter of course, when glancing at the superscription she saw, or fancied she saw, that it was in a woman's hand. She looked at it again. It was sealed plainly with a woman's seal, and she looked up at Martin Lightfoot. She had remarked as he gave her the letter a sly significant look in his face.

'What dost thou know of this letter?' she inquired sharply.

'That it is from the Countess Alfrida, who-soever she may be.'

A chill struck through her heart. True, Alfrida had written before only to warn Hereward of danger to his life—and here. She might be writing again, only for the same purpose. But still, she did not wish that either Hereward or she should owe Alfrida then lives, or anything. They had struggled on through weal and woe without her for many a year. Let them do so without her still. That Alfrida had once loved Hereward she knew well. Why should she not? The wonder was to her that every woman did not love him. But she had long since gauged Alfrida's character, and seen in it a persistence like her own, yet, as she proudly hoped, of a lower temper, the persistence of the base weasel, not of the noble hound: yet the creeping weasel might endure, and win, when the hound was tired out by his own gallant pace. And there was a something in the tone of Alfrida's last letter, which seemed to tell her that the weasel was still upon the scent of its game. But she was too proud to mistrust Hereward, or rather to seem to mistrust him. And yet—how dangerous Alfrida might be as a rival, if rival she chose to be. She was up in the world now, free, rich, gay, beautiful, a favourite at Queen Matilda's court, while she—

'How came this letter into thy hands?' asked she as carelessly as she could.

'I was in Peterborough last night,' said Martin, 'concerning little matters of my own, and there came to me in the street a bonny young page with smart jacket on his back, smart cap on his head, and smiles and bows, and "You are one of Hereward's men," quoth he. "Say that again, young jackanapes," said I, "and I'll cut your tounge out," whereat he took fright and all but cried. He was very sorry, and meant no harm, but he had a letter for my master, and he heard I was one of his men. "Who told him that?" Well, one of the monks, he could not justly say which, or wouldn't, and I thinking the letter of more importance than my own neck, ask him quietly into my friend's house. There he pulls out this and five silver pennies, and I shall have five more if I bring an answer back—but to none than Hereward must I give it. With that I, calling my friend, who is an honest woman, and nigh as strong in the arms as I am, ask her to clap her back against the door, and pull out my

axe. "Now," said I, "I must know a little more about this letter. Tell me, knave, who gave it thee, or I'll split thy skull." The young man cries and blubbers, and says that it is the Countess Alfrida, who is staying in the monastery, and that he is her serving-man, and that it is as much as my life is worth to touch a hair of his head, and so forth—so far so good. Then I asked him again, who told him I was my master's man!—and he confessed that it was Herlun the prior—who that was Lady Godiva's chaplain of old, whom my master robbed of his money when he had the cell of Bonne years ago. Very well, quoth I to myself, that's one more count on our score against Master Herlun. Then I asked him how Herlun and the Lady Alfrida came to know aught of each other? and he said that she had been questioning all about the monastery without Abbot Thorold's knowledge, for one that know Hereward and favoured him well. That was all I could get from the knave, he cried so for fright. So I took his money and his letter, warning him that if he betrayed me, there were those who would roast him alive before he was done with me. And so away over the town wall, and ran here five-and-twenty miles before breakfast, and thought it better as you see to give the letter to my lady first.'

'You have been officious,' said Torfrida coldly. 'Tis addressed to your master. Take it to him. Go.'

Martin Lightfoot whistled and obeyed, while Torfrida walked away proudly and silently with a beating heart.

Again Godiva's words came over her. Should she end in the convent of Crowland? And suspecting, fearing, imagining all sorts of baseless phantasies, she hardened her heart into a great hardness.

Martin had gone with the letter, and Torfrida never heard any more of it.

So Hereward had secrets which he would not tell to her. At last!

That, at least, was a misery which she would not confide to Lady Godiva, or to any soul on earth.

But a misery it was, such a misery as none can delineate, save those who have endured it themselves, or had it confided to them by another. And happy are they to whom neither has befallen.

She wandered out and into the wild wood, and sat down by a spring. She looked in it—her only mirror—at her wan coarse face, with wild black elf locks hanging round it, and wondered whether Alfrida, in her luxury and prosperity, was still so very beautiful. Ah, that that fountain were the fountain of Jouvence, the spring of perpetual youth, which all believed in those days to exist somewhere,—how would she plunge into it, and be young and fair once more!

No! she would not! She had lived her life, and lived it well, gallantly, lovingly, heroically. She had given that man her youth, her beauty, her wealth, her wit. He should not have them

a second time. He had had his will of her. If he chose to throw her away when he had done with her, to prove himself base at last, unworthy of all her care, her counsels, her training—dreadful thought! To have lived to keep that man for her own, and just when her work seemed done, to lose him! No, there was worse than that. To have lived that she might make that man a perfect knight, and just when her work seemed done, to see him lose himself.

And she wept till she could weep no more. Then she washed away her tears in that well. Had it been in Greece of old, it would have become a sacred well thenceforth, and Torfrida's tears have changed into forget-me-nots, and fringed its marge with azure overmore.

Then she went back, calm, all but cold—but determined not to betray herself, let him do what he would. Perhaps it was all a mistake, a fancy. At least she would not degrade him, and herself, by showing suspicion. It would be dreadful, shameful to herself, wickedly unjust to him, to accuse him were he innocent after all.

Hereward, she remarked, was more kind to her now. But it was a kindness which she did not like. It was shy, faltering, as of a man guilty and ashamed, and she repelled it as much as she dared, and then, once or twice, returned it passionately, madly, in hopes—

But he never spoke a word of that letter.

After a dreadful month, Martin came mysteriously to her again. She trembled, for she had remarked in him lately a strange change. He had lost his usual loquacity and quaint humour; and had fallen back into that sullen taciturnity which, so she heard, he had kept up in his youth. He, too, must know evil which he dared not tell.

'There is another letter come. It came last night,' said he.

'What is that to thee or me? My lord has his state secrets. Is it for us to pry into them? Go!'

'I thought—I thought —'

'Go, I say!'

'That your ladyship might wish for a guide to Crowland!'

'Crowland!' almost shrieked Torfrida, for the thought of Crowland had risen in her own wretched mind instantly and involuntarily. 'Go, madman!'

Martin went. Torfrida paced madly up and down the barnhouse. Then she settled herself into heroic despair.

There was a noise of tramping horses outside. The men were arming and saddling, seemingly for a raid.

Hereward hurried in for his armour. When he saw Torfrida, he blushed scarlet.

'You want your arms,' said she quietly, 'let me fetch them.'

'No, never mind. I can harness myself. I am going south-west, to pay Taillebois a visit. I am in a great hurry. I shall be back in three days. Then—good-bye.'

He snatched his arms off a perch, and hurried

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out again, dragging them on. As he passed her, he offered to kiss her, she put him back, and helped him on with his armour, while he thanked her confusedly.

'He was as glad not to kiss me, after all!'

She looked after him as he stood, his hand on his horse's withers. How noble he looked! And a great yearning came over her. To throw her arms round his neck once, and then to stab herself, and set him free, dying, as she had lived for him.

Two bonny boys were wrestling on the lawn, young outlaws who had grown up in the forest with ruddy cheeks and iron limbs.

'Ah, Winter!' she heard him say, 'had I had such a boy as that!—'

She heard no more. She turned away, her heart dead within her. She knew all that those words implied, in days when the possession of land was everything to the free man, and the possession of a son necessary, to pass that land on in the ancestral line. Only to have a son, only to prevent the old estate passing, with an heiress, into the hands of strangers, what crimes did not men commit in those days, and find themselves excused for them in public opinion? And now, her other children (if she ever had any) hatched in childhood, the little Torfrida, named after herself, was all that she had brought to Hereward, and he was the last of his house. In him the race of Loofric, of Golvra, of Earl Osloc, would become extinct, and that girl would marry—whom? Whom but some French conqueror, or at best some English outlaw. In either case Hereward would have no descendants for whom it was worth his while to labour or to fight. What wonder if he longed for a son—and not a son of hers, the barren tree—to pass his name down to future generations? It might be worth while, for that, to come in to the king, to recover his lands, to — She saw it all now, and her heart was dead within her.

She spent that evening, neither eating nor drinking, but sitting over the log embers, her head upon her hands, and thinking over all her past life and love, since she saw him, from the gable window, and the first time into St Omer. She went through it all, with a certain stern delight in the self-torture, deliberately day by day, year by year,—all its lofty aspirations, all its blissful passages, all its deep disappointments, and found in it—so she chose to fancy in the wilfulness of her misery, nothing but cause for remorse. Self in all, vanity and vexation of spirit, for herself she had loved him, for herself she had tried to raise him, for herself she had set her heart on man, and not on God. She had sown the wind, and behold she had reaped the whirlwind. Still she could not repent, she could not pray. But oh! that she could die.

She was unjust to herself in her great nobleness. It was not true, not half, not a tenth part true. But perhaps it was good for her that it should seem true for that moment, that she should be emptied of all earthly things—for once, if so she might be filled from above.

At last she went into the inner room to lie down and try to sleep. At her feet, under the porch where Hereward's armour had hung, lay an open letter.

She picked it up, surprised to see such a thing there, and kneeling down, held it eagerly to the wax candle which was on a spike at the bed's head.

She knew the handwriting in a moment. It was Alfrida's.

Thus then was why Hereward had been so strangely hurried. He must have had that letter and dropped it.

Her mind and eye took it all in in one instant, as the lightning flash reveals a whole landscape. And then her mind became as dark as that landscape when the flash is past.

It congratulated Hereward on having shaken himself free from the fascinations of that sorceress. It said that all was settled with king William. Hereward was to come to Winchester. She had the king's writ for his safety ready to send to him. The king would receive him as his hegemon. Alfrida would receive him as her husband. Archbishop Lanfranc had made difficulties about the dissolution of the marriage with Torfrida, but gold would do all things at Rome, and Lanfranc was her very good friend, and a reasonable man—and so forth.

Men and beasts likewise, when stricken with a mortal wound, will run, and run on, blindly, unless, impelled by the mere instinct of escape from intolerable agony. And so did Torfrida. Half undrest as she was, she fled forth into the forest, she knew not whither, running as one does wrapped in fire, but the fire was not without her, but within.

She cast a passing glance at the girl who lay by her, sleeping a pure and gentle sleep—

'Oh, that thou hadst but been a boy!' Then she thought no more of her, not even of Hereward, but all of which she was conscious was a breast and brain bursting, an intolerable choking, from which she must escape.

She ran, and ran on, for miles. She knew not whether the night was light or dark, warm or cold. Her tender feet might have been ankle-deep in snow. The branches over her head might have been howling in the tempest, or dripping with rain. She knew not, and heeded not. The owls hooted to each other under the staring moon, but she heard them not. The wolves glared at her from the brakes, and snunk off appalled at the white ghostly figure, but she saw them not. The deer stood at gaze in the glades till she was close upon them, and then bounded into the wood. She ran right at them, past them heedless. She had but one thought. To flee from the agony of a soul alone in the universe with its own misery.

At last she was aware of a man close beside her. He had been following her a long way, she recollected now, but she had not feared him, even hooded him. But when he laid his hand upon her arm she turned fiercely, but without dread.

She looked to see if it was Hereward. To meet him would be death. If it were not he she cared not who it was. It was not Hereward, and she cried angrily, 'Off! off!' and hurried on.

'But you are going the wrong way!' The wrong way!' said the voice of Martin Light-foot.

'The wrong way! Fool, which is the right way for me, save the path which leads to a land where all is forgotten!'

'To Crowland! To Crowland! To the minster! To the monks! That is the only right way for poor wretches in a world like this. The Lady Godiva told you you must go to Crowland. And now you are going! I too, I ran away from a monastery when I was young, and now I am going back. Come along!'

'You are right! Crowland, Crowland, and a nun's cell till death. Which is the way, Martin?'

'Oh, a wise lady! A reasonable lady! But you will be cold before you get thither. There will be a frost ere morn. So when I saw you run out, I caught up something to put over you.'

Torfrida shuddered, as Martin wrapped her in the white bear's skin.

'No! Not that! Anything but that!' and she struggled to shake it off.

'Then you will be dead ere dawn. Folks that run wild in the forest thus, for but one night, die.'

'Would God I could die!'

'That shall be as He wills. You do not die while Martin can keep you alive. Why, you are staggering already.'

Martin caught her up in his arms, threw her over his shoulder as if she had been a child, and hurried on in the strength of madness.

At last he stopped at a cottage door, set her down upon the turf, and knocked loudly.

'Grunkel Tolken! Grunkel, I say!'

And Martin burst the door open with his foot. 'Give me a horse, on your life,' said he to the man inside. 'I am Martin, The Wake's man, upon my master's business.'

'What is mine is The Wake's, God bless him,' said the man, struggling into a garment, and hurrying out to the stable.

'There is a ghost against the gate!' cried he, recoiling.

'That is my matter, not yours. Get me a horse to put the ghost upon.'

Torfrida lay against the gate-post, exhausted now, but quite unable to think. Martin lifted her on to the beast, and led her onward, holding her up again and again.

'You are tired. You had run four miles before I could make you hear me.'

'Would I had run four thousand!' And she relapsed into stupor.

They passed out of the forest, across open wolds, and at last down to the river. Martin knew of a boat there. He lifted her from the horse, turned him loose, put Torfrida into the boat, and took the oars.

She looked up, and saw the roofs of Bourne shining white in the moonlight.

And then she lifted up her voice, and shrieked three times,

'Lost! Lost! Lost!'

with such a dreadful cry, that the starlings whirled up from the reeds, and the wild fowl rose clanging off the meres, and the watch-dogs in Bourne and Manthorpe barked and howled, and folk told fearfully next morning, how a white ghost had gone down from the forest to the fen, and wakened them with its unearthly scream.

The sun was high when they came to Crowland minster. Torfrida had neither spoken nor stirred, and Martin, who in the midst of his madness kept a strange courtesy and delicacy, had never disturbed her, save to wrap the bear's skin more closely over her.

When they came to the bank, she rose, stepped out without his help, and drawing the bear's skin closely round her, and over her head, walked straight up to the gate of the house of nuns.

All men wondered at the white ghost, but Martin walked behind her, his left finger on his hip, his right hand grasping his hilt, and with such a stern and serious face, and so fierce an eye, that all drew back in silence, and let her pass.

The portress looked through the wicket.

'I am Torfrida,' said a voice of terrible calm. 'I am come to see the Lady Godiva. Let me in.'

The portress opened, utterly astounded.

'Madam!' said Martin eagerly, as Torfrida entered.

'What? What?' she seemed to waken from a dream. 'God bless thee, thou good and faithful servant,' and she turned again.

'Madam! Stay!'

'What?'

'Shall I go back, and kill him?' And he held out the little axe.

Torfrida snatched it from his grasp with a shriek, and cast it inside the convent door.

'Mother Mary and all saints!' cried the portress, 'your garments are in tatters, madam!'

'Never mind! Bring me garments of yore. I shall need none other till I die!' and she walked in and on.

'She is come to be a nun!' whispered the portress to the next sister, and she again to the next, and they all gabbled, and lifted up their hands and eyes, and thanked all the saints of the calendar, over the blessed and miraculous conversion of the Lady Torfrida, and the wealth which she would probably bring to the convent.

Torfrida went straight on, speaking to no one, not even to the prioress, and into Lady Godiva's chamber.

There she dropped, at the countess's feet, and laid her head upon her knees.

'I am come, as you always told me I should do. But it has been a long way hither, and I am very tired.'

'My child! What is this? What brings you here?'

'I am doing penance for my sins.'

'And your feet all cut and bleeding.'

'Are they?' said Torfrida vacantly. 'I will tell you all about it when I wake.'

And she fell fast asleep, with her head in Godiva's lap.

The countess did not speak or stir. She beckoned the good prioress, who had followed Torfrida in, to go away. She saw that some thing dreadful had happened, and prayed as she awaited the news.

Torfrida slept for a full hour. Then she awoke with a start.

'Where am I? Hereward!'

Then followed a dreadful shock, which made every nun in that quiet house shudder, and thank God that she knew nothing of those agonies of soul which were the lot of the foolish virgins who married and were given in marriage themselves, instead of waiting with oil in their lamps for the true Bridegroom.

'I recollect all now,' said Torfrida. 'Listen! And she told the countess all, with speech so calm and clear that Godiva was awed by the power and spirit of that marvellous woman.

But she groaned in bitterness of soul. 'Any thing but this! Rather death from him than treachery! This last, worse than had God kept in His quiver for me, most miserable of women! And now his bolt has fallen! Hereward! Hereward! That thy mother should wish her last child laid in his grave!'

'Not so,' said Torfrida, 'it is well as it is. How better? It is his only chance for comfort, for honour, for life itself. He would have grown a —I was growing bad and foul myself in that ugly wilderness. Now he will be a knight on a mare among meadows, and win himself fresh honour in fresh fields. Let him marry her. Why not? He can get a dispensation from the Pope, and then there will be no sin in it, you know. If the Holy Father cannot make wrong right, who can? Yes. It is very well as it is. And I am very well where I am. Women! Bring me scissors, and one of your nun's dresses. I am come to be a nun like you.'

Godiva would have stopped her. But Torfrida rose upon her knees, and calmly made a solemn vow, which though canonically void without her husband's consent, would, she well knew, never be disputed by any there, and as for him, — 'He has lost me, and for ever. Torfrida never gives herself away twice.'

'There's a cruel pride in those words, my poor child,' said Godiva.

'Cruel!' said she proudly. 'When I am sacrificing myself utterly for him.'

'And thy poor girl!'

'He will let her come hither,' said Torfrida, with forced calm. 'He will see that it is not fit that she should grow up with — yes, he will send her to me — to us. And I shall live for her — and for you. If you will let me be your bower-woman, dress you, serve you, read to you.'

You know that I am a pretty scholar. You will let me, mother? 'I may call you mother, may I not?' And Torfrida fondled the old woman's thin hands. 'For I do want so much something to love.'

'Love thy heavenly Bridegroom, the only love worthy of woman!' said Godiva, as her tears fell fast on Torfrida's head.

She gave a half impatient toss.

'That may come, in good time. As yet it is enough to do, if I can keep down this devil here in my throat. Women, bring me the scissors.'

And Torfrida cut off her raven locks, now streaked with gray, and put on the nun's dress, and became a nun housefurther.

On the second day there came to Crowland Leofric the priest, and with him the poor child.

She had woken in the morning and found no mother. Leofric and the other men searched the woods round, far and wide. The girl mounted her horse, and would go with them. Then they took a bloodhound, and he led them to Grunkol's hut. There they heard of Martin. The ghost must have been Torfrida. Then the hound brought them to the river. And they divined at once that she was gone to Crowland, to Godiva, but why, they could not guess.

Then the girl wept, prayed, at last commanded them to take her to Crowland. And to Crowland they came.

Leofric left the girl at the nuns' house door, and went into the monastery, where he had friends now, runaway and renegade as he was. As he came into the great court, whom should he meet but Martin Lightfoot, in a lay brother's frock.

'Aha! And are you come home likewise? Have you renounced the devil and this last work of his?'

'What work? What devil?' asked Leofric, who saw method in Martin's madness. 'And what do you here in a lay frock?'

'Devil! Hereward the devil. I would have killed him with my axe, but she got it from me, and threw it in among the holy sisters, and I had work to get it again. Shame on her, to spoil my chance of heaven. For I should surely have won heaven, you know, if I had killed the devil.'

After much beating about, Leofric got from Martin the whole tragedy.

And when he heard it, he burst out weeping.

'O Hereward, Hereward! O knightly honour! Oh, faith and troth, and gratitude, and love in return for such love as might have tamed him and made tyrants mild! Are they all carnal vanities, words of the weak flesh, bruised words which break when they are leaned upon? If so, you are right, Martin, and there is nought left, but to flee from a world in which all men are liars.'

And Leofric, in the midst of Crowland Yard, tore off his belt and trusty sword, his hauberk and helm also, and letting down his monk's frock, which he wore trussed to the mid-knee,

he went to the abbot's lodgings, and asked to see old Ulfcetyl.

'Bring him up,' said the good abbot, 'for he is a valiant man and true, in spite of all his vanities, and may be, he brings news of Hereward, whom God forgive.'

And when Leofric came in, he fell upon his knees, bewailing and confessing his sinful life, and begged the abbot to take him back again into Crowland minster, and lay upon him what penance he thought fit, and put him in the lowest office because he was a man of blood; if only he might stay there, and have a sight at times of his dear Lady Torfrida, without whom he should surely die.

So Leofric was received back, in full chapter, by abbot, and prior, and all the monks. But when he asked them to lay a penance upon him, Ulfcetyl arose from his high chair, and spoke.

'Shall we, who have sat here at ease, lay a penance on this man, who has shed his blood in fifty valiant fights for us, and for St. Guthlac, and for this English land? Look at you scars upon his head and arms. He has had sharper discipline from cold steel than we could give him here with rod, and has fasted in the wilderness more sorely, many a time, than we have fasted here.'

And all the monks agreed that no penance should be laid on Leofric. Only that he should abstain from singing vain and carnal ballads, which turned the heads of the young brothers, and made them dream of nought but battles, and grants, and enchantments, and ladies' love.

Hereward came back on the third day, and found his wife and daughter gone. His guilty conscience told him in the first instance why. For he went into the chamber, and there, upon the floor, lay the letter which he had looked for in vain.

None had touched it where it lay. Perhaps no one had dared to enter the chamber. If they had, they would not have dared to meddle with writing which they could not read, and which might contain some magic spell. Letters were very safe in those old days.

There are moods of man which no one will dare to describe, unless, like Shakespeare, he is Shakespeare, and like Shakespeare knows it not.

Therefore what Hereward thought and felt will not be told. What he did, was this.

He raged and blustered. He must hide his shame. He must justify himself to his knights, and much more to himself, or if not justify himself, must shift some of the blame over to the opposite side. So he raged and blustered. He had been robbed of his wife and daughter. They had been cajoled away by the monks of Crowland. What villains were those to rob an honest man of his family while he was fighting for his country?

So he rode down to the river, and there took two great barges, and rowed away to Crowland, with forty men-at-arms.

And all the while he thought of Alfrida, as he had seen her at Peterborough.

And of no one else!

Not so. For all the while he felt that he loved Torfrida's little finger better than Alfruda's whole body, and soul into the bargain.

What a long way it was to Crowland! How wearying were the hours through mire and sea. How wearying the monotonous pulse of the oars. If tobacco had been known then, Hereward would have smoked all the way, and been none the wiser, though the happier, for it, for the herb that drives away the evil spirits of anxiety, drives away also the good, though stern, spirits of remorse.

But in those days a man could only escape facts by drinking, and Hereward was too much afraid of what he should meet in Crowland, to go blither drunk.

Sometimes he hoped that Torfrida might hold her purpose, and set him free to follow his wicked will. All the lower nature in him, so long crushed under, leapt up chuckling and grinning and tumbling head over heels, and cried—'Now I shall have a holiday!'

Sometimes he hoped that Torfrida might come out to the shore, and settle the matter in one moment, by a glance of her great hawk's eyes. If she would but quell him by one look, leap on board, seize the helm, and assume without a word the command of his men and him, steer them back to Bourne, and sit down beside him with a kiss, as if nothing had happened! If she would but do that, and ignore the past, would he not ignore it? Would he not forget Alfruda, and King William, and all the world, and go up with her into Sherwood, and then north to Scotland and Gwynedd, and be a man once more?

No. He would go with her to the Baltic or the Mediterranean. Constantinople and the Varangers would be the place and the men. Ay, there to escape out of that charmed ring into a new life.

No. He did not deserve such luck, and he would not get it.

She would talk it all out. She must, for she was a woman.

She would blame, argue, say dreadful words—dreadful, because true and deserved. Then she would grow angry, as women do when they are most in the right, and say too much—still more dreadful words, which would be untrue and undeserved. Then he should resist, recriminate. He would not stand it. He could not stand it. No. He could never face her again.

And yet if he had seen a man insult her—if he had seen her at that moment in peril of the slightest danger, the slightest bruise, he would have rushed forward like a madman, and died, saving her from that bruise. And he knew that: and with the strange self-contradiction of human nature, he soothed his own conscience by the thought that he loved her still; and that, therefore—somehow or other, he cared not to make out how—he had done her no wrong. Then he blustered again, for the benefit of his men. He would teach these monks of Crow-

land a lesson. He would burn the minster over their heads.

'That would be juty, seeing they are the only Englishmen left in England,' said Siward the White, his nephew, very simply.

'What is that to thee? Thou hast helped to burn Peterborough at my bidding, and thou shalt help to burn Crowland.'

'I am a free gentleman of England, and what I choose, I do. I and my brother are going to Constantinople to join the Varanger Guard, and shall not burn Crowland, nor let any man burn it.'

'Shall not let?'

'No,' said the young man, so quietly that Hereward was cowed.

'I—I only meant if they did not do right by me.'

'Do right thyself,' said Siward.

Hereward swore awfully, and laid his hand on his sword-hilt. But he did not draw it, for he thought he saw overhead a cloud which was very like the figure of St Guthlac in Crowland window, and an awe fell upon him from above.

So they came to Crowland, and Hereward landed and beat upon the gates, and spoke high words. But the monks did not open the gates for a while. At last the gates creaked, and opened, and in the gateway stood Abbot Ulfketyl in his robes of state, and behind him the prior, and all the others, and all the monks of the house.

'Comes Hereward in peace or in war?'

'In war!' said Hereward.

Then that true and trusty old man, who sealed his patriotism, if not with his blood, for the very Normans had not the heart to take that—still with long and bitter sorrows, lifted up his head, and said, like a valiant Dane, as his name bespoke him, 'Against the traitor and the adulterer—'

'I am neither,' roared Hereward.

'Thou wouldst be, if thou couldst. Whoso looketh upon a woman to—'

'Preach me no sermons, man! Let me in to seek my wife.'

'Over my body,' said Ulfketyl, and laid himself down across the threshold.

Hereward recoiled. If he had dared to step over that sacred body, there was not a blood-stained ruffian in his crew who dared to follow him.

'Rise, rise! for God's sake, lord abbot,' said he. 'Whatever I am, I need not that you should disgrace me thus. Only let me see her—reason with her.'

'She has vowed herself to God, and is none of thine henceforth.'

'It is against the canons. A wrong and a robbery.'

Ulfketyl rose, grand as ever.

'Hereward Leofricsson, our joy and our glory once. Harken to the old man who will soon go whither thine uncle Brand is gone, and be free of Frenchmen, and of all this wicked world. When the walls of Crowland dare not shelter

the wronged woman, fleeing from man's treason to God's faithfulness, then let the roofs of Crowland burn till the flame reaches heaven, for a sign that the children of God are as false as the children of this world, and break their faith like any lustful knight.'

Hereward was silenced. His men shrink back from him. He felt as if God, and the mother of God, and St. Guthlac, and all the host of heaven, were shrinking back from him likewise. He turned to supplications, compromises—what else was left.

'At least you will let me have speech of her, or of my mother?'

'They must answer that, not I.'

Hereward sent in, entreating to see one, or both.

'Tell him,' said Lady Godiva, 'what calls himself my son, that my sons were men of honour, and that he must have been changed at nurse.'

'Tell him,' said Tithida, 'that I have lived my life, and am dead. Dead. If he would see me, he will only see my corpse.'

'You would not slay yourself?'

'What is there that I dare not do? You do not know Torfrida. He does.'

And Hereward did, and went back again like a man stunned.

After a while there came by boat to Crowland all Torfrida's wealth, clothes, jewels, not a shield had Hereward kept. The magic armour came with them.

Tithida gave all to the alms, there and then. Only the armour she wrapped up in the white bear's skin, and sent it back to Hereward, with her blessing, and entreaty not to refuse that, her last request.

Hereward did not refuse, for very shame. But for very shame he never wore that armour more. For very shame he never slept again upon the white bear's skin, on which he and his true love had lain so many a year.

And Tithida turned herself utterly to serve the Lady Godiva, and to teach and train her child as she had never done before, while she had to love Hereward, and to work day and night with her own fingers, for all his men. All pride, all fierceness, all care of self, had passed away from her. In penitence, humility, obedience, and gentleness, she went on, never smiling, but never weeping. Her heart was broken, and she felt it good for herself to let it break.

And Leofric the priest, and mad Martin lightfoot, watched like two dogs for her going out and coming in, and when she went among the old caroliers, and nursed the sick, and taught the children, and went to and fro upon her holy errands, blessing and blessed, the two wild men had a word from her mouth, or a kiss of her hand, and were happy all the day after. For they loved her with a love mightier than ever Hereward had heaped upon her, for she had given him all. But she had given those two wild men nought but the beatific vision of a noble woman.

CHAPTER XXXVII

HOW HERWARD LOST SWORD BAINBITER

'On account of which,' says the chronicler, 'many troubles came to Hereward because Torfrida was most wise, and of great counsel in need. For afterwards, as he himself confessed, things went not so well with him as they did in her time.'

And the first thing that went ill was this. He was riding through the Bruneswald, and behind him Gery, Wenoch, and Matelgar, these three. And there met him in an open glade a knight, the biggest man he had ever seen, on the biggest horse, and two knights behind him. He was an Englishman, and not a Frenchman, by his dress, and Hereward spoke courteously enough to him. But who he was, and what his business was in the Bruneswald, Hereward thought that he had a right to ask.

'Tell me who thou art who askest, before I tell thee who I am when am asked, riding here on common land,' quoth the knight surly enough.

'I am Hereward, without whose leave no man has ridden the Bruneswald for many a day.'

'And I am Letwold the Englishman, who rides whither he will in merry England, without care for any Frenchman upon earth.'

'Frenchman? Why callest thou me Frenchman, man? I am Hereward.'

'Then thou art, if tales be true, as French as *les Taillebois*. I hear that thou hast left thy true lady, like a fool and a churl, and goest to London, or Winchester, or the nether yot. I care not which—to make thy peace with the *Manner*.'

The man was a surly brute. But what he said was so true, that Hereward's wrath arose. He had promised Torfrida many a time never to quarrel with an Englishman, but to endure all things. Now, out of very spite to Torfrida's counsel, because it was Torfrida's, and he had promised to obey it, he took up the quarrel.

'If I am a fool and a churl, thou art a greater fool, to provoke thine own death, and a greater—'

'Space your breath,' said the big man, 'and let me try Hereward, as I have many another.'

Whereon they dropped their lance points, and rode at each other like two mad bulls. And by the contagion of folly common in the middle age, at each other rode Hereward's three knights and Letwold's five. The two leaders found themselves both rolling on the ground, jumped up, drew their swords, and hewed away at each other. Gery unhorsed his man at the first charge, and left him stunned. Then he turned on another, and did the same by him. Wenoch and Matelgar each overthrew their man. The fifth of Letwold's knights threw up his lance-point, not liking his new company. Gery and the other two rode in on the two chiefs, who were fighting hard, each under shield.

'Stand back!' roared Hereward, 'and give the knight fair play! When did any one of us want a man to help him? Kill or die single has been our rule, and shall be.'

They threw up their lance-points, and stood round to see that great fight. Letwold's knight rode in among them, and stood likewise, and friend and foe looked on, as they might at a pair of game-cocks.

Hereward had, to his own surprise and that of his fellows, met his match. The sparks flew, the iron clanged, but so heavy were the stranger's strokes that Hereward recoiled again and again. So sure was the guard of his shield, that Hereward could not wound him, hit where he would. At last he dealt a furious blow on the stranger's head.

'If that does not bring your master down?' quoth Gery. 'By --, Braumbiter is gone!'

It was too true. Sword Braumbiter's end was come. The ogre's magic blade had snapped off short by the hilt.

'Your master is a true Englishman, by the hardness of his blows,' quoth Wemmel, as the stranger, reeling for a moment, lifted up his head, and stared at Hereward in the face, doubtful what to do.

'Will you yield, or fight on?' cried he.

'Yield?' shouted Hereward, rushing upon him, as a mastiff might on a lion, and striking at his helm, though shorter than him by a head and shoulders, such swift and terrible blows with the broken hilt, as staggered the tall stranger.

'What are you at, forgetting what you have at your side?' roared Gery.

Hereward sprang back. He had, as was his custom, a second sword on his right thigh.

'I forgot everything now,' said he to himself angrily.

And that was too true. But he drew the second sword, and sprang at his man once more.

The stranger tried, according to the chronicles, who probably had it from one of the three bystanders, a blow which has cost many a brave man his life. He struck right down on Hereward's head. Hereward raised his shield, warding the stroke, and threw in that *coup de jaree*, which there is no guarding, after the downright blow has been given. The stranger chattered upon his wounded knee.

'Yield,' cried Hereward in his turn.

'That is not my fashion.' And the stranger fought on upon his stump, like Witherington in *Cherry Chase*.

Hereward, mad with the sight of blood, struck at him four or five times. The stranger's guard was so quick that he could not hit him, even on his knee. He held his hand, and drew back, looking at his new rival.

'What the murrain are we two fighting about?' said he, at last.

'I know not, neither care,' said the other, with a grim chuckle. 'But if any man will fight me, him? I fight, ever since I had beard to my chin.'

'Thou art the best man that ever I faced.'

'That is like enough.'

'What wilt thou take, if I give thee thy life?' 'My way on which I was going. For I turn back for no man alive on land.'

'Then thou hast not had enough of me?'

'Not by another hour.'

'Thou must be born of fiend, and not of man.' 'Very like. It is a wise son knows his own father.'

Hereward burst out laughing.

'Would to heaven I had had thee for my man this three years since.'

'Perhaps I would not have been thy man.'

'Why not?'

'Because I have been my own man ever since I was born, and am well content with myself for my master.'

'Shall I bind up thy leg?' asked Hereward, having no more to say, and not wishing to kill the man.

'No. It will grow again, like a crab's claw.'

'Thou art a fiend.' And Hereward turned away, sulky and half afraid.

'Very like. No man knows what a devil he is till he tries.'

'What dost mean?' and Hereward turned angrily back.

'Friends we are all, till God's grace comes.'

'Little grace has come to thee yet, by thy ungracious tongue.'

'Rough to men may be gracious to women.'

'What hast thou to do with women?' asked Hereward fiercely.

'I have a wife, and I love her.'

'Thou art not like to get back to her to-day.'

'I fear not, with this paltry scratch. I had looked for a cut from that would have saved me all fighting henceforth.'

'What dost mean?' asked Hereward with an oath.

'That my wife is in heaven, and I would needs follow her.'

Hereward got on his horse, and rode away. Never could he find out who that Su Letwold was, or how he came into the Bruneswale. All he knew was, that he never had had such a fight since he wore beard, and that he had lost sword Braumbiter, from which his evil conscience augured that his luck had turned, and that he should lose many things beside.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

HOW HERWARD CAME IN TO THE KING

AFTER these things Hereward summoned all his men, and set before them the hopelessness of any further resistance, and the promises of amnesty, lands, and honours which William had offered him, and persuaded them—and indeed he had good arguments enough and to spare—that they should go and make their peace with the king.

They were so accustomed to look up to his determination, that when it gave way theirs gave way likewise. They were so accustomed to trust his wisdom, that most of them yielded at once to his arguments. That the band should break up, all agreed. A few of the more suspicious, or more desperate, said that they could never trust the Frenchman, that Hereward himself had warned them again and again of his treachery; that he was now going to do himself what he had laughed at Gospatric and the rest for doing, what had brought ruin on Edwin and Morcar, what he had again and again prophesied would bring ruin on Walthoof himself ere all was over.

But Hereward was deaf to their arguments. He had said as little to them as he could about Alfrida, for very shame, but he was utterly besotted on her. For her sake, he had determined to run his head blindly into the very snare of which he had warned others. And he had seared—so he fancied—his conscience. It was Torfrida's fault now, not his. If she left him—if she herself freed him of her own will—why, he was free, and there was no more to be said about it.

And Hereward (says the chronicler) took Gwenoel, Gery, and Matelgar, and rode south to the king.

Where were the two young Swards? It is not said. Probably they, and a few desperadoes, followed the fashion of so many English in those sad days—when, as sings the Norse scald,

'Cold heart and bloody hand
Now rule English land,'

and took ship for Constantinople, and enlisted in the Varangian Guard, and died full of years and honour, leaving fair-haired children behind them, to become Varangers in their turn.

Be that as it may, Hereward rode south. But when he had gotten a long way upon the road, a fancy (says the chronicler) came over him. He was not going in pomp and glory enough. It seemed mean for the once great Hereward to sneak into Winchester with three knights. Perhaps it seemed not over safe for the once great Hereward to travel with only three knights. So he went back all the way to camp, and took (says the chronicler) 'forty most famous knights, all big and tall of stature, and splendid—if from nothing else, from their looks and their harness alone.'

So Hereward and those forty knights rode down from Peterborough, along the Roman road. For the Roman roads were then, and for centuries after, the only roads in this land, and our forefathers looked on them as the work of gods and giants, and called them after the names of their old gods and heroes—Irmen Street, Watling Street, and so forth.

And then, like true Englishmen, our own forefathers showed their respect for the said divine works, not by copying them, but by picking them to pieces to pave every man his own courtyard. Be it so. The neglect of new

roads, the destruction of the old ones, was a natural evil consequence of local self-government. A cheap price perhaps, after all, to pay for that power of local self-government which has kept England free unto this day.

Be that as it may, down the Roman road Hereward went; past Alconbury Hill, of the old posting days; past Hatfield, then deep forest, and so to St. Albans, then deep forest likewise. And there they lodged in the minster, for the monks thereof were good English, and sang masses daily for King Harold's soul. And the next day they went south, by ways which are not so clear.

Just outside St. Albans—Verulamium of the Romans (the ruins whereof were believed to be full of ghosts, demons, and magic treasures)—they turned at St. Stephen's to the left, off the Roman road to London, and by another Roman road struck into the vast forest which ringed London round from north-east to south-west. Following the upper waters of the Colne, which ran through the woods on their left, they came to Watford, and then turned probably to Rickmansworth. No longer on the Roman paved ways, they followed horse-tracks, between the forest and the rich marsh-meadows of the Colne, as far as Denham, and then struck into a Roman road again at the north end of Langley Park. From thence over heathy commons—for that western part of Buckinghamshire, its soil being light and some gravel, was little cultivated then, and hardly all cultivated now—they held on straight by Langley town into the Vale of Thames.

Little they dreamed, as they rode down by Ditton Green, off the heathy commons, past the poor-scattered farms, on to the vast rushy meadows, while upon them was the dull weight of disappointment, shame, all but despair, their race enslaved, their country a prey to strangers, and all its future, like their own, a lurid blank—little they dreamed of what that vale would be within eight hundred years—the eye of England, and it may be of the world, a spot which owns more wealth and peace, more art and civilisation, more beauty and more virtue, it may be, than any of the God's-gardens which make fair this earth. Windsor, on its crowned steep, was to them but a new hunting-palace of the old miracle-monger Edward, who had just ruined England. Bunnymede, a mile below them down the broad stream, was but a horse-fen fringed with water-lilies, where the men of Wessex had met of old to counsel, and to bring the country to this pass. And as they crossed, by ford or ferry-boat, the shallows of old Windsor, whither they had been tending all along, and struck into the moorlands of Wessex itself, they were as men going into an unknown wilderness, behind them ruin, and before them unknown danger.

On through Windsor Forest, Edward the Saint's old hunting-ground, its bottoms choked with beech and oak, and birch and alder scrub; its upper lands vast flats of level heath; along

the great trackway which runs along the lower side of Chobham Camp, some quarter of a mile broad, every rut and trackway as fresh at this day as when the ancient Briton, finding that his neighbour's cessum—chariot, or rather cart—had worn the ruts too deep, struck out a fresh wandering line for himself across the dreary heath.

Over the Blackwater by Sandhurst, and along the flats of Hartford Bridge, where the old furze-grown ruts show the trackway to this day down into the clayland forests of the Andredswald, and up out of them again at Basing, on to the clean crisp chalk turf, to strike at Popham Lane the Roman road from Silchester, and hold it over the high downs, till they saw far below them the royal city of Winchester.

It then, silver as they looked on her from above, but when they came down to her, so clear that none could see where water ended and where air began, hurried through the city in many a stream. Beyond it rose the 'White Camp,' the 'Venta Belgarum,' the circular earthwork of white chalk on the high down. Within the city rose the ancient minster church, built by Ethelwold—ancient even then—where slept the ancient kings, Kennulf, Eglbert, and Ethelwulf, the Saxons, and by them the Danes, Canute the Great, and Hardecanute, his son, and Norman Emma, his wife, and Ethelred's before him, and the great Earl Godwin, who seemed to Hereward to have died, not twenty, but two hundred years ago,—and it may be an old Saxon hall upon the littleisle whither Edgar had hidden bring the heads of all the wolves in Wessex, where afterwards the bishops built Wolvesey Palace. But nearer to them, on the down which sloped up to the west, stood an uglier thing, which they saw with curses deep and loud,—the keep of the new Norman castle by the west gate.

Hereward halted his knights upon the down outside the northern gate. Then he rode forward himself. The gate was open wide, but he did not care to go in.

So he rode into the gateway, and smote upon that gate with his lance-butt. But the porter saw the knights upon the down, and was afraid to come out; for he feared treason.

Then Hereward smote a second time—but the porter did not come out.

Then he took the lance by the shaft, and smote a third time. And he smote so hard, that the lance-butt flew to splinters against Winchester Gate.

And at that started out two knights, who had come down from the castle, seeing the men on the down; and asked.

'Who art thou, who knockest here so bold?'

'Who I am, any man can see by those splinters, if he knows what men are left in England this day.'

The knights looked at the broken wood, and then at each other. Who could the man be, who could beat an ash stave to splinters at a single blow?

'You are young, and do not know me, and no shame to you. Go and tell William the king that Hereward is come to put his hands between the king's, and be the king's man henceforth.'

'You are Hereward?' asked one, half awed, half disbelieving, at Hereward's short stature.

'You are—I know not who. Pick up those splinters, and take them to King William, and say, "The man who broke that lance against the gate is here to make his peace with thee," and he will know who I am.'

And so cowed were these two knights with Hereward's royal voice, and royal eye, and royal strength, that they went simply, and did what he bade them.

And when King William saw the splinters, he was as joyful as man could be, and said.

'Send him to me, and tell him, Bright shines the sun to me that lights Hereward into Winchester.'

'But, lord king, he has with him a meinie of full forty knights.'

'So much the better. I shall have the more valiant Englishmen to help my valiant French.'

So Hereward rode round, outside the walls, to William's new entrenched palace outside the west gate, by the castle.

And then Hereward went in, and knelt before the Norman, and put his hands between William's hands, and swore to be his man.

'I have kept my word,' said he, 'which I sent to thee at Rouen seven years ago. Thou art king of all England, and I am the last man to say so.'

'And since thou hast said it, I am king indeed. Come with me, and dine, and to-morrow I will see thy knights.'

And William walked out of the hall leaning on Hereward's shoulder, at which all the Normans gnashed their teeth with envy.

'And for my knights, lord king? Thine and mine will mix, for a while yet, like oil and water, and I fear lest there be murder done between them.'

'Likely enough.'

So the knights were bestowed in a 'vill' near by, and the next day the venerable king himself went forth to see those knights, and caused them to stand, and march before him, both with arms and without. With whom being much delighted, he praised them, congratulating them on their beauty and stature, and saying that they must all be knights of fame in war. After which Hereward sent them all home except two, and waited till he should marry Alfrida, and get back his heritage.

'And when that happens,' said William, 'why should we not have two weddings, beannare, as well as one? I hear that you have in Crowland a fair daughter, and marriageable.'

Hereward bowed.

'And I have found a husband for her suitable to her years, and who may conduce to your peace and serenity.'

Hereward bit his lip. To refuse was impossible in those days. But—

'I trust that your grace has found a knight of higher lineage than him whom, after so many honours, you honoured with the hand of my niece.'

William laughed. It was not his interest to quarrel with Hereward. 'Alas! Ivo, the woodcutter's son. I ask your pardon for that, Sir Hereward. Had you been my man then, as you are now, it might have been different.'

'If a kinsman ask my pardon, I can only ask him in return.'

'You must be friends with Taillebois. He is a brave knight, and a wise warrior.'

'None ever doubted that.'

'And to cover my little blot in his sentence, I have made him an earl, as I may make you some day.'

'Your majesty, like a true king, knows how to reward. Who is this knight whom you have chosen for my lady?'

'Sir Hugh of Everme, a neighbour of yours, and a man of blood and breeding.'

'I know him, and his lineage, and it is very well. I humbly thank your majesty.'

'Can I be the same man?' said Hereward to himself bitterly.

And he was not the same man. He was loosened on Altruda, and haunted himself accordingly.

CHAPTER XXXIX

HOW TORFRIDA CONFESSED THAT SHE HAD
BEEN INSPIRED BY THE DEVIL

AFTER a few days, there came down a priest to Crowland from Winchester, and talked with Torfrida.

And she answered him, the priest said, so wisely and well, that he never had met with a woman of so clear a brain, or of so stout a heart.

At last, being puzzled to get that which he wanted, he touched on the matter of her marriage with Hereward.

She wished it, he said, dissolved. She wished herself to enter religion.

The Church would be most happy to sanction so fully a desire, but there were objections. She was a married woman, and her husband had not given his consent.

'Let him give it, then.'

There were still objections. He had nothing to bring against her which could justify the dissolution of the holy bond—unless—

'Unless I bring some myself!'

'There have been rumours—I say not how true—of magic and sorcery—'

Torfrida leapt up from her seat, and laughed such a laugh, that the priest said in after years, it rang through his head as if it had aken out of the pit of the loat.

'So that is what you want, churchman? Then you shall have it. Bring me pen and ink. I

need not to confess to you. You shall read my confession when it is done. I am a better scribe, mind you, than any clerk between here and Paris.'

She seized the pen and ink, and wrote; not fiercely, as the priest expected, but slowly and carefully. Then she gave it to the priest to read.

'Will that do, churchman? Will that free my soul, and that of your French archbishop?'

And the priest read to himself.

How Torfrida of St. Omer, born at Arles, in Provence, confessed that from her youth up she had been given to the practice of diabolic arts, and had at diverse times and places used the same, both alone and with Richilda, late Countess of Harcourt. How, wickedly, wantonly, and instinct with a malignant spirit, she had compassed, by charms and spells, to win the love of Hereward. How she had ever since kept in bondage him, and others whom she had not loved with the same carnal love, but only desired to make them useful to her own desire of power and glory, by the same magical arts, for which she now humbly begged pardon of Holy Church, and of all Christian folk, and penetrated with compunction, desired only that she might retire into the convent of Crowland. She assented the marriage which she had so unlawfully compassed to be null and void, and prayed to be released therefrom, as a burden to her conscience and soul, that she might spend the rest of her life in penitence for her many enormous sins. She submitted herself to the judgment of Holy Church, only begging that this her free confession might be counted in her favour, and that she might not be put to death, as she deserved, nor remained perpetually, because her mother-in-law, according to the flesh, the Countess Godiva, being old and infirm, had daily need of her, and she wished to serve her mentally as long as she lived. After which, she put herself utterly upon the judgment of the Church. And meanwhile she desired and prayed that she might be allowed to remain in perpetual imprisonment (whereby her marriage could be canonically dissolved) in the said monastery of Crowland, not leaving the precincts thereof without special leave given by the abbot and priores in one case between her and them reserved, to wear garments of hair-cloth to fast all the year on bread and water, and to be disciplined with rods or otherwise, at such times as the priores should command, and to such degree as her body, softened with carnal luxury, could reasonably endure. And beyond—that, being dead to the world, God might have mercy on her soul.

And she meant what she said. The madness of remorse and disappointment, so common in the wild middle age, had come over her, and with it the twin madness of self-torture.

The priest read, and trembled; not for Torfrida, but for himself, lest she should enchant him after all.

'She must have been an awful sinner,' said

he to the monks when he got safe out of the room, 'comparable only to the witch of Endor, or the woman Jezebel, of whom St. John writes in the Revelations.'

'I do not know how you Frenchmen measure folks, when you see them but to our mind she is—for goodness, humility, and patience, comparable only to an angel of God,' said Abbot Ulfsketyl.

'You Englishmen will have to change your minds on many points, if you mean to stay here.'

'We shall not change them, and we shall stay here,' quoth the abbot.

'How! You will not get Sweyn and his Dances to help you a second time.'

'No, we shall all die, and give you your wills, and you will not have the heart to cast our bones into the fens!'

'Not unless you intend to work miracles, and set up for saints, like your Alphego and Edmund.'

'Heaven forbid that we should compare ourselves with them! Only let us alone till we die.'

'If you let us alone, and do not turn traitor meanwhile.'

Abbot Ulfsketyl hit his lip, and kept down the rising feud.

'And now, said the priest, 'deliver me over Torfrida the younger, daughter of Hroeward and this woman, that I may take her to the king, who has found a fit husband for her.'

'You will hardly get her.'

'Not get her?'

'Not without her mother's consent. The lass cares for nought but her.'

'Push that sorceress! Send for the girl.'

Abbot Ulfsketyl, forced in his own abbey, great and august lord though he was, to obey any upstart of a Norman priest who came backed by the king and Lanthan, sent for the lass.

The young outlaw came in—hawk on fist, and its hood off, for it was a jet short, sturdy, upright, brown-haired, blue-eyed, ill-dressed, with hard hands and sunburnt face, but with the hawk-eyo of her father and her mother, and the hawks among which she was bred. She looked the priest over from head to foot, till he was abashed.

'A Frenchman!' said she, and she said no more.

The priest looked at her eyes, and then at the hawk's eyes. They were disagreeably like each other. He told his errand as courteously as he could, for he was not a bad-hearted man for a Norman priest.

The lass laughed him to scorn. The king's commands! She never saw a king in the greenwood, and cared for none. There was no king in England now, since Sweyn Ulfsen sailed back to Denmark. Who was this French William, to sell a free English lass like a colt or a cow? The priest might go back to the slaves of Wessex, and command them if he could but in the fens men were free, and lasses too.

The priest was piously shocked and indignant, and began to argue.

She played with her hawk instead of listening, and then was marching out of the room.

'Your mother,' said he, 'is a sorceress.'

'You are a knave, or set on by knaves. You lie, and you know you lie.' And she turned away again.

'She has confessed it.'

'You have driven her mad between you, till she will confess anything. I presume you threatened to burn her, as some of you did a while back.' And the young lady made use of words equally strong and true.

The priest was not accustomed to the direct language of the greenwood, and, indignant on his own account, threatened, and finally offered to use force. Whereon there looked up into his face such a gleam (so he said) as he never had seen or dreamed of, and said:

'If you lay a finger on me, I will bridle you like any dog.' And therewith pulled out a saying-knife, about half as long again as the said priest's hand, being very sharp, so he disposed, down the whole length of one edge, and likewise down his little finger's length of the other.

Not being versed in the terms of English ventry, he asked Abbot Ulfsketyl what brithing of a sliver might mean, and being informed that it was that operation on the carcass of a stag which his countrymen called *renter*, he subsided, and thought it best to go and consult the young lady's mother.

She, to his astonishment, submitted at once and utterly. The king and he whom she had called her husband were very gracious. It was all well. She would have preferred, and the lady Godiva too, after their experience of the world and the flesh, to have devoted her daughter to heaven in the instant there. But she was unworthy. Who was she, to train a bride for him who died on the cross? She accepted this as part of her penance, with thankfulness and humility. She had heard that Su Hugh of Everme was a gentleman of ancient birth and good prowess, and she thanked the king for his choice. Let the priest tell her daughter that she commanded her to go with him to Winchester. She did not wish to see her. She was stained with many crimes, and unworthy to approach a pure martyr. Besides, it would only cause misery and tears. She was trying to die to the world and to the flesh, and she did not wish to reawaken that power within her. Yes. It was very well. Let the lass go with him.

'Thou art indeed a true penitent,' said the priest, his human heart softening him.

'Thou art very much mistaken,' said she, and turned away.

The girl, when she heard her mother's command, wept, shrieked, and went. At least she was going to her father. And from wholesome fear of that same saying-knife, the priest left her in peace all the way to Winchester.

After which, Abbot Ulfsketyl went into his

lodgings, and burst, like a noble old nobleman as he was, into bitter tears of rage and shame.

But Torfrida's eyes were as dry as her own sackcloth.

The priest took the letter back, and showed it—it may be to Archbishop Lanfranc, who was well versed in such matters, having already (as is well known to all the world) arranged King William's uncanonical marriage, by help of Archdeacon Hildebrand, afterwards pope. But what he said, this chronicler would not dare to say. For he was a very wise man, and a very staunch and strong pillar of the holy Roman Church. And doubtless he was man enough not to require that anything should be added to Torfrida's penance, and that would have been enough to prove him a man in those days—at least for a churchman—as it proved Archbishop or Saint Aired to be, a few years after, in the case of the nun of Watton, to be read in Gale's *Scriptores Anglicanæ*. Then he showed the letter to Alfruda.

And she laughed one of her laughs, and said, 'I have her at last!'

Then, as it befell, he was forced to show the letter to Queen Matilda, and she wept over it human tears, such as she, the noble heart, had been forced to weep many a time before, and said, 'The poor soul!—You, Alfruda, woman! does Hereward know of this?'

'No, madam,' said Alfruda, not adding that she had taken good care that he should not know.

'It is the best thing which I have heard of him. I should tell him, were it not that I must not meddle with my lord's plans. God grant him a good delivery, as they say of the poor souls in gaol. Well, madam, you have your will at last. God give you grace thereof, for you have not given him much chance as yet.'

'Your majesty will honour us by coming to the wedding!' asked Alfruda, utterly unabashed.

Matilda the Good looked at her with a face of such calm childlike astonishment, that Alfruda dropped her proud head at last, and slunk out of the presence like a beaten cur.

But William went to the wedding, and swore horrible oaths that they were the handsomest pair he had ever seen. And so Hereward married Alfruda. How Holy Church settled the matter is not said. But that Hereward married Alfruda, under these very circumstances, may be considered a 'historic fact,' being vouched for both by Gaimar and by Richard of Ely. And doubtless Holy Church contrived that it should happen without sin, if it conduced to her own interest.

And little Torfrida—then aged, it seems, some sixteen years—was married to Hugh of Evermuc. She wept and struggled as she was dragged into the church.

'But I do not want to be married. I want to go back to my mother.'

'The diabolic instinct may have descended to

her,' said the priests, 'and attracts her to the sorceress. We had best sprinkle her with holy water.'

So they sprinkled her with holy water, and used exorcisms. Indeed, the case being an important one, and the personages of rank, they brought out from their treasures the apron of a certain virgin saint, and put it round her neck, in hopes of driving out the hereditary fiend.

'If I am led with a halter, I must needs go,' said she, with one of her mother's own flashes of wit, and went. 'But, Lady Alfruda,' whispered she, half-way up the church, 'I never loved him.'

'Behave yourself before the king, or I will whip you till the blood runs.'

And so she would, and no one would have wondered in those days.

'I will murder you, if you do. But I never even saw him.'

'Little fool! And what are you going through, but what I went through before you?'

'You to say that?' gnashed the girl, as another spark of her mother's wit came out. 'And you gaining what—?'

'What I have waited for for fifteen years,' said Alfruda coolly. 'If you have courage and cunning like me, to wait for fifteen years, you too may have your will likewise.'

The pure child shuddered, and was married to Hugh of Evermuc, who was, according to them of Crowland, a good friend to that monastery, and therefore, doubtless, a good man. Once, says wicked report, he offered to strike her, as was the fashion in those chivalrous days. Whereon she turned upon him like a tigress, and bidding him remember that she was the daughter of Hereward and Torfrida, gave him such a beating that he, not wishing to draw sword upon her, surrendered at discretion, and they lived all their lives afterwards as happily as most other married people in those times.

All this, however pleasant to Hereward, was not pleasant to the French courtiers, whereon, after the simple fashion of those times, they looked about for one who would pick a quarrel with Hereward and slay him in fair fight. But an Archibald Bell-the-Cat was not to be found behind every hedge.

Still, he might be provoked to fight. If his foe were slain, so much the worse for both parties. For a duel, especially if a fatal one, within the precincts of the king's court, was a grave offence, punishable, at least in extreme cases, with death.

Now it befell that among them at Winchester was Oger the Breton, he who had held Morcar's lands round Bourne, and who was now in wrath and dread enough at the prospect of having to give them up to Hereward. It was no difficult matter to set the hot-headed Celt on to provoke the equally hot-headed Wake, and accordingly Oger, having been duly plied with wine, was advised to say one afternoon—

'Hereward feeds well at the king's table. French cooking is a pleasant change for an

outlaw, who has fed for many a day on rats and mice and such small deer.'

'A pleasanter change for a starveling Breton, who was often glad enough, ere he came to England, to rob his own ponies of their furze-toppings, and boil them down for want of kale.'

'We use furze-toppings in Brittany to scourge saucy churls withal. Speakest thou thus to me, who have the blood of King Arthur and half his knights in my veins?'

'Then discipline thine own churl's back therewith, for churl thou art, though thou comest of Arthur's blood. Nay, I will not quarrel with thee. I have had too many gnats pestering me in the fens already to care for one more here.'

Wherefrom the Breton judged that Hereward had no lust to fight.

The next day he met Hereward going out to hunt, and was confirmed in his opinion when Hereward lifted his cap to him most courteously, saying that he was not aware before that his neighbour was a gentleman of such high lineage.

'Lineage! Better at least than thine, thou bare-legged Saxon, who has dared to call me base born and starveling! So thou must needs have thy throat cut! I took thee for a wiser man.'

'Many have taken me for that which I am not. If you will harness yourself, I will do the same, and we will ride up to the woods, and settle this matter in peace.'

'Three men on each side to see fair play,' said the Breton.

And up to the woods they rode, and fought long without advantage on either side.

Hereward was not the man which he had been. His nerve was gone, as well as his conscience, and all the dash and fury of his old onslaughts gone therewith.

He grew tired of the fight, not in body, but in mind, and more than once drew back.

'Let us stop this child's play,' said he, according to the chronicler, 'what now have we to fight here all day about nothing?'

Whereat the Breton fancied him already more than half-beaten, and attacked more furiously than ever. He would be the first man on earth who ever had had the better of the great outlaw. He would win himself eternal glory, as the champion of all England.

But he had mistaken his man and his indomitable English pluck. 'It was Hereward's fashion in fight and war,' says the chronicler, 'always to ply the man most at the last.' And so found the Breton, for Hereward suddenly lost patience, and rushing on him with one of his old shouts, hewed at him again and again, as if his arm would never tire.

Oger gave back, would he or not. In a few moments his sword-arm dropped to his side, cut half-through.

'Have you had enough, Sir Tristram the younger?' quoth Hereward, wiping his sword, and walking moodily away.

The fruit of which was this. That within

twenty-four hours Hereward was arrested on a charge of speaking evil of the king, breaking his peace, compassing the death of his faithful lieges, and various other wicked, traitorous, and diabolical acts.

He was to be sent to Bedford Castle, in the custody of Robert Herepol, chatelain of Bedford, a reasonable and courteous man. The king had spared his life, in consideration of his having first submitted himself.

Hereward went like a man stunned, and spoke never a word. Day after day he rode northward, unarmed for the first time for many a year, and for the first time in all his years, with gyves on ankle and on wrist. This was the wages of his sin. This was the faith of Frenchmen. He was not astonished, hardly disappointed. Hatred of William, and worse, hatred of himself, swept all the passions from his soul. Of Alfrida he never thought for a moment. Indeed he never thought steadily of anything, was hardly conscious of anything, till he heard the key turned on him in a room -- not a small or doleful one -- in Bedford keep, and found an iron shackle on his leg, fastened to the stone bench on which he sat.

Robert of Herepol had meant to leave his prisoner loose. But there were those among his French guards who told him, and with truth, that if he did so, no man's life would be safe, that to brain the gaoler with his own keys, and then twist out of his bowels a line wherewith to let himself down from the top of the castle, would be not only easy, but amusing, to the famous 'Wake.'

So Robert consented to fetter him so far, but no farther, and begged his pardon again and again as he did it, pleading the painful necessities of his office.

But Hereward heard him not. He sat in stupefied despair. A great black cloud had covered all heaven and earth, and entered into his brain through every sense, till his mind, as he said afterwards, was like hell with the fire gone out.

A gaoler came in, he knew not how long after, bringing a good meal, and wine. He came cautiously toward the prisoner, and when still beyond the length of his chain, set the food down, and thrust it toward him with a stick, lest Hereward should leap on him and wring his neck.

But Hereward never even saw him or the food. He sat there all day, all night, and nearly all the next day, and hardly moved hand or foot. The gaoler told Sir Robert in the evening that he thought the man was mad, and would die.

So good Sir Robert went up to him, and spoke kindly and hopefully. But all Hereward answered was, that he was very well. That he wanted nothing. That he had always heard well of Sir Robert. That he should like to get a little sleep, but that sleep would not come.

The next day Sir Robert came again early, and found him sitting in the same place.

'He was very well,' he said. 'How could he

be otherwise? He was just where he ought to be. A man could not be better than in his right place.'

Whereon Sir Robert gave him up for mad.

Then he bethought of sending him a harp, knowing the fame of Hereward's music and singing. 'And when he saw the harp,' the quoter said, 'he wept, but bade take the thing away. And so sat still where he was.'

In this state of dull despair, he remained for many weeks. At last he woke up.

There passed through and by Bedford large bodies of troops, going as it were to and from battle. The clank of arms stirred Hereward's heart as of old, and he sent to Sir Robert to ask what was toward.

Sir Robert, 'the venerable man,' came to him joyfully and at once, glad to speak to an illustrious captive, whom he looked on as an injured person, and told him news enough.

Tallebois's warning about Ralph Guader and Waltheof had not been needless. Ralph, as the most influential of the Bretons, was on no good terms with the Normans, save with one, and that one of the most powerful—Fitz-Osbern, Earl of Hereford. His sister Ralph was to have married but William, for reasons unknown, forbade the match. The two great earls celebrated the wedding in spite of William, and asked Waltheof as a guest. And at Exning, between the ten and Newmarket Heath—

'Was that bride ale
Which was men's bair.'

For there was matured the plot which Ivo and others had long seen brewing. William (they said) had made himself hateful to all men by his cruelties and tyranny, and, indeed, his government was growing more unrighteous day by day. Let them drive him out of England, and put the land between them. Two should be dukes, the third king paramount.

'Waltheof, I presume,' quoth Hereward, 'plotted drunk, and repented sober, when too late. The wittol! He should have been a monk.'

'Repented he has, if ever he was guilty. For he fled to Archbishop Lanfranc, and confessed to him so much, that Lanfranc desires him innocent, and has sent him on to William in Normandy.'

'O kind priest! true priest! To send his sheep into the wolf's mouth.'

'You forget, dear sir, that William is our king.'

'I can hardly forget that, with this pretty ring upon my ankle. But after my experience of how he has kept faith with me, what can I expect for Waltheof, the wittol, save that which I have foretold many a time?'

'As for you, dear sire, the king has been misinformed concerning you. I have sent messengers to reason with him again and again, but as long as Taillebois, Warrene, and Robert Malet had his ear, of what use were my poor words?'

'And what said they?'

'That there would be no peace in England if you were loose.'

'They lied. I am no boy, like Waltheof. I know when the game is played out. And it is played out now. The Frenchman is master, and I know it well. Were I loose to-morrow, and as great a fool as Waltheof, what could I do with, it may be, some forty knights, and a hundred men-at-arms, against all William's armies? But how go on this fools' rebellion? If I had been loose, I might have helped to crush it in the bud.'

'And you would have done that against Waltheof?'

'Why not against him? He is but bringing more misery on England. Tell that to William. Tell him that if he sets me free, I will be the first to attack Waltheof, or whom he will. There are no English left to fight against,' said he bitterly, 'for Waltheof is none now.'

'He shall know your words when he returns to England.'

'What, is he abroad, and all this evil going on?'

'In Normandy. But the English have risen for the king in Herefordshire, and beate Earl Roger, and Odo of Bayeux and Bishop Mowbray are on their way to Cambridge, where they hope to give a good account of Earl Ralph, and hope, too, that the English may help them there.'

'And they shall! They hate Ralph Guader as much as I do. Can you send a message for me?'

'Whither?'

'To Rouen in the Brunswald, and say to Hereward's men, wherever they are, let them rise and arm, if they love Hereward, and go down to Cambridge, to be the foremost at Bishop Odo's side against Ralph Guader, or Waltheof himself. Send! send! Oh that I were free!'

'Would to heaven thou wert free, my gallant son!' said the good man.

From that day Hereward woke up somewhat. He was still a broken man, querulous, peevish, but the hope of freedom and the hope of battle stirred him. If he could but get to his men! But his melancholy returned. His men—some of them at least—went down to Odo at Cambridge, and did good service. Guader was utterly routed, and escaped to Norwich, and thence to Brittany, his home. The lords punished their prisoners, the rebel French, with horrible mutilations.

'The wolves are beginning to eat each other,' said Hereward to himself. But it was a sickening thought to him, that his men had been fighting and he not at their head.

After a while there came to Bedford Castle two witty knaves. One was a cook, who 'canno to buy milk,' says the chirqueler, the other seemingly a gleeman. They told stories, jested, harped, sang, drank, and pleased much the garrison and Sir Robert, who let them hang about the place.

They asked next, whether it were true that

the famous Wake was there? If so, might a man have a look at him?

The gaoler said that many men might have gone to see him, so easy was Sir Robert to him. But he would have no man, and none dare enter save Sir Robert and he, for fear of their lives. But he would ask him of Hereward.

The good knight of Herepol said, 'Let the rogues go in, they may amuse the poor soul.'

So they went in, and as soon as they went, he knew them. One was Martin Lightfoot, the other, Leofric his mass-priest.

'Who sent you?' asked he surily, turning his face away.

'She.'

'Who?'

'We know but one she, and she is at Crow-bind.'

'She sent you? and wherefore?'

'That we might sing to you, and make you merry.'

Hereward answered them with a terrible word, and turned his face to the wall, groaning, and then bade them sternly to go.

So they went for the time.

The gaoler told this to Sir Robert, who understood all, being a kind-hearted man.

'From his poor first wife, eh? Well, there can be no harm in that. Nor if they came from this Lady Alfrida either, for that matter, let them go in and out when they will.'

'But they may be spies and traitors.'

'Then we can but hang them.'

Robert of Herepol, it would appear from the chronicle, did not much care whether they were spies or not.

So the men went to and fro, and often sat with Hereward. But he forbade them sternly to mention Tofrida's name.

Alfrida, meanwhile, returned to Bourne, and took possession of her new husband's house and lands. She sent him again and again messengers of passionate love and sorrow, but he listened to them as sullenly as he did to his two servants, and sent no answer back. And so he sat more weary months, in the very prison, it may be in the very room, in which John Bunyan sat eight hundred years after—but in a very different frame of mind.

One day Sir Robert was going up the stairs with another knight, and met the two coming down. He was talking to that knight earnestly, indignantly, and somehow, as he passed Leofric and Martin he thought fit to raise his voice, as if in a great wrath.

'Shame to all honour and chivalry! Good saints in heaven, what a thing is human fortune! That this man, who had once a gallant army at his back, should be at this moment going like a sheep to the slaughter, to Buckingham Castle, at the mercy of his worst enemy—of Ivo Taille-bow, of all men in the world! If there were a dozen knights left of all those whom he used to heap with wealth and honour, worthy the name of knights, they would catch us between here and Stratford, and make a free man of their lord.'

So spake—or words to that effect, according to the Latin chronicler, who must have got them from Leofric himself—the good knight of Herepol.

'Hillo, knaves!' said he, seeing the two, 'are you here cavedropping? Out of the castle this instant, on your lives.'

Which hint those two witty knaves took on the spot.

A few days after, Hereward was travelling toward Buckingham, chained upon a horse, with Sir Robert and his men, and a goodly company of knights belonging to Ivo. Ivo, as the story runs, seems to have arranged with Ralph Pagnel at Buckingham to put him into the keeping of a creature of his own. And how easy it was to put out a man's eyes, or starve him to death, in a French keep, none knew better than Hereward.

But he was past fear or sorrow. A dull heavy cloud of despair had settled down upon his soul. Black with sin, his heart could not pray. He had hardened himself against all heaven and earth, and thought, when he thought at all, only of his wrongs—but never of his sins.

CHAPTER XL

HOW EARL WALTHEOF WAS MADE A SAINT

A DAY or two after, there sat in Abbot Thorold's lodgings in Peterborough a select company of Frenchmen, talking over affairs of state after their supper.

'Well, lords and knights,' said the abbot, as he sipped his wine, 'the cause of our good king, which is happily the cause of Holy Church, goes well, I think. We have much to be thankful for when we review the events of the past year. We have finished the rebels, Roger de Bretonvil is safe in prison, Ralph Guadin unsafe in Brittany, and Waltheof more than unsafe in—the place to which traitors descend. We have not a man left which is not in loyal hands, we have not a single English monk left who has not been surgical and starved into holy obedience, not an English saint for whom any man cares a jot, since Guerin de Laro preached down St. Adhelm, the admirable inmate disposed of St. Alphego's martyrdom, and some other wise man—I am ashamed to say that I forget who—proval that St. Edmund of Sutholk was merely a barbarian knight, who was killed fighting with Danes only a little more heathen than himself. We have had great labours and great sufferings since we landed in this barbarous isle upon our holy errand ten years since, but, under the shadow of the Gumbles of St. Peter, we have conquered, and may sing, "Dominus Illuminatio mea," with humble and thankful hearts.'

'I don't know that,' said Ascelin, 'my lord uncle, I shall never sing "Dominus Illuminatio mea," till I see your cellars illuminated once more by those thirty thousand marks.'

'Or I,' said Ivo Taillebois, 'till I see Hereward's head on Bourne gable, where he stuck up those Frenchmen's heads seven years ago, as his will be, within a week after he gets to Buckingham Castle—where he should be by now. But what the lord abbot means by saying that we have done with English saints I do not see, for the rogues of Crowland have just made a new one for themselves.'

'A new one!'

'I tell you truth and fact, I will tell you all, lord abbot, and you shall judge whether it is not enough to drive an honest man mad to see such things going on under his nose. Men say of me that I am rough, and swear, and blaspheme. I put it to you, lord abbot, if Job would not have cursed if he had been lord of Spalding. You know that the king let these Crowland monks have Waltheof's body!'

'Yes, I thought it an unwise act of grace it would have been wiser to leave him, as he intended, out on the bare down, in ground unconsecrated, but what has happened?'

'That old traitor, Ulfketyl, and his monks, bring the body to Crowland, and bury it as if it had been the Pope's. In a week they begin to spread their lies—that Waltheof was innocent, that Archbishop Lanfranc himself said so.'

'That was the only act of human weakness which I have ever known the venerable prelate commit,' said Thorold.

'That the hurglers at Winchester were so deep in the traitor's favour, that the king had to have him out and cut off his head in the gray of the morning, ere folks were up and about, that the fellow was so holy that he passed all his time in prison in weeping and praying, and said over the whole psalter every day, because his mother had taught it him—I wish she had taught him to be an honest man—and that when his head was on the block he said all the paternoster, as far as "Lead us not into temptation," and then off went his head, whereon, his head being off, he finished the prayer with—you know best what comes next, abbot!'

'"Deliver us from evil, Amen!" What a manifest lie! The traitor was not permitted, it is plain, to ask for that which could never be granted to him but his soul, unworthy to be delivered from evil, entered instead into evil, and howls for ever in the pit.'

'But all the rest may be true,' said one, 'and yet that be no reason why these monks should say it.'

'So I told them,' quoth Taillebois, 'and threatened them too, for, not content with making him a martyr, they are making him a saint.'

'Impious! Who can do that, save the Holy Father!' said Thorold.

'You had best get your bishop to look to them, then; for they are carrying blind beggars and mad girls by the dozen to be cured at the man's tomb, that is all. Their fellows in the cell at Spalding went about to take a girl that

had fits off one of my manors, to cure her, but that I stopped with a good horse-whip.'

'And rightly.'

'And gave the monks a piece of my mind; and drove them clean out of their cell home to Crowland.'

What a piece of Ivo's mind on this occasion might be, let Ingulf describe—

Against our monastery and all the people of Crowland he was, by the instigation of the devil, raised to such an extreme pitch of fury that he would follow their animals in the marshes with his dogs, drive them to a great distance down in the lakes, mutilate some in the tails, others in the ears, while often, by breaking the backs and legs of the beasts of burden, he rendered them utterly useless. Against our cell also (at Spalding) and our brethren, his neighbours, the prior and monks, who dwelt all day within his presence, he raged with tyrannical and frantic fury, lamed their oxen and horses, daily impounded their sheep and poultry, striking down, killing, and slaying their swine and pigs, while at the same time the servants of the prior were oppressed in the earl's court with insupportable exactions, were often assaulted in the highways with swords and staves, and sometimes killed.'

At this moment there was a bustle outside. The door which led from the hall was thrown open, and then rushed in, muddied and gory, Oger the Breton.

'Have a care for yourselves, lordings! The Wake is loose!'

If the earth had opened between them, the party could not have started more suddenly on their feet.

When their curses had lulled somewhat, Oger told his story between great gulps of wine, for he was nigh dead with hard riding.

'We were in a forest midway between Bedford and Buckingham, when the rascals dashed out on us—Gwenoch and Winter, and the rest, with that Ramsey monk and the Wake banners—I know not how many there were. We had no time to form or even arm. Our helmets were hanging at our saddle-bows—it was all over in a minute.'

'Cleverly done!' shouted Ivo, in spite of his curses, for he honestly loved deeds of arms, for him or against him. 'One Wake makes many.'

'And that old traitor of Herepold refused to fight. We were past his jurisdiction, he said. Your men, Lord Ivo, and Sir Ralph's must guard the prisoner, if they would.'

'He has been in league with The Wake all through.'

'That has he. For when The Wake was freed and armed, and hewing away like a devilish dwarf as he is, he always bade spare Sir Robert, crying that he was his friend and his saviour, and ere they parted the two villains shook hands lovingly, saying aloud how Sir Robert should ride post to the king, and give him a good report of Hereward.'

The comments which followed this statement

had best be omitted, as they consisted wholly of French oaths.

'And how earnest thou alive hither, of all men?' asked the abbot at last.

'How? I was smitten down at once, having no sword arm as you know. But The Wake, when he saw me down, bade spare me. He would not slay me, lest the king should say he did it for the sake of my lady. I should ride to you here at Peterborough, and carry this message to you all, that whoso wanted his head cut off, should come to him at Bourne.'

'He has promised to cut my head off long ago,' said Ascelin. 'Earl, knights, and gentlemen, do you not think it wiser that we should lay our wife together once and for all, and cut off him?'

'But who will catch The Wake sleeping?' said Ivo, laughing.

'That will I. I have my plans, and my intelligencers.'

'You your intelligencers?'

'Nobles, there is nought suits so much my olivaceous humour as the consoling of distressed ladies. I may have visited the fair Alfrida at Bourne, I may have reminded her of certain old pleasant passages between her and me.'

'Which may end in thy going over thy horse's crump, nephew, as thou dost about another dame of Hereward's.'

'Uncle! What would a sinner of doughty deeds, and a deer thereof beside, like you, have me do especially when we both have thirty thousand marks to avenge—save dare again—perhaps to win? No, no. I lost that Torrida but I am grown cunninger now, and Alfrida is an easier game to fly at. I may have said to her, for instance, that she had better have chosen me, and been answered by gentle wailings about who should protect her in her loneliness. I may have offered to do so myself, and been shrucked at with "Out, traitor! wretch!" and yet have visited Bourne again—in all honesty, mind you, my lords. And I may have talked with a pretty bowen-maiden, and have said that though Abbot Thorold be poor, yet he has a ring or two left, or an owl, or suchlike, which might be earned by service due. And so forth. Wait for me, my good lords all, and I will not keep you waiting long.'

And so those wicked men took counsel together to slay Hereward.

CHAPTER VII

HOW HERWARD BEGAN TO GET HIS SON'S PRICE

AND now behold Hereward at home again, fat with the wages of sin, and not knowing that they are death.

He is once more 'Dominus de Brunne cum Marisco,' lord of Bourne with the fen, 'with all returns and liberties and all other things

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adjacent to the same vill, which are now held as a barony from the lord king of England.' He has a fair young wife, and with her farms and manors even richer than his own. He is still young, hearty, wise by experience, high in the king's favour, and deservedly so.

Why should he not begin life again?

Why not? Unless it be true that the wages of sin are, not a new life, but death.

And yet he had his troubles. Hardly a French knight or baron round but had a blood-feud against him, for a kinsman slain. Of the Breton was not likely to forgive his wounded arm. Sir Aswain, Thorold the abbot's man, was not likely to forgive him for turning him out of the three Manthorpe manors, which he had comfortably held for two years past, and sending him back to lounge in the abbot's hall at Peterborough, without a yard of land which he could call his own. Sir Ascelin was not likely to forgive him for marrying Alfrida, whom he had intended to marry himself. Ivo Taillebois was not likely to forgive him for existing within a hundred miles of Spalding, any more than the wolf would forgive the lamb for fouling the water below him. Beside, had not he (Ivo) married Hereward's niece? And what more grievous offence could Hereward commit, than to be her uncle, reminding Ivo of his own low birth by his nobility, and too likely to take Lucia's part, whenever it should please Ivo to beat or kick her? Only Gillairet of Ghent, 'the pious and illustrious earl,' sent messages of congratulation and friendship to Hereward, it being his custom to sail with the wind, and worship the rising sun—till it should decline again.

But more, hardly one of the Frenchmen round him, in the conceit of their skin-deep yesterday's civilisation, looked on Hereward as a barbarian Englishman, who had his throat tattooed, and wore a short coat, and preferred—the churl—to talk English in his own hall, though he could talk as good French as they when he was with them, beside three or four barbarian tongues if he had need.

But more still—if they were not likely to bestow their love on Hereward, Hereward was not likely to win love from them of his own will. He was peevish and wrathful, often insolent and quarrelsome and small blame to him. The French were invaders and tyrants, who had no business there, and would not have been there if he had had his way. And they and he could no more amalgamate than fire and water. Moreover, he was a very great man, or had been such once, and he thought himself one still. He had been accustomed to command men, whole armies, and he would no more treat these French as his equals than they would treat him as such. His own son-in-law, Hugh of Everme, had to take hard words—thoroughly well-deserved, it may be, but all the more unpleasant for that reason.

The truth was, that Hereward's heart was gnawed with shame and remorse, and therefore

he fancied, and not without reason, that all men pointed at him the finger of scorn.

He had done a bad, base, accursed deed. And he knew it. Once in his life—for his other sins were but the sins of his age—the Father of men seems (if the chroniclers say truth) to have put before this splendid barbarian good and evil, saying, Choose! And he knew that the evil was evil, and chose it nevertheless.

Eight hundred years after, a far greater genius and greater general had the same choice—as far as human cases of conscience can be alike—put before him. And he chose as Hereward chose.

But as with Napoleon and Josephine, so it was with Hereward and Torfrida. Neither thrived after.

It was not punished by miracle. What sin is? It worked out its own punishment, that which it merited, deserved, or earned by its own labour. No man could commit such a sin without shaking his whole character to the root. Hereward tried to persuade himself that his was not shaken, that he was the same Hereward as ever. But he could not deceive himself long. His conscience was evil. He was discontented with all mankind, and with himself most of all. He tried to be good—as good as he chose to be. If he had done wrong in one thing, he might make up for it in others, but he could not. All his higher instincts fell from him one by one. He did not like to think of good and noble things, he dared not think of them. He felt, not at first, but as the months rolled on, that he was a changed man; that God had left him. His old bad habits began to return to him. Gradually he sank back more and more into the very vices from which Torfrida had raised him sixteen years before. He took to drinking again, to quell the malady of thought, he excused himself to himself, he wished to forget his defeats, his disappointment, the ruin of his country, the splendid past which lay behind him like a dream. True, but he wished to forget likewise Torfrida fasting and weeping in Crowland. He could not bear the sight of Crowland Tower on the far green horizon, the sound of Crowland bells booming over the flat on the south wind. He never rode down into the fens, he never went to see his daughter at Deeping, because Crowland lay that way. He went up into the old Brunesswald, hunted all day long through the glades where he and his merry men had done their doughty deeds, and came home in the evening to get drunk.

Then he lost his sleep. He sent down to Crowland to Leofric the priest, that he might come to him, and sing him sagas of the old heroes, that he might get rest. But Leofric sent back for answer that he would not come.

That night Alfrida heard him by her side in the still hours, weeping silently to himself. She caressed him, but he gave no heed to her.

'I believe,' and she bitterly at last, 'that you love Torfrida still better than you do me.'

And Hereward answered, like Mahomet in

like case, 'That do I, by heaven. She believed in me when no one else in the world did.'

And the vain hard Alfrida answered angrily; and there was many a fierce quarrel between them after that.

With his love of drinking, his love of boasting came back. Because he could do no more great deeds—or rather had not the spirit left in him to do more—he must needs, like a worn-out old man, babble of the great deeds which he had done, insult and defy his Norman neighbours, often talk what might be easily caricatured into treason against King William himself.

There were great excuses for his follies, as there are for those of every beaten man; but Hereward was spent. He had lived his life, and had no more life which he could live, for every man, it would seem, brings into the world with him a certain capacity, a certain amount of vital force, in body and in soul, and when that is used up, the man must sink down into some sort of second childhood, and end, like Hereward, very much where he began—unless the grace of God shall lift him up above the capacity of the mere flesh, into a life literally new, ever-renewing, ever-expanding, and eternal.

But the grace of God had gone away from Hereward, as it goes away from all men who are unfaithful to their wives.

It was very pitiable. Let no man judge him late, to most, is very hard work. There are those who endure to the end, and are saved; there are those, again, who do not endure, upon whose souls may God have mercy.

So Hereward soon became as intolerable to his Norman neighbours as they were intolerable to him, and he had, for his own safety, to keep up at Bourne the same watch and ward by day and night as he had kept up in the forest.

In those days a messenger came riding post to Bourne. The Countess Judith wished to visit the tomb of her late husband, Earl Waltheof, and asked hospitality on her road of Hereward and Alfrida.

Of course she would come with a great train, and the trouble and expense would be great. But the hospitality of those days, when money was scarce, and wine scarcer still, was unbounded, and a matter of course, and Alfrida was overjoyed. No doubt Judith was the most unpopular person in England at that moment, called by all a traitress and a fiend. But she was an old acquaintance of Alfrida's, she was the king's niece, she was immensely rich, not only in manors of her own, but in manors, as Domesday-book testifies, about Lincolnshire and the counties round, which had belonged to her murdered husband—which she had too probably received as the price of her treason. So Alfrida looked to her visit as to an honour which would enable her to hold her head high among the proud French dames, who despised her as the wife of an Englishman.

Hereward looked on the visit in a different

light. He called Judith ugly names, not undeserved, and vowed that if she entered his house by the front door he would go out at the back. 'Torfrida prophesied,' he said, 'that she would betray her husband, and she has done it.'

'Torfrida prophesied! Did she prophesy that I should betray you likewise?' asked Alfruda, in a tone of bitter scorn.

'No, you handsome fiend, will you do it!'

'Yes, I am a handsome fiend, am I not?' and she bridled up her magnificent beauty, and stood over him as a snake stands over a mouse.

'Yes, you are handsome—beautiful I adore you.'

'And yet you will not do what I wish!'

'What you wish? What would I not do for you? What have I not done for you?'

'Then receive Judith. And now, go hunting, and bring me in game. I want deer, roe, fowls, anything and everything, from the greatest to the smallest. Go and hunt.'

And Hereward trembled and went.

There are flowers whose scent is so insidious that silly children will plunge their heads among them, drinking in their odour, to the exclusion of all fresh air. On a sudden, sometimes, comes a revulsion of the nerves. The delicious odour changes in a moment to a disgusting one; and the child cannot bear for years after the scent which has once become intolerable by oversweetness. And so had it happened to Hereward. He did not love Alfruda now, he loathed, hated, dreaded her. And yet he could not take his eyes for a moment off her beauty. He watched every movement of her hand, to press it, obey it. He would have preferred instead of hunting simply to sit and watch her go about the house at her work. He was spellbound to a thing which he regarded with horror.

But he was told to go and hunt, and he went, with all his men, and sent home large supplies for the larder. And as he hunted, the fresh air of the forest comforted him; the free forest life came back to him, and he longed to be an outlaw once more, and hunt on for ever. He would not go back yet, at least to face that Judith. So he sent back the greater part of his men with a story. He was ill, he was laid up at a farmhouse far away in the forest, and begged the countess to excuse his absence. He had sent fresh supplies of game, and a goodly company of his men, knights and housecarles, who would escort her royally to Crowland.

Judith cared little for his absence, he was but an English barbarian. Alfruda was half glad to have him out of the way, lest his now sullen and uncertain temper should break out, and bowed herself to the earth before Judith, who patronised her to her heart's content, and offered her shyly insistent condolences on being married to a barbarian. She herself could sympathise—who more?

Alfruda might have answered with scorn that she was a princess, and of better English

blood than Judith's French blood; but she had her ends to gain, and gained them.

For Judith was pleased to be so delighted with her that she kissed her lovingly, and said with much emotion that she required a friend who would support her through her coming trial, and who better than one who herself had suffered so much? Would she accompany her to Crowland?

Alfruda was overjoyed, and away they went.

And to Crowland they came, and to the tomb in the minster, whereof men were saying already that the sacred corpse within worked miracles of healing.

And Judith, habited in widow's weeds, approached the tomb, and laid on it, as a peace-offering to the soul of the dead, a splendid pall of silk and gold.

A fierce blast came howling off the fen, screeched through the minster towers, swept along the dark aisles, and then, so say the chroniclers, caught up the pall from off the tomb, and hurled it far away into a corner.

'A miracle!' cried all the monks at once, and honestly enough, like true Englishmen as they were.

'The holy saint refuses the gift, countess,' said old Ulfketyl, in a voice of awe.

Judith covered her face with her hands, turned away trembling, and walked out, while all looked upon her as a thing accursed.

Of her subsequent life, her folly, her wantonness, her disgrace, her poverty, her wanderings, her wretched death, let others tell.

But these Normans believed that the curse of heaven was upon her from that day. And the best of them believed likewise that Waltheof's murder was the reason that William, her uncle, prospered no more in life.

'Ah, saucy sir,' said Alfruda to Ulfketyl, as she went out. 'There is one waiting at Peterborough now who will teach thee manners, Ingulf of Fontenelle, abbot in thy room.'

'Does Hereward know that?' asked Ulfketyl, looking keenly at her.

'What is that to thee?' said she fiercely, and flung out of the minster. But Hereward did not know. There were many things abroad of which she told him nothing.

They went back, and were landed at Deeping town, and making their way along the King Street to Bourne. Thereon a man met them running. They had best stay where they were. The Frenchmen were out, and there was fighting up in Bourne.

Alfruda's knights wanted to push on, to see after the Bourne folk, Judith's knights wanted to push on to help the French, and the two parties were ready to fight each other. There was a great tumult. The ladies had much ado to still it.

Alfruda said that it might be but a countryman's rumour, that, at least, it was shame to quarrel with their guests. At last it was agreed that two knights should gallop on into Bourne, and bring back news.

But those knights never came back. So the whole body moved on Bourne, and there they found out the news for themselves.

Hereward had gone home as soon as they had departed, and sat down to eat and drink. His manner was sad and strange. He drank much at the mid-day meal, and then lay down to sleep, setting guards as usual.

After a while he leapt up with a shriek and shudder.

They ran to him, asking whether he was ill.

'Ill? No. Yes. Ill at heart. I have had a dream—an ugly dream. I thought that all the men I ever slew on earth came to me with their wounds all gaping, and cried at me, "Our luck then, thy luck now." Chaplain! Is there not a verse somewhere—uncle Brand said it to me on his deathbed—"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed"?''

'Surely the master is fey,' whispered Gwenoeh in fear to the chaplain. 'Answer him out of Scripture.'

'Text? None such that I know of,' quoth priest Ailward, a graceless fellow, who had taken Leofric's place. 'If that were the law, it would be but few honest men that would die in their beds. Let us drink, and drive girls' fancies out of our heads.'

So they drank again, and Hereward fell asleep once more.

'It is thy turn to watch, priest,' said Winter to Ailward. 'So keep the door well, for I am worn out with hunting,' and so fell asleep.

Ailward shuffled into his harness, and went to the door. The wine was heady, the sun was hot. In a few minutes he was asleep likewise.

Hereward slept, who can tell how long? But at last there was a rustle, a heavy fall, and waking with a start, he sprang up. He saw Ailward lying dead across the door, and above him a crowd of fierce faces, some of which he knew too well. He saw Ivo Taillebois, he saw Oger, he saw his fellow-Breton, Sir Raoul de Dol, he saw Sir Ascelin; he saw Sir Aswart, Thorold's man; he saw Sir Hugh of Evermine, his own son-in-law, and with them he saw, or seemed to see, the ogre of Cornwall, and Feargus of Ivark, and Dirk Hammerhand of Waloheren, and many another old foe long underground, and in his ear rang the text—'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' And Hereward knew that his end was come.

There was no time to put on mail or helmet. He saw sword and shield hang on a perch, and tore them down. As he garded the sword on, Winter sprang to his side.

'I have three lances—two for me and one for you, and we can hold the door against twenty.'

'Till they fire the house over our heads. Shall Hereward die like a wolf in a cave? Forward, all The Wake men! A Wake! A Wake!

And he rushed out upon his fate. No man followed him, save Winter. The rest, dispersed, unarmed, were running hither and thither helplessly.

'Brothers in arms! and brothers in Valhalla!' shouted Winter as he rushed after him.

A knight was running to and fro in the court, shouting Hereward's name. 'Where is the villain? Wake! We have caught thee asleep at last.'

'I am out,' quoth Hereward, as the man almost stumbled against him, 'and thou art in.'

And through shield, and hauberk, and body, as says Gaimar, went Hereward's javelin, while all drew back, confounded for the moment at that mighty stroke.

'Felon!' shouted Hereward, 'your king has given me his truce, and do you dare break my house, and kill my folk? Is that your French law? And is this your French honour?—To take a man unawares over his meat? Come on, traitors all, and get what you can of a naked man, you will buy it dear—Guard my back, Winter!'

And he ran right at the press of knights; and the fight began.

'He gored them like a wood wild boar,
As long as that lance might endure.'

says Gaimar

'And when that lance did break in hand,
Full full enough he smote with brand.'

And as he hewed on silently, with grinding teeth, and hard glittering eyes, of whom did he think? Of Alfrida?

Not so. But of that pale ghost, with great black hollow eyes, who sat in Crowland, with thin bare feet, and sackcloth on her tatter-limbs, watching, praying, longing, loving, uncomplaining. That ghost had been for many a month the background of all his thoughts and dreams. It was so clear before his mind's eye now, that, unawares to himself, he shouted 'Tofrida!' as he struck, and struck the harrier at the sound of his old battle-cry.

And now he is all wounded and be-bled, and Winter, who has fought back to back with him, has fallen on his face, and Hereward stands alone, turning from side to side, as he sweeps his sword right and left till the forest rings with the blows, but staggering as he turns. Within a ring of eleven corpses he stands. Who will go in and make the twelfth?

A knight rushes in, to fall headlong down, cleft through the helm: but Hereward's blade snaps short, and he hurls it away as his

1 / a. without armour.

foes rush in with a shout of joy. He tears his shield from his left arm, and with it, says Gaimar, brains two more.

But the end is come. Taillebois and Evermue are behind him now, four lances are through his back, and bear him down upon his knees.

'Cut off his head, Breton!' shouted Ivo. Raoul de Dol rushed forward, sword in hand. At that cry Hereward lifted up his dying head. One stroke more ere it was all done for ever.

And with a shout of 'Torfrida!' which made the Bruneswald ring, he hurled the shield full in the Breton's face, and fell forward dead.

The knights drew their lances from that terrible corpse slowly and with caution, as men who have felled a bear, and yet dare not step within reach of the seemingly lifeless paw.

'The dog died hard,' said Ivo. 'Lucky for us that Sir Ascelin had news of his knights being gone to Crowland. If he had had them to back him, we had not done this deed to-day.'

'I must keep my word with him,' said Ascelin, as he struck off the once fair and golden head.

'Ho, Breton,' cried Ivo, 'the villain is dead. Get up, man, and see for yourself. What ails him?'

But when they lifted up Raoul de Dol his brains were running down his face, and all men stood astonished at that last mighty stroke.

'That blow,' said Ascelin, 'will be sung hereafter by minstrel and maiden as the last blow of the last Englishman. Knights, we have slain a better knight than ourselves. If there had been three more such men in this realm, they would have driven us and King William back again into the sea.'

So said Ascelin, those words of his, too, were sung by many a jongleur, Norman as well as English, in the times that were to come.

'Likely enough,' said Ivo, 'but that is the more reason why we should set that head of his up over the hall-door, as a warning to those English churls that their last man is dead, and their last stake thrown and lost.'

So perished 'The last of the English.'

It was the third day. The French were drinking in the hall of Bourne, advising Ascelin, with coarse jests, to lose no time in espousing the fair Alfrida, who sat weeping within over the headless corpse; when in the afternoon a servant came in, and told them how a barge full of monks had come to the shore, and that they seemed to be monks from Crowland. Ivo Taillebois bade drive them back again into the barge with whips. But Hugh of Evermue spoke up.

'I am lord and master in Bourne this day; and if Ivo have a quarrel against St. Guthlac, I have none. This Ingulf of Fontenelle, the new abbot who has come thither since old Ulfsketil

was sent to prison, is a loyal man, and a friend of King William's, and my friend he shall be till he behaves himself as my foe. Let them come up in peace.'

Taillebois growled and cursed, but the monks came up, and into the hall, and at their head Ingulf himself, to receive whom all men rose, save Taillebois.

'I come,' said Ingulf, in most courtly French, 'noble knights, to ask a boon in the name of the Most Merciful, on behalf of a noble and unhappy lady. Let it be enough to have avenged yourself on the living. Gentlemen and Christians war not against the dead.'

'No, no, master abbot!' shouted Taillebois, 'Waltheof is enough to keep Crowland in miracles for the present. You shall not make a martyr of another Saxon churl. He wants the barbarian's body, knights, and you will be fools if you let him have it.'

'Churl? Barbarian?' said a haughty voice, and a nun stepped forward who had stood just behind Ingulf. She was clothed entirely in black. Her bare feet were bleeding from the stones. Her hand, as she lifted it, was as thin as a skeleton's.

She threw back her veil, and showed to the knights what had been once the famous beauty of Torfrida.

But the beauty was long passed away. Her hair was white as snow, her cheeks were fallen in. Her hawk-like features were all sharp and hard. Only in their hollow sockets burned still the great black eyes, so fiercely that all men turned uneasily from her gaze.

'Churl? Barbarian?' she said slowly and quietly, but with an intensity which was more terrible than rage. 'Who gives such names to one who was as much better born and better bred than they who now sit here, as he was braver and more terrible than they? The base woodcutter's son?—The upstart who would have been honoured had he taken service as your dead man's groom?—'

'Talk to me so, and my stirrup leathers shall make acquaintance with your sides,' said Taillebois.

'Keep them for your wife. Churl? Barbarian? There is not a man within this hall who is not a barbarian compared with him. Which of you touched the harp like him? Which of you, like him, could move all hearts with song? Which of you knows all tongues from Lapland to Provence? Which of you has been the joy of ladies' bowers, the counsellor of earls and heroes, the rival of a mighty king? Which of you will compare yourself with him—whom you dared not even strike, you and your robber crew, fairly in front, but skulked round him till he fell pecked to death by you, as

Lapland Skratlungs peck to death the bear! Ten years ago he swept this hall of such as you, and hung their heads upon yon gable outside, and were he alive but one five minutes, this hall would be right cleanly swept again! Give me his body—or bear for ever the name of cowards, and Torfrida's curse.'

She fixed her terrible eyes first on one, and then on another, calling them by name.

'Ivo Taillebois—basest of all—'

'Take the witch's accursed eyes off me!' and he covered his face with his hands. 'I shall be overlooked—planet-struck. Hew the witch down! Take her away!'

'Hugh of Evermeo—The dead man's daughter is yours, and the dead man's lands. Are not these remembrances enough of him? Are you no fond of his memory that you need his corpse likewise?'

'Give it her! Give it her!' said he, hanging down his head like a ratal car.

'Ascelin of Lincoln, once Ascelin of Ghent—There was a time when you would have done—what would you not?—for one glance of Torfrida's eyes. Stay. Do not deceive yourself, fair sir. Torfrida means to ask no favour of you, or of living man. But she commands you. Do the thing she bids, or with one glance of her eye she sends you childless to your grave.'

'Madam! Lady Torfrida! What is there I would not do for you? What have I done now, save avenge your great wrong?'

Torfrida made no answer, but fixed steadily on him eyes which widened every moment.

'But, madam!—and he turned shrinking from the fancied spell—'what would you have? The—the corpse? It is in the keeping of—of another lady.'

'So?' said Torfrida quietly. 'Leave her to me,' and she swept past them all, and slung open the bower door at their backs, discovering Alfruda sitting by the dead.

The ruffians were so utterly appalled, not only by the false powers of magic, but by the veritable powers of majesty and eloquence, that they let her do what she would.

'Out!' cried she, using a short and terrible epithet. 'Out, siren, with fairy's face and tail of fiend, and leave the husband with his wife!'

Alfruda looked up, shrieked, and then, with the sudden passion of a weak nature, drew a little knife, and sprang up.

Ivo made a coarsen jest. The abbot sprang in. 'For the sake of all holy things, let there be no more murder here!'

Torfrida smiled, and fixed her snake's eye upon her wretched rival.

'Out! woman, and choose thee a new husband among these French gallants, ere I blast thee

from head to foot with the leprosy of Naaman the Syrian.'

Alfruda shuddered, and fled shrieking into an inner room.

'Now, knights, give me—that which hangs outside.'

Ascelin hurried out, glad to escape. In a minute he returned.

The head was already taken down. A tall lay brother, the moment he had seen it, had climbed the gable, snatched it away, and now sat in a corner of the yard, holding it on his knees, talking to it, chiding it, as if it had been alive. When men had offered to take it, he had drawn a battle-axe from under his frock, and threatened to brain all comers. And the monks had warned off Ascelin, saying that the man was mad, and had Berserk fits of superhuman strength and rage.

'He will give it me,' said Torfrida, and went out.

'Look at that gable, foolish head,' said the madman. 'Ten years ago, you and I took down from thence another head. O foolish head, to get yourself at last up into that same place! Why would you not be ruled by her, you foolish golden head?'

'Martin!' said Torfrida.

'Take it and comb it, mistress, as you used to do. Comb out the golden locks again fit to shine across the battlefield. She has let them all get entangled into elf-knots, that lazy slut within!'

Torfrida took it from his hands, dry-eyed, and went in.

Then the monks silently took up the bier, and all went forth, and down the Roman road, toward the fen. They laid the corpse within the barge, and slowly rowed away.

And past the Deeping, down the Welland stream,
By winding reaches on, and shining meres
Between gray reed-beds, and green alder beds,
And the brown horror of the homeless fen,
A dirge of monks and wail of women rose
In vain to heaven for the last Englishman,
Then died far off within the boundless mist,
And left the Frenchman master of the land!

So Torfrida took the corpse home to Crowland, and buried it in the choir, near the blessed martyr St. Waltheof, after which she did not die, but lived on many years, spending all day in nursing and feeding the Countess Godiva, and lying all night on Hereward's tomb, and praying that he might find grace and mercy in that day.

And at last Godiva died, and they took her away, and buried her with great pomp in her own minster-church of Coventry.

And after that Torfrida died likewise; because she had nothing else for which to live. And they laid her in Hereward's grave, and their dust is mingled to this day.

¹ If Ingulf can be trusted, Torfrida died about A. D. 1085.

And Oger the Breton got back Morcar's lands, and held them at least till the time of Domesday-book. But Manthorpe, Toft, and Witham, Aswast, Thorold's man, got back, and they were held for several centuries by the abbey of Peterborough, seemingly as some set-off for Abbot Thorold's thirty thousand marks.

And Ivo Taillebois did evil mightily all his days, and how he died, and what befell him after death, let Peter of Blois declare.

And Leofric the priest lived on to a good old age, and above all things he remembered the deeds and the sins of his master, and wrote them in a book, and thus is what remains thereof.

But when Martin Lightfoot died no man has said, for no man in those days took account of such poor churls and running serving-men.

And Hereward's comrades were all scattered abroad, some maimed, some blinded, some with tongues cut out, to beg by the wayside, or crawl into convents, and then die, while their sisters and daughters, ladies born and bred, wore the slaves of grooms and scullions from beyond the sea.

And so, as sang Thorkel Skallason—

'Cold heart and bloody hand!
Now rule English land.'

And after that things waxed even worse and worse, for sixty years and more, all through the reigns of the two Williams, and of Henry Beaulerc, and of Stephen, till men saw visions and portents, and thought that the foul fiend was broken loose on earth. And they whispered oftener and oftener that the soul of Hereward haunted the Brunswald, where he loved to hunt the dun deer and the roe. And in the Brunswald, when Henry of Poitou was made abbot,* men saw—'let no man think lightly of the marvel which we are about to relate as a truth, for it was well known all over the country—upon the Sunday, when men sing "Exsurge quare, O Domine," many hunters hunting, black, and tall, and loathly, and their hounds were black and ugly with wide eyes, and they rode on black horses and black bucks. And they saw them in the very deer park in the town of Peterborough, and in all the woods to Stamford, and the monks heard the blasts of the horns which they blow in the night. Men of truth kept watch upon them, and said that there might be well about twenty or thirty horn-blowers. This was seen and heard all that Lent until Easter.' And the French monks of Peterborough said how it was The Wake, doomed to wake for ever with Apollyon and all his crew, because he had stolen the riches of the

Golden Borough—but the poor folk knew better, and said, That the mighty outlaw was rejoicing in the chase, blowing his horn for Englishmen to rise against the French, and therefore it was that he was seen first on 'Arise O Lord' Sunday.

But they were so sore trodden down that they could never rise, for 'the French' had filled the land full of castles. They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work at these castles, and when the castles were finished, they filled them with devils and evil men. They took those whom they suspected of having any goods, both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable, for never were any martyrs tormented as these were. They hung some by their feet, and smoked them with foul smoke, some by the thumbs or by the head, and put burning things on their feet. They put a knotted string round their heads, and twisted it till it went into the brain. They put them in dungeons wherein were addors, and snakes, and toads, and thus wore them out. Some they put into a crucet-house—that is, into a chest that was short and narrow, and they put sharp stones therein, and crushed the man so that they broke all his bones. There were hateful and grim things called *sachentege*s in many of the castles, which two or three men had enough to do to carry. This *sachentege* was made thus—It was fastened to a beam, having a sharp iron to go round a man's throat and neck, so that he might no ways sit, nor lie, nor sleep, but he must bear all the iron. Many thousands they wore out with hunger. They were continually levying a tax from the towns, which they called *trusene*, and when the wretched townsfolk had no more to give, then burnt they all the towns, so that well mightest thou walk a whole day's journey or ever thou shouldst see a man settled in a town, or its lands tilled.

'Then was corn dear, and flesh, and cheese, and butter, for there was none in the land. Wretched men starved with hunger. Some lived on alms who had been once rich. Some fled the country. Never was there more misery, and never heathens acted worse than these.'

For now the sons of the Church's darlings, of the Crusaders whom the Pope had sent, beneath a gonfalon blessed by him, to destroy the liberties of England, turned by a just retribution upon that very French clergy who had abetted all their iniquities in the name of Rome. 'They spared neither church nor churchyard, but took all that was valuable therein, and then burned the church and all together. Neither did they spare the lauds of bishops, nor of abbots, nor of priests, but they robbed the

* *Laing's Hæmekringla.*

² *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1127*

¹ *Ibid, A.D. 1127*

monks and clergy, and every man plundered his neighbour as much as he could. If two or three men came riding to a town, all the townsfolk fled before them, and thought that they were robbers. The bishops and clergy were for ever cursing them, but this to them was nothing, for they were all accursed and forsworn and reprobate. The earth bore no corn, you might as well have tilled the sea, for all the land was ruined by such deeds, and it was said openly that Christ and His saints slept.

And so was avenged the blood of Harold and his brothers, of Edwin and Morean, of Walthoeof and Hereward.

And those who had the spirit of Hereward in them fled to the merry greenwood, and became bold outlaws, with Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John, Adam Bell, and Clym of the Cleugh, and William of Cloudeslee, and watched with sullen joy the French robbers tearing in pieces each other, and the Church who had blest their crime.

And they talked and sung of The Wake, and all his dauntless deeds, over the hearth in lone farmhouse, or in the outlaw's lodge beneath the hollow green, and all the burden of their song was, 'Ah that The Wake were alive again!' for they knew not that The Wake was alive for evermore—that only his husk and shell lay mouldering there in Crowland choir, that above them, and around them, and in them, destined to raise them out of that bitter bondage, and mould them into a great nation, and the parents of still greater nations in lands as yet unknown, brooded the immortal spirit of The Wake, now purged from all earthly dross—even the spirit of Freedom, which can never die.

CHAPTER XLII

HOW DEEPING FEN WAS DRAINED

BUT war and disorder, ruin and death, cannot last for ever. They are by their own nature exceptional and suicidal, and spend themselves with what they feed on. And then the true laws of God's universe, peace and order, usefulness and life, will reassert themselves, as they have been waiting all along to do, had in God's presence from the strife of men.

And even so it was with Bourne.

Nearly eighty years after, in the year of grace 1155, there might have been seen sitting, side by side, and hand in hand, upon a sunny bench on the Bruneswald slope, in the low December sun, an old knight and an old lady, the master and mistress of Bourne.

Much had changed since Hereward's days. The house below had been raised a whole story.

There were fresh herbs and flowers in the garden, unknown at the time of the Conquest. But the great change was in the fen, especially away toward Deeping, on the south-eastern horizon.

Where had been lonely meres, foul water-concretes, stagnant slime, there were now great dykes, rich and fair corn and grass lands, rows of white cottages. The newly-drained land swarmed with stocks of new breeds—horses and sheep from Flanders, cattle from Normandy, for Richard de Rulos was the first—as far as history tells—of that noble class of agricultural squires who are England's blessing and England's pride.

'For thus Richard de Rulos,' says Ingulf, or whoever wrote in his name, 'who had married the daughter and heiress of Hugh of Evermune, Lord of Bourne and Deeping, being a man of agricultural pursuits, got permission from the monks of Crowland, for twenty marks of silver, to enclose as much as he would of the common marshes. So he shut out the Wolland by a strong embankment, and building thereon numerous tenements and cottages, till in a short time he formed a large "vill," marked out gardens, and cultivated fields, while, by shutting out the river, he found in the meadow land, which had been lately deep lakes and impassable marshes (wherefore the place was called Deeping, the deep meadow), most fertile fields and desirable lands, and out of sloughs and bogs accursed made quite a garden of pleasure.'

So there the good man, the beginning of the good work of centuries, sat looking out over the fen, and listening to the music which came on the southern breeze, above the low of the kine, and the clang of the wild-fowl settling down to rest, from the hells of Crowland minster far away.

They were not the same bells which tolled for Hereward and Torfrida. Those had run down in molten streams upon that fatal night when Abbot Ingulf leapt out of bed to see the vast wooden sanctuary wrapt in one sheet of roaring flame, from the carelessness of a plumber who had raked the ashes over his fire in the bell-tower, and left it to smoulder through the night.

Then perished all the riches of Crowland, its library too, of more than seven hundred volumes, with that famous Nadir, or Orrery, the like whereof was not in all England, wherein the seven planets were represented, each in their proper metals. And even worse, all the charters of the monastery perished, a loss which involved the monks thereof in centuries of lawsuits, and compelled them to become as industrious and skilful forgers of documents as were to be found in the minsters of the Middle Age.

But Crowland minster had been rebuilt in

greater glory than ever, by the help of the French gentry round. Abbot Ingulf, finding that St. Guthlac's plain inability to take care of himself had discredited him much in the women's eyes, fell back, Frenchman as he was, on the virtues of the holy martyr, St. Walthoof, whose tomb he opened with due reverence, and found the body as whole and uncorrupted as on the day on which it was buried, and the head united to the body, while a fine crimson line around the neck was the only sign remaining of his decollation.

On seeing which Ingulf 'could not contain himself for joy, and interrupting the responses which the brethren were singing, with a loud voice began the hymn, "Te Deum Laudamus," on which the chanter, taking it up, enjoined the rest of the brethren to sing it.' After which Ingulf—who had never seen Walthoof in life—discovered that it was none other than he whom he had seen in a vision at Fontenelle, as an earl most gorgeously arrayed, with a tone of gold about his neck, and with him an abbot, two bishops, and two saints, the three former being Ushaw, Aubelet, and Wandregisel of Fontenelle, and the two saints, of course, St. Guthlac and St. Neot.

Whereon, crawling on his hands and knees, he kissed the face of the holy martyr, and 'perceived such a sweet odour proceeding from the holy body, as he never remembered to have smelt, either in the palace of the king or in Syria with all its aromatic herbs.'

Quid plura? What more was needed for a convent of hunt-out monks? St. Walthoof was translated in state to the side of St. Guthlac, and the news of this translation of the holy martyr being spread throughout the country, multitudes of the faithful flocked thither to the tomb, and offering up their vows there, tended in a great degree to 'resuscitate our monastery.'

But more. The virtues of St. Walthoof were too great not to turn themselves, or be turned, to some practical use. So if not in the days of Ingulf, at least in those of Abbot Jollid, who came after him, St. Walthoof began again, says Peter of Blois, to work wonderful deeds. 'The blind received their sight, the deaf their hearing, the lame their power of walking, and the dumb their power of speech, while each day troops innumerable of other sick persons were arriving by every road, as to the very fountain of their safety—and by the offerings of the pilgrims who came flocking in from every part, the revenues of the monastery were increased in no small degree.'

Only one wicked Norman monk of St. Albans, Audwin by name, dared to dispute the sanctity of the martyr, calling him a wicked traitor who

had met with his deserts. In vain did Abbot Jollid, himself a Norman from St. Evroult, expostulate with the inconvenient blasphemer. He launched out into invective beyond measure, till on the spot, in presence of the said father, he was seized with such a stomach-ache, that he went home to St. Albans, and died in a few days, after which all went well with Crowland, and the French monks, who worked the English martyr to get money out of the English whom they had enslaved.

And yet—so strangely nangled for good and evil are the works of men—that lying brotherhood of Crowland set up, in those very days, for pure love of learning and of teaching learning, a little school of letters in a poor town hard by, which became, under their auspices, the University of Cambridge.

So the bells of Crowland were restored, more melodious than ever, and Richard of Ruloe doubtless had his share in their restoration. And that day they were ringing with a will, and for a good reason, for that day had come the news that Henry Plantagenet was crowned king of England.

"Lord," said the good old knight, "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." This day, at last, he sees an English king head the English people.

'God grant,' said the old lady, 'that he may be such a lord to England as thou hast been to Bourne.'

'If he will be—and better far will he be, by God's grace, than what I hear of him, than ever I have been—he must learn that which I learnt from thee—to understand these English men, and know what stout and trusty prichommes they are all, down to the meanest serf, when once one can humour their sturdy independent tempers.'

'And he must learn, too, the lesson which thou dost teach me, when I would have laid thee, in the pride of youth, put on the magic armour of my ancestors, and win no fame in every tournament and battlefield. Blessed be the day when Richard of Ruloe said to me, "If others dare to be men of war, I dare more, for I dare to be a man of peace. Have patience with me, and I will win for thee and for myself a renown more lasting, before God and man, than ever was won with lance!" Do you remember those words, Richard mine?'

The old man leant his head upon his hands. 'It may be that not those words, but the deeds which God has caused to follow them, my, by Christ's merits, bring us a short purgatory and a long heaven.'

'Amen. Only whatever grief we may endure in the next life for our sins, may we endure it as we have the griefs of this life, hand in hand.'

'Amen, Torfrida. There is one thing more to do before we die. The tomb in Crowland,— Ever since the fire blackened it, it has seemed to me too poor and mean to cover the dust which once held two such noble souls. Let us send over to Normandy for fair white stone of Caen, and let us carve a tomb worthy of thy grandparents.'

'And what shall we write thereon?'

'What but that which is there already. "Here lies the last of the English"'

'Not so. We will write—"Here lies the last of the old English." But upon thy tomb, when thy time comes, the monks of Crowland shall write—'

'"Here lies the first of the new English, who, by the inspiration of God, began to drain the Fens"'

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A POET'S CHILDHOOD.

I AM a Cockney among Cockneys Italy and the Tropics, the Highlands and Devonshire, I know only in dreams Even the Surrey hills, of whose loveliness I have heard so much, are to me a distant fairyland, whose gleaming ridges I am worthy only to behold afar With the exception of two jonnies, never to be forgotten, my knowledge of England is bounded by the horizon which encircles Richmond Hill

My earliest recollections are of a suburban street, of its jumble of little shops and little terraces, each exhibiting some fresh variety of capricious ugliness, the little scraps of garden before the doors, with their dusty, stunted lilacs and balsam poplars, were my only forests, my only wild animals, the dingy, merry sparrows, who quivered fearlessly on my window sill, ignorant of trap or gun From my earliest childhood, through long nights of sleepless pain, as the midnight brightened into dawn, and the glaring lamps grew pale, I used to listen, with a pleasant awe, to the ceaseless roll of the market-waggon, bringing up to the great city the treasures of the gay green country, the land of fruits and flowers, for which I have yearned all my life in vain They seemed to my boyish fancy mysterious messengers from another world the silent, lonely night, in which they were the only moving things, added to the wonder I used to get out of bed to gaze at them, and envy the coarse men and sluttish women who attended them, their labour among verdant plants and rich brown mould, on breezy slopes, under God's own clear sky I fancied that they learnt what I knew I should have learnt there, I know not then that "the eye only sees that which it brings with it the power of seeing" When will their eyes be opened? When will priests go forth into the highways and the hedges, and preach to the ploughman and the gipsy the blessed news, that there, too, in every thicket and fallow field, is the house of God;—here, too, the gate of Heaven?

I do not complain that I am a Cockney. That, too, is God's gift He made me one, that I might learn to feel for poor wretches who sit stifled in reeking garrets and work-

rooms drinking in disease with every breath,—banned in their prison house of brick and iron, with their own funeral pall hanging over them, in that canopy of fog and poisonous smoke, from their cradle to their grave. I have drank of the cup of which they drink And so I have learnt—if, indeed, I have learnt—to be a poet—a poet of the people That lesson, surely, was worth buying with asthma, and rickets, and consumption, and weakness, and—worst of all to me—with ugliness It was God's purpose about me; and, therefore, all circumstances combined to imprison me in London I used once, when I worshipped circumstance, to fancy it my curse, Fate's injustice to me, which kept me from developing my genius, and asserting my rank among poets I longed to escape to glorious Italy, or some other southern clime, where natural beauty would have become the very element which I breathed, and yet, what would have come of that? Should I not, as nobler spirits than I have done, have idled away my life in Elysian dreams, singing out like a bird into the air unarticulately, purposeless, for mere joy and fullness of heart; and, taking no share in the terrible questionings, the terrible struggles of this great, awful, blessed time—feeling no more the pulse of the great heart of England stirring me, I used, as I said, to call it the curse of circumstance that I was a sickly, decrepit Cockney My mother used to tell me that it was the cross which God had given me to bear I know now that she was right there She used to say that my disease was God's will I do not think, though, that she spoke right there also I think that it was the will of the world and of the devil, of man's avarice, and laziness, and ignorance And so would my readers, perhaps, had they seen the shop in the city where I was born and nursed, with its little garrets reeking with human breath, its kitchens and areas with noisome sewers. A sanitary reformer would not be long in guessing the cause of my unhealthiness He would not rebuke me—nor would she, sweet soul! now that she is at rest in bliss—for my wild longings to escape, for my envying the very flies and sparrows their wings that I might flee miles away into the country, and breathe the air of heaven once, and die I have had my wish. I

have made two journeys far away into the country, and they have been enough for me.

My mother was a widow. My father, whom I cannot recollect, was a small retail tradesman in the city. He was unfortunate, and when he died, my mother came down, and lived pennilessly enough. I knew not how till I grew older, down in that same suburban street. She had been brought up an Independent. After my father's death she became a Baptist, from conscientious scruples. She considered the Baptists, as I do, as the only sect who thoroughly embody the Calvinistic doctrine. She held it, as I do, an absurd and impious thing for those who believe mankind to be children of the devil till they have been consciously "converted," to baptise unconscious infants and give them the sign of God's mercy on the mere chance of that mercy being intended for them. When God had proved, by converting them, that they were not reprobate and doomed to hell by His absolute and eternal will, then, and not till then, dare man baptise them into His name. She dared not pun a presumptuous fiction on herself, and call it "charity." But though we had both been christened during my father's lifetime, she purposed to have us rebaptised, if ever that happened—which, in her sense of the word, never happened, I am afraid, to me.

She gloried in her dissent, for she was sprung from old Puritan blood, which had flowed again and again beneath the knife of Stra-Chunker butchers, and on the battle fields of Naseby and Sedgemoor. And on winter evenings she used to sit with her Bible on her knee, while I and my little sister Susan stood beside her and listened to the stories of Gideon and Barak, and Samson and Jephtah, till her eye kindled up, and her thoughts passed forth from that old Hebrew time home into those English times which she fancied, and not untruly, like them. And we used to shudder, and yet listen with a strange fascination, as she told us how her ancestor killed his seven sons off their small Cambridge farm, and horsed and armed them himself to follow behind Cromwell, and smite kings and prelates with "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Whether she were right or wrong, what is it to me? What is it now to her, thank God! But those stories, and the strict, stern Puritan education, learnt from the Independents and not the Baptists, which accompanied them, had their effect on me, for good and ill.

My mother moved by rule and method; by God's law, as she considered, and that only. She seldom smiled. Her word was absolute. She never commanded twice, without punishing. And yet there were abysses of unspoken tenderness in her, as well as clear, womanly sense and insight. But she thought herself as much bound to keep down all tenderness as if she had been

some ascetic of the Middle Ages—so do extremes meet. It was "carnal," she considered. She had as yet no right to have any "spiritual affection" for us. We were still "children of wrath and of the devil,"—not yet "convicted of sin," "converted, born again." She had no more spiritual bond with us, she thought, than she had with a heathen or a Papist. She dared not even pray for our conversion, earnestly as she prayed on every other subject. For though the majority of her sect would have done so, her clear logical sense would yield to no such tender inconsistency. Had it not been decided from all eternity? We were elect, or we were reprobate. Could her prayers alter that? If He had chosen us, He would call us in His own good time and, if not,—Only, again and again, as I afterwards discovered from a journal of hers, she used to beseech God with agonised tears to set her mind at rest by revealing to her His will towards us. For that comfort she could at least rationally pray. But she received no answer. Poor, beloved mother! If thou couldst not read the answer, written in every flower and every sunbeam, written in the very fact of our existence, here at all, what answer would have sufficed thee?

And yet, with all this, she kept the strictest watch over our morality. Fear, of course, was the only motive she employed, for how could our still carnal understandings be affected with love to God? And love to herself was too faulty and temporary to be urged by one who knew that her life was uncertain, and who was always trying to go down to the deepest eternal ground and reason of everything, and like her stand upon that. So our god, or gods rather, till we were twelve years old, were hell, the rod, the ten commandments, and feeble opinion. Yet under them, not they, but something deeper far, both in her and us, preserved us pure. Call it natural character, conformation of the spirit, conformation of the brain, if you like, if you are a scientific man and a physiologist. I never yet could dissect and map out my own being, or my neighbour's, as you analysts do. To me, I myself, aye, and each person round me, seem one metaphysical whole, to take away a single faculty whereof is to destroy the harmony, the meaning, the life of all the rest. That there is a duality in us—a lifelong battle between flesh and spirit—we all, alas! know well enough, but which is flesh and which is spirit, what philosophers in those days can tell us? Still less had we two found out any such duality or discord in ourselves; for we were gentle and obedient children. The pleasures of the world did not tempt us. We did not know of those existences, and no foundlings educated in a nunnery ever grew up in more virginal and spotless innocence—if ignorance be such—than did Susan and I.

The narrowness of my sphere of observation only concentrated the faculty into

greater strength. The few natural objects which I met—and they, of course, constituted my whole outer world (for art and poetry were tabooed both by my rank and my mother's sectarianism, and the study of human beings only develops itself as the boy grows into the man)—these few natural objects, I say, I studied with intense keenness. I knew every leaf and flower in the little front garden, every cabbage and rhubarb-plant in Battersea Fields was wonderful and beautiful to me. Clouds and water I learnt to delight in, from my occasional lingerings on Battersea Bridge, and yearning westward looks toward the sun setting above rich meadows and wooded gardens, to me a forbidden El Dorado.

I brought home wild flowers and chance beetles and butterflies, and pored over them, not in the spirit of a naturalist, but of a poet. They were to me God's angels, shining in coats of mail and fairy masquerading dresses. I envied them their beauty, their freedom. At last I made up my mind, in the simple tenderness of a child's conscience, that it was wrong to rob them of the liberty for which I pined,—to take them away from the beautiful broad country whither I longed to follow them, and I used to keep them a day or two, and then, regretfully, carry them back, and set them loose on the first opportunity, with many compunctions of heart, when, as generally happened, they had been staved to death in the meantime.

They were my only recreations after the hours of the small day-school at the neighbouring chapel, where I learnt to read, write, and sum, except, now and then, a London walk, with my mother holding my hand tight the whole way. She would have hood-winked me, stopped my ears with cotton, and led me in a string,—kind, careful soul!—if it had been reasonably safe on a crowded pavement, so fearful was she lest I should be polluted by some chance sight or sound of the Babylon which she feared and hated—almost as much as she did the Bishops.

The only books which I knew were the *Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Bible*. The former was my Shakespeare, my Dante, my *Vedas*, by which I explained every fact and phenomenon of life. London was the City of Destruction, from which I was to flee; I was Christian, the Wicket of the Way of Life I had strangely identified with the turnpike at Battersea Bridge and, and the rising ground of Moulton and Wimbledon was the Land of Beulah—the Enchanted Mountains of the Shepherds. If I could once get there, I was saved—a carnal view, perhaps, and a childish one, but there was a dim meaning and human reality in it nevertheless.

As for the *Bible*, I knew nothing of it really, beyond the Old Testament. Indeed, the life of Christ had little chance of becoming interesting to me. My mother had given me formally to understand that it

spoke of matters too deep for me; that, "till converted, the natural man could not understand the things of God" and I obtained little more explanation of it from the two unintelligible, dreary sermons to which I listened every dreary Sunday, in terror lest a chance shuffle of my feet, or a hint of drowsiness, the natural result of the stifling gallery and glaring windows and gaslights,—should bring down a lecture and a punishment when I returned home. Oh, those "Sabbaths"—days, not of rest, but utter weariness, when the beetles and the flowers were put by, and there was nothing to fill up the long vacancy but books of which I could not understand a word, when play, laughter, or even a stare out of window at the sun, merrily, Sabbath-breaking pro-miscuaries, were all forbidden, as if the commandment had run, "In it thou shalt take no manner of amusement, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter." By what strange ascetic perversion has that got to mean "keeping holy the Sabbath-day?"

Yet there was an hour's relief in the evening, when either my mother told us Old Testament stories, or some other preacher or two came in to supper after meeting, and I used to sit in the corner and listen to their talk, not that I understood a word, but the mere struggle to understand—the mere watching my mother's earnest face—my pride in the reverent flattery with which the worthy men addressed her as "a mother in Israel," was enough to fill up the blank for me till bedtime.

Of "vital Christianity" I heard much, but, with all my efforts, could find out nothing. Indeed, it did not seem interesting enough to tempt me to find out much. It seemed a set of doctrines, believing in which was to have a magical effect on people, by saving them from the everlasting torture due to sins and temptations which I had never felt. Now and then, believing, in obedience to my mother's assurances, and the solemn prayers of the ministers about me, that I was a child of hell, and a lost and miserable sinner, I used to have accessions of terror, and fancy that I should surely wake next morning in everlasting flames. Once I put my finger a moment into the fire, as certain Papists, and Protestants too, have done, not only to themselves, but to their disciples, to see if it would be so very dreadfully painful; with what conclusions the reader may judge.

Still, I could not keep up the excitement. Why should I?—The fear of pain is not the fear of sin, that I know of, and, indeed, the thing was unreal altogether in my case, and my heart, my common sense, rebelled against it again and again, till at last I got a terrible whipping for taking my little sister's part, and saying that if she was to die,—so gentle, and obedient, and affectionate as she was,—God would be very unjust in sending her to hell-fire, and that I was quite certain He would do no such thing—unless

He were the Devil—an opinion which I have since seen no reason to change. The confusion between the King of Hell and the King of Heaven has cleared up, thank God, since then.

So I was whipped and put to bed—the whipping altering my secret heart just about as much as the dread of hell fire did.

I speak as a Christian man—an orthodox Churchman (if you require that shibboleth). Was I so very wrong? What was there in the idea of religion which was presented to me at home to captivate me? What was the use of a child's hearing of "God's great love manifested in the scheme of redemption," when he heard, in the same breath, that the effects of that redemption were practically confined only to one human being out of a thousand, and that the other nine hundred and ninety-nine were lost and damned from their birth to all eternity—not only by the absolute will and reprobation of God (though that infernal blasphemy I heard often enough), but also, putting that out of the question, by the mere fact of being born of Adam's race. And this to a generation to whom God's love shines out in every tree, and flower, and hedge-side bird, to whom the daily discoveries of science are revealing that love in every microscopic mummified which peoples the stagnant pool! This to working-men, whose craving is only for some idea which shall give equal hopes, claims, and deliverances to all mankind alike! This to working-men, who, in the smiles of their innocent children, see the heaven which they have lost—the messages of baby-chimbs, made in God's own image! This to me, to whom every butterfly, every look at my little sister, contradicted the lie! You may say that such thoughts were too deep for a child, that I am ascribing to my boyhood the scepticism of my manhood; but it is not so, and what went on in my mind goes on in the minds of thousands. It is the cause of the contempt into which not merely sectarian Protestantism, but Christianity altogether, has fallen, in the minds of the thinking workmen. Clergymen, who anathematise us for wandering into Unitarianism—you, you have driven us thither. You must find some explanation of the facts of Christianity more in accordance with the truths which we do know, and will live and die for, or you can never hope to make us Christians; or, if we do return to the true fold, it will be as I returned, after long, miserable years of darkling error, to a higher truth than most of you have yet learned to preach.

But those old Jewish heroes did fill my whole heart and soul. I learnt from them lessons which I never wish to unlearn. Whatever else I saw about them, this I saw,—that they were patriots, deliverers from that tyranny and injustice from which the child's heart,—"child of the devil" though you may call him,—instinctively, and, as I

believe, by a divine inspiration, revolts. Moses leading his people out of Egypt; Gideon, Barak, and Samson slaying their oppressors; David, hiding in the mountains from the tyrant, with his little band of those who had fled from the oppressions of an aristocracy of Nobels. Jehu, executing God's vengeance on the kings—they were my heroes, my models, they mixed themselves up with the dim legends about the Reformation martyrs, Cromwell and Hampden, Sidney and Monmouth, which I had heard at my mother's knee. Not that the perennial oppression of the masses, in all ages and countries, had yet risen on me as an awful, torturing, fixed idea. I fancied, poor fool! that tyranny was the exception, and not the rule. But it was the mere sense of abstract pity and justice which was delighted in me. I thought that these were old fairy tales, such as never need be realised again. I learnt otherwise in after years.

I have often wondered since, why all cannot read the same lesson as I did in those old Hebrew Scriptures—that they of all books in the world, have been wrested into proofs of the divine right of kings, the eternal necessity of slavery! But the eye only sees what it brings with it the power of seeing. The upper classes, from their first day at school to their last day at college, read of nothing but the glories of Salamis and Marathon, of freedom and of the old republics. And what comes of it? No more than that tutors know will come of it, when they thrust into the boy's hands books which give the lie in every page to their own political superstitions.

But when I was just turned of thirteen, an altogether new fairyland was opened to me by some missionary tracts and journals, which were lent to my mother by the ministers. Pacific coral islands and volcanoes, coconut groves and bananas, graceful savages with paint and feathers—what an El Dorado! How I devoured them and dreamt of them, and went there in fancy, and preached small sermons as I lay in bed at night to Tahitians and New Zealanders, though I confess my spiritual eyes were, just as my physical eyes would have been, far more busy with the scenery than with the souls of my audience. However, that was the place for me, I saw clearly. And one day, I recollect it well, in the little dingy, foul, reeking, twelve-foot-square back-yard, where huge smoky party-walls shut out every breath of air and almost all the light of heaven, I had climbed up between the water butt and the angle of the wall for the purpose of fishing out of the dirty fluid which lay there, crusted with gnat and alive with insects, to be renewed only three times in the seven days, some of the great larvae and kicking monsters which made up a large item in my list of wonders. All of a sudden the horror of the place came over me; those grim prison walls above, with their canopy of

lurid smoke; the dreary, sloppy, broken pavement; the horrible stench of the stagnant cesspools; the utter want of form, colour, life, in the whole place, crushed me down, without my being able to analyse my feelings as I can now, and then came over me that dream of Pacific Islands, and the free, open sea, and I slid down from my perch, and bursting into tears threw myself upon my knees in the court, and prayed aloud to God to let me be a missionary.

Half fearfully I set out my wishes to my mother when she came home. She gave me no answer, hint, as I found out afterwards, —too late, alas! for her, if not for me,—she, like Mary, had "laid up all these things, and treasured them in her heart."

You may guess then my delight when, a few days afterwards, I heard that a real live missionary was coming to take tea with us. A man who had actually been in New Zealand! —the thought was rapture. I painted him to myself over and over again, and when after the first burst of fancy, I recollected that he might possibly not have adopted the native costume of that island, or, if he had, that perhaps it would look too strange for him to wear it about London, I settled within myself that he was to be a tall, venerable-looking man, like the portraits of old Puritan divines which adorned our day-room, and as I had heard that "he was powerful in prayer," I advanced his right hand with that mystic weapon "all-prayer," with which Christian, when all other means had failed, finally vanquishes the fiend—-which instrument, in my mind, was somewhat after the model of an infernal sort of hilt or halberd—all hooks, curls, spikes, and crescents—which I had passed, shuddering, once, in the hand of an old eunuch of annam in Wardour Street.

He came—and with him the two ministers who often drank tea with my mother; both of whom, as they played some small part in the drama of my afterlife, I may as well describe here. The elder was a little, sleek, silver-haired old man, with a blind, weak face, just like a white rabbit. He loved me, and I loved him too, for there were always lollipops in his pocket for me and Susan. Had his head been equal to his heart—but what has been was to be—and the dissenting clergy, with a few noble exceptions among the Independents, are not the strong men of the day—none know that better than the workmen. The old man's name was Bowyer. The other, Mr Wigginton, was a younger man; tall, grim, dark, bilious, with a narrow forehead, retreating suddenly from his eyebrows up to a conical peak of black hair over his ears. He preached "higher doctrine," i.e. more fatalist and Antinomian, than his gentler colleague,—and, having also a stentorian voice, was much the greater favourite at the chapel. I hated him—and if any man ever deserved hatred, he did.

Well, they came. My heart was in my

mouth as I opened the door to them, and sunk back again to the very lowest depths of my inner man when my eyes fell on the face and figure of the missionary—a squat, red-faced, pig-eyed, low-browed man, with great soft lips that opened back to his very ears, sensuality, conceit, and cunning marked on every feature—an innate vulgarity, from which the artisan and the child recoil with an instinct as true, perhaps truer, than that of the courtier, showing itself in every tone and motion, I shrunk into a corner, so crest-fallen that I could not even exert myself to hand round the bread and butter, for which I got duly scolded afterwards. Oh! that man!—how he bawled and contradicted, and laid down the law, and spoke to my mother in a fumbling, patronising way, which maddened me, I knew not why, boil over with jealousy and indignation. How he filled his teacup half full of the white sugar, to buy which my mother had entailed her yesterday's dinner—how he drained the few remaining drops of the three-pennyworth of cream, with which Susan was stealing off to keep it as an unexpected treat for my mother at breakfast the next morning—how he talked of the natives, not as St. Paul might of his converts, but as a planter might of his slaves, over-laying all his unintentional confessions of his own greed and prosperity, with cant, flimsy enough for even a boy to see through, while his eyes were not blinded with the superstition that a man must be pious who sufficiently interlards his speech with a jumble of old English picked out of our translation of the New Testament. Such was the man I saw. I don't deny that all are not like him. I believe there are noble men of all denominations, doing their best according to their light, all over the world, but such was the one I saw—and the men who are sent home to plead the missionary cause, whatever the men may be like who stay behind and work, are, from my small experience, too often such. It appears to me to be the rule that many of those who go abroad as missionaries, go simply because they are men of such inferior powers and attainments that if they stayed in England they would starve.

Three parts of his conversation, after all, was made up of abuse of the missionaries of the Church of England, not for doing nothing, but for being so much more successful than his own sect,—accusing them, in the same breath, for being just of the inferior type of which he was himself, and also of being more universally true gentlemen. Really I did not wonder, upon his own showing, at the savages preferring them to him; and I was pleased to hear the old white-headed minister gently interpose at the end of one of his tirades—"We must not be jealous, my brother, if the Establishment has discovered what we, I hope, shall find out some day, that it is not wise to draft our missionaries from the off-scouring of the ministry, and

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serve God with that which costs us nothing except the expense of providing for them beyond seas."

"There was somewhat of a roguish twinkle in the old man's eye as he said it, which emboldened me to whisper a question to him."

"Why is it, sir, that in old times the heathens used to crucify the missionaries and burn them, and now they give them beautiful farms, and build them houses, and carry them about on their backs?"

The old man seemed a little puzzled, and so did the company, to whom he smilingly retailed my question.

As nobody seemed inclined to offer a solution, I ventured one myself.

"Perhaps the heathens are grown better than they used to be?"

"The heart of man," answered the tall, dark minister, "is, and ever was, equally at enmity with God."

"Then, perhaps," I ventured again, "what the missionaries preach now is not quite the same as what the missionaries used to preach in St. Paul's time, and so the heathens are not so angry at it?"

My mother looked thunder at me, and so did all except my white-headed friend, who said, gently enough,—

"It may be that the child's words come from God."

Whether they did or not, the child took very good care to speak no more words till he was alone with his mother, and then finished off that disastrous evening by a punishment for the indecency of saying, before his little sister, that he thought it "a great pity the missionaries taught black people to wear ugly coats and trousers, they must have looked so much handsomer running about with nothing on but feathers and strings of shells."

So the missionary dream died out of me, by a foolish and illegal antipathy enough; though, after all, it was a child of my imagination only, not of my heart, and the fancy, having tried it, was able to kill it also. And David became my ideal. To be a shepherd boy, and sit among beautiful mountains, and sing hymns of my own making, and kill lions and bears, with now and then the chance of a stray giant—what a glorious life! And if David slew giants with a sling and a stone, why should not I?—at all events, one ought to know how, so I made a sling out of an old garter and some string, and began to practise in the little back-yard. But my first shot broke a neighbour's window, value sevenpence, and the next flew back in my face, and cut my head open, so I was sent supplicious to bed for a week, till the sevenpence had been duly saved out of my hungry stomach—and, on the whole, I found the hymn-writing side of David's character the more feasible, so I tried, and with much brass-knitting, committed the following lines to a scrap of duty paper. And it was strangely significant,

that in this, my first attempt, there was an instinctive denial of the very doctrine of "particular redemption," which I had been hearing all my life, and an instinctive yearning after the very Being in whom I had been told I had "no part nor lot" till I was "converted." Here they are. I am not ashamed to call them,—loggery! though they be,—an inspiration from Him of whom they speak. If not from Him, good readers, from whom?

Jesus, He loves one and all,
Jesus, He loves children small,
Their souls are sitting round His feet,
On high, before His mercy seat.

When on earth He walked in skum,
Children small unto Him came,
At His feet they knelt and prayed,
On their heads His hands He laid.

Came a spirit on them then,
Greater than of mighty men,
A spirit gentle, meek, and mild,
A spirit good for king and child.

Oh! that spirit give to me,
Jesus, Lord, where'er I be!
So—

But I did not finish them, not seeing very clearly what to do with that spirit when I obtained it, for, indeed, it seemed a much finer thing to fight material Apollyons with material swords of iron, like my friend Christian, or to go bear and lion hunting with David, than to convert heathens by meekness—at least, if true meekness was at all like that of the missionary whom I had lately seen.

I showed the verses in secret to my little sister. My mother heard us singing them together, and extorted, grimly enough, a confession of the authorship. I expected to be punished for them (I was accustomed weekly to be punished for all sorts of deeds and words, of the harmfulness of which I had not a notion). It was, therefore, an agreeable surprise when the old minister, the next Sunday evening, patted my head, and praised me for them.

"A hopeful sign of young grace, brother," said he to the dark, tall man. "May we behold here an infant Timothy?"

"Bad doctrine, brother, in that first line—bad doctrine, which I am sure he did not learn from our excellent sister here. Remember, my boy, henceforth, that Jesus loves *not* love one and all—not that I am angry with you. The carnal mind cannot be expected to understand divine things, any more than the beasts that perish. Nevertheless, the blessed message of the Gospel stands true, that Christ loves none but His Bride, the Church. His merits, my poor child, extend to none but the elect. Ah! my dear sister Locke, how delightful to think of the narrow way of discriminating grace! How it enhances the believer's view of his own exceeding privileges, to remember that there be few that be saved!"

I said nothing. I thought myself only too

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lucky to escape so well from the danger of having done anything out of my own head. But somehow Susan and I never altered it when we sang it ourselves.

I thought it necessary for the sake of those who might read my story, to string together these few scattered recollections of my boyhood,—to give, as it were, some sample of the cotyledon leaves of my young life-plant, and of the soil in which it took root ere it was transplanted—but I will not forestall my sorrows. After all, they have been but types of the woes of thousands who “die and give no sign.” Those to whom the struggles of every, even the meanest, human being are scenes of an awful drama, every incident of which is to be noted with reverent interest, will not find them void of meaning, while the life which opens in my next chapter is, perhaps, full enough of mere dramatic interest (and whose life is not, were it but truly written?) to amuse merely as a novel. Ay, grim and real is the action and suffering which begins with my next page, as you yourself would have found, high born reader (if such chance to light upon this story), had you found yourself at fifteen, after a youth of convent like seclusion, settled, apparently for life—in a tailor’s workshop.

Ay, laugh! no tailor can quote poetry as well as make your coat dresses.

You sit in a cloud and shew, like pictured angels,
And see the world run smooth while right below
Welters the black fermenting heap of griefs
Whereon your state is built.

CHAPTER II

THE TAILOR’S WORKROOM

HAVE you done laughing? Then I will tell you how the thing came to pass.

My father had a brother, who had steadily risen in life, in proportion as my father fell. They had both begun life in a grocer’s shop. My father saved enough to marry, when of middle age, a woman of his own years, and set up a little shop, where there were but too many such already, in the hope—to him, as to the rest of the world, quite just and innocent—of drawing away as much as possible of his neighbours’ custom. He failed, died—as so many small tradesmen do—of bad debts and a broken heart, and left us beggars. His brother, more prudent, had in the meantime, risen to be foreman; then he married, on the strength of his handsome person, his master’s blooming widow; and rose and rose, year by year, till at the time of which I speak, he was owner of a first-rate grocery establishment in the city, and a pleasant villa near Henric Hill, and had a son, a year or two older than myself, at King’s College, preparing for Oxford and the Church—that being nowadays the ap-

proved method of converting a tradesman’s son into a gentleman,—whereof let artisans, and gentlemen also, take note!

My aristocratic readers—if I ever get any, which I pray God I may—may be surprised at so great an inequality of fortune between two cousins, but the thing is common in our class. In the higher ranks, a difference in income implies none in education or manners, and the poor “gentleman” is a fit companion for dukes and princes—thanks to the old usages of Norman chivalry, which after all were a democratic protest against the sovereignty, if not of rank, at least of money. The knight, however penniless, was the prince’s equal, even his superior, from whose hands he must receive knight hood, and the “squire of low degree,” who honourably earned his spurs, rose also into that guild, whose qualifications, however hairbare, were still higher ones than any which the pocket gives. But in the commercial classes money most truly and fearfully “makes the man.” A difference in income, as you go lower, makes more and more difference in the supply of the common necessities of life, and worse in education and manners, in all which polishes the man, till you may see often, as in my case, one cousin an Oxford undergraduate, and the other a tailor’s journeyman.

My uncle one day came down to visit us, resplendent in a black velvet waistcoat, thick gold chain, and acres of shirt front, and I and Susan were turned to feed on our own curiosity and awe in the back yard, while he and my mother were closeted to gether for an hour or so in the living room. When he was gone, my mother called me in, and with eyes which would have been tearful had she allowed herself such a weakness before us, told me very solemnly and slowly, as if to impress upon me the awfulness of the matter, that I was to be sent to a tailor’s workroom the next day.

And an awful step it was in her eyes, as she laid her hands on my head and murmured to herself, “Behold I send you forth as a lamb in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” And then rising hastily to conceal her own emotion I fled upstairs, where we could hear her throw herself on her knees by the bedside, and sob piteously.

That evening was spent dolefully enough, in a sermon of warnings against all manner of sins and temptations, two very names of which I had never heard, but to which, as she informed me, I was by my fallen nature altogether prone, and right enough was she in so saying, though, as often happens, the temptations from which I was in real danger were just the ones of which she had no notion—fighting more or less extinct Satans, as Mr Carlyle says, and quite unconscious of the real, modern, man-devouring Satan close at her elbow.

To me, in spite of all the terror which she

tried to awaken in me, the change was not unwelcome, at all events, it promised me food for my eyes and my ears,—some escape from the narrow cage in which, though I hardly dare confess it to myself, I was beginning to pine. Little I dreamt to what a darker cage I was to be translated! Not that I accuse my uncle of neglect or cruelty, though the thing was altogether of his commanding. He was as generous to us as society required him to be. We were entirely dependent on him, as my mother told me then for the first time, for support. And had he not a right to dispose of my person, having bought it by an allowance to my mother of five-and-twenty pounds a year? I did not forget that fact, the thought of my dependence on him rankled in me, till it almost bred hatred in me to a man who had certainly never done or meant anything to me but in kindness. For what could he make me but a tailor—or a shoemaker? A pale, consumptive, rickety, weakly boy, all forehead and no muscle—have not clothes and shoes been from time immemorial the appointed work of such? The fact that that weakly frame is generally compensated by a proportionally increased activity of brain is too unimportant to enter into the calculations of the great King Louis-seize-faire. Well, my dear Society, it is you that suffer for the mistake, after all, more than we. If you do tether your cleverest artisans on tailors' shop-boards and cobblers' benches, and they—as sedentary folk will—fall a thinking, and come to strange conclusions thereby, they really ought to be much more thankful to you than you are to them. If Thomas Cooper had passed his first five and twenty years at the plough tail instead of the shoemaker's awl, many words would have been left unsaid which, once spoken, working men are not likely to forget.

With a beating heart I shambled along by my mother's side the next day to Mr Smith's shop, in a street off Piccadilly, and stood by her side, just within the door, waiting till someone would condescend to speak to us, and wondering when the time would come when I, like the gentleman who skipped up and down the shop, should shine gloriously in patent leather boots, and a blue satin tie spunged with gold.

Two personages, both equally magnificent, stood talking with their backs to us, and my mother, in doubt, like myself, as to which of them was the tailor, at last summoned up courage to address the wrong one, by asking if he were Mr Smith.

The person addressed answered by a most polite smile and bow, and assured her that he had not that honour, while the other—he'd, evidently a little flustered by the mistake, and then uttered in a tremendous voice these words:

"I have nothing for you, my good woman—go Mr Elliot! how did you come to allow these people to get into the establishment?"

"My name is Locke, sir, and I was to bring my son here this morning."

"Oh—ah—Mr Elliot, see to these persons. As I was saying, my lord, the crimson velvet suit, about thirty-five guineas. By-the-bye, that coat ours? I thought so—idea grand and light—masses well broken—very fine chiaroscuro about the whole—an aristocratic wrinkle just above the hips—which I flatter myself no one but myself and my friend Mr Cooke really do understand. The rapid smoothness of the door dummy, my lord, should be confined to the regions of the Strand. Mr Elliot, where are you? Just be so good as to show his lordship that lovely new thing in drab and *bleu foncé*. Ah! your lordship can't wait—Now, my good woman, is this the young man?"

"Yes," said my mother "and—and—God deal so with you, sir, as you deal with the widow and the orphan."

"Oh—ah—that will depend very much, I should say, on how the widow and the orphan deal with me. Mr. Elliot, take this person into the office and transact the little formalities with her. Jones, take the young man upstairs to the workroom."

I stumbled after Mr Jones up a dark, narrow, iron staircase till we emerged through a trap-door into a garret at the top of the house. I recoiled with disgust at the scene before me, and here I was to work—perhaps through life! A low lean to room, stifling me with the combined odours of human breath and perspiration, stale beer, the sweet sickly smell of gun, and the son and hardly less disgusting one of new cloth. On the floor, thick with dust and dirt, scraps of stuff, and ends of thread, sat some dozen haggard, untidy, shoeless men, with a mingled look of care and recklessness that made me shudder. The windows were tight closed to keep out the cold winter air, and the condensed breath ran in streams down the panes, chequering the dreary outlook of chimney tops and smoke. The conductor handed me over to one of the men.

"Here, Crosswhite, take this younger and make a tailor of him. Keep him next you, and pick him up with your needle if he shirks."

He disappeared down the trap door, and mechanically, as if in a dream, I sat down by the man and listened to his instructions kindly enough bestowed. But I did not remain in peace two minutes. A burst of chatter rose as the foreman vanished, and a tall, bloated, sharp-nosed young man next me bawled in my ear,—

"I say, young'un, fork out the tin and pay your footing at Conscumption Hospital!"

"What do you mean?"

"Ain't he just given?—Down with the stumpy—a tizzy for a pot of half-and-half."

"I never drink beer."

"Then never do," whispered the man at my side, "as sure as hell's hell, it's your only chance."

There was a fierce, deep earnestness in the tone, which made me look up at the speaker, but the other instantly chimed in,—

"Oh, yer don't, don't yer, my young Father Mathy? then yer'll soon learn it here if yer want to keep yer virtuals down"

"And I have promised to take my wages home to my mother"

"Oh, crimony! hark to that, my coves! here's a chap as is going to take the blunt home to his mammy"

"Tain't much of it tho old'un 'll see," said another "Ven yer pockets it at the Cock and Bottle, my kildy, yer won't find much of it left o' Sunday mornings"

"Don't his mother know he's out?" asked another, "and won't she know it—"

Ven he's sitting in his glory
Half price at the Victory

Oh no! 'e never mentions her—her name is never heard! Certainly not, by no means! Why should it?"

"Well, if yer won't stand a pot," quoth the tall man, "I will, that's all, and blow temperance! 'A short life and a merry one," says the tailor—

The midstern talk a great deal about port,
And they make Cape wine very dear,
But blow their his if ever they tries
To deprive a poor cove of his beer

Here, Sam, run to the Cock and Bottle for a pot of half and half to my score"

A thin, pale lad jumped up and vanished, while my tormentor turned to me

"I say, young'un, do you know why we're nearer heaven here than our neighbours?"

"I shouldn't have thought so," answered I, with a *natret* which raised a laugh, and dashed the tall man for a moment

"Yer don't?" then I'll tell yer! A cause we're atop of the house in the first place, and next place yer'll be here six months sooner nor if yer worked in the room below! Ain't that logic and science, Orator?" appealing to Crossthwaite

"Why?" asked I

"A cause you get all the other floors stinks up here as well as your own! Concentrated essence of man's flesh is this here as you is a breathing! Cellar workroom w calls Rheumatic Ward, because of the damp Ground floor's Fever Ward—them as don't gets typhus gets dysentery, and them as don't get dysentery gets typhus—your nose 'd tell yer why if ybu opened the back windy! First floor's Ashmy Ward—don't you know 'um now through the cracks in the boards, a puffing away like a host of young locomotives! And this here most august and upper crust cockloft is the Conscriptive Hospital. First you begins to cough, then you proceeds to expectorate—spituous, as you see, powdered free gracious for nothing—fined a kivarten if you spits on the floor—

Then your cheeks they grows red, and your nose it grows thin,
And your bones they sticks out, till they comes through the skin

And then, when you've sufficiently covered the poor, dear shivering bare backs of the aristocracy—

Die, die, die,
Away you fly,
Your soul is in the sky!

is the inspired Shakespeare wittily remarks"

And the rihald lay down on his back, stretched himself out, and pretended to die in a fit of coughing, which last was, alas! no counterfeit, while poor I, shocked and bewildered, let my tears fall fast upon my cheeks

"Fine him a pot!" roared one, for talking about kicking the bucket! He's a nroving man to keep a cove's spirits up, and talk about a 'short life and a merry one'! Here comes the heavy! Him it is to take the taste of that fellow's talk out of my mouth!"

"Well, my young'un," recommenced my tormentor, "and how do you like your company?"

"Leave the boy alone," growled Crossthwaite, "don't you see he's crying?"

"Is that anything good to eat? Give me some on it if it is—it'll save me washing my face!" And he took hold of my hair and pulled my head back

"I'll tell you what, Tommy Downer," said Crossthwaite, in a voice which made him draw back, "if you don't drop the t, I'll give you such a taste of my tongue as shall turn you blue!"

"You'd better try it on then! Do—only just now—if you please!"

"Be quiet, you fool!" said another "You're a pretty fellow to chaff the Orator! He'll sling you up the chimney afore you can get your shoes on!"

"Fine him a kivarten for quarrelling," cried another, and the bully subsided into a minute's silence, after a *solto voce*—"Blow temperance, and blow all Chartists, say I!" and then delivered himself of his feelings in a doggerel song

Some folks leads coves a dance,
With their pledge of temperance
And their plans for donkey salvation,
And their pockets full they crams
By their patriotic flame,
And then swears 'em for the good of the nation.

But I don't care two huns
For political opinions,
While I can stand my heavy and my quartern,
For to drown dull care within,
In bac-y, beer, and gin,
Is the prime of a working-tailor's fortin!

"There's common sense for yer now, hand the pot here!"

I recollect nothing more of that day, except that I bent myself to my work with

readily enough to earn praises from Cross thwaite. It was to be done, and I did it. The only virtue I ever possessed (if virtue it be) is the power of absorbing my whole heart and mind in the pursuit of the moment, however dull or trivial, if there be good reason why it should be pursued at all.

I owe, too, an apology to my readers for introducing all this ricksherry. God knows it is as little to my taste as it can be to theirs, but the thing exists, and those who live, if not by, yet still beside such a state of things, ought to know what the men are like to whose labour, or, life blood, they owe their luxuries. They are "their brothers' keepers," let them deny it as they will. Thank God, many are hiding that out, and the morals of the working tailors, as well as of other classes of artisans, are rapidly improving—a change which has been brought about partly by the wisdom and kindness of a few master tailors, who have built work shops fit for human beings, and have resolutely stood out against the iniquitous and destructive alterations in the system of employment. Among them I may, and will, whether they like it or not, make honourable mention of Mr. Willis, of St. James's Street, and Mr. Stultz, of Bond Street.

But nine tenths of the improvement has been owing, not to the masters, but to the men themselves; and who among them, my aristocratic readers, do you think, have been the great preachers and practisers of temperance, thrift, chastity, self respect, and education? Who? shrink not in your Belgravian silences—the Chartists, the communists Chartists, upon whom you and your venal press heap every kind of cowardly excitation and libellous slander. You have found out many things, since Peterloo, add that fact to the number.

It may seem strange that I did not tell my mother into what a pandemonium I had fallen, and get her to deliver me, but a delicacy, which was not all evil, kept me back. I shrank from seeming, to dislike to earn my daily bread, and still more from seeming to object to what she had appointed for me. Her will had been always law, it seemed a devilish sin to dispute it. I took for granted, too, that she knew what the place was like, and that, therefore, it must be right for me. And when I came home at night, and got back to my beloved missionary stories, I gathered materials enough to occupy my thoughts during the next day's work, and make me blind and deaf to all the evil around me. My mother, poor dear creature, would have denounced my day dreams sternly enough, had she known of their existence, but were they not holy angels from heaven, guardians sent by that Father, whom I had been taught not to believe in, to shield my senses from pollution?

I was ashamed, too, to mention to my mother the wickedness which I saw and heard. With the delicacy of an innocent

boy, I almost forgot all the very witnessing of it as a sin to myself, and soon I began to be ashamed of more than the mere sitting by and hearing. I found myself gradually learning slang-insolence, laughing at coarse jokes, taking part in angry conversations, my moral tone was gradually becoming lower, but yet the habit of prayer remained, and every night at my bedside, when I prayed to "be converted, and made a child of God," I prayed that the same mercy might be extended to my fellow workmen, "if they belonged to the number of the elect." Those prayers may have been answered in a wider and deeper sense than I then thought of.

But, altogether, I felt myself in a most distracted, rudderless state. My mother's advice I felt duly less and less inclined to ask. A gulf was opening between us, we were moving in two different worlds, and she saw it, and imputed it to me as a sin, and was the more cold to me by day, and painful for me (as I knew afterwards) the more passionately while I slept. But help or teacher I had none. I knew not that I had a Father in heaven. How could He be my Father till I was converted? I was a child of the Devil, they told me, and now and then I felt inclined to take them at their word, and behave like one. No sympathising face looked on me out of the wide heaven—off the wide earth, none. I was all boiling with new hopes, new temptations, new passions, new sorrows, and "I looked to the right hand and to the left, and no man cared for my soul."

I had felt myself from the first strangely drawn towards Crossthwaite, carefully as he seemed to avoid me, except to give me business directions in the workroom. He alone had shown me any kindness, and he, too, alone was untroubled with the sin around him. Silent, moody, and pre-occupied, he was yet the king of the room. His opinion was always asked, and listened to. His eye always covered the rascal and the blasphemer, his songs, when he rarely broke out into merriment, were always rapturously applauded. Men hated, and yet respected him. I shrank from him at first, when I heard him called a Chartist, for my dim notions of that class were, that they were a very wicked set of people who wanted to kill all the soldiers and policemen, and respectable people, and rob all the shops of their contents. But, Chartist or none, Crossthwaite fascinated me. I often found myself neglecting my work to study his face. I liked him, too, because he was as I was—small, pale, and weakly. He might have been five and twenty, but his looks, like those of too many working-men, were rather those of a man of forty. Wild grey eyes gleamed out from under huge knitted brows, and a perpendicular wall of brain, too large for his puny body. He was not only, I soon discovered, a water-drinker, but a strict "vegetarian" also; to which, per-

haps, he owed a great deal of the almost preternatural clearness, volubility, and sensitiveness of his mind. But whether from his ascetic habits, or the unhealthiness of his grade, the marks of ill-health were upon him; and his sallow cheek, and ever working lip, proclaimed too surely --

The fiery soul which, working out its way,
Fretted the piny body to decay
And o'er informed the ornament of clay

I longed to open my heart to him. Instinctively I felt that he was a kindred spirit. Often, turning round suddenly in the workroom, I caught him watching me with an expression which seemed to say, "Poor boy, and art thou too one of us? Hast thou too to fight with poverty and guilelessness, and the cravings of an unsatisfied intellect, as I have done?" But when I tried to speak to him earnestly, his manner was peremptory and repellent. It was well for me that so it was -- well for me, I see now, that it was not from him my mind received the first lessons in self-development. For guides did come to me in good time, though not such, perhaps, as either my mother or my readers would have chosen for me.

My great desire now was to get knowledge. By getting that I fancied, as most self-educated men are apt to do, I should surely get wisdom. Books, I thought, would tell me all I needed. But where to get the books? And which? I had exhausted our small stock at home, I was sick and tired, without knowing why, of their narrow conventional view of everything. After all, I had been reading them all along, not for their doctrines but for their facts, and knew not where to find more, except in forbidden paths. I dare not ask my mother for books, for I dare not confess to her that religious ones were just what I did not want, and all history, poetry, science, I had been accustomed to hear spoken of as "carnal learning, human philosophy," more or less diabolic and inimical to the soul. So, as usually happens in this life -- "By the law was the knowledge of sin" -- and unnatural restrictions on the development of the human spirit only associated with guilt of conscience, what ought to have been an innocent and necessary blessing.

My poor mother, not singular in her mistake, had sent me forth, out of an unconscious paradise into the evil world, without allowing me even the god strength which comes from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. She expected in me the innocence of the dove, as if that was possible on such an earth as this, without the wisdom of the serpent to support it. She forbade me strictly to stop and look into the windows of print shops, and I strictly obeyed her. But she forbade me, too, to read any book which I had not first shown her, and that restriction, reasonable enough in the ab-

stract, practically meant, in the case of a poor boy like myself, reading no books at all. And then came my first act of disobedience, the parent of many more. Bitterly have I repented it, and bitterly been punished. Yet, strange contradiction! I dare not wish it undone. But such is the great law of life. Punished for our sins we surely are, and yet how often they become our blessings, teaching us that which nothing else can teach us! Nothing else? One says so. Rich parents, I suppose, say so, when they send their sons to public schools "to learn life." We working men have too often no other teacher than our own errors. But surely, surely, the rich ought to have been able to discover some mode of education in which knowledge may be acquired without the price of conscience. Yet they have not, and we must not complain of them for not giving such a one to the working man when they have not yet even given it to their own children.

In a street through which I used to walk homeward was an old book shop, piled and fringed outside and in with books of every age, size, and colour. And here I at last summoned courage to stop, and timidly and stealthily taking out some volume whose title attracted me, snatch hastily a few pages and hasten on, half-fearful of being called on to purchase, half-ashamed of a desire which I fancied everyone else considered as unlawful as my mother did. Sometimes I was lucky enough to find the same volume several days running, and to take up the subject where I had left it off, and then I continued to hurry through a great deal of "Childe Harold," "Lara," and the "Corsair" -- a new world of wonders to me. They fed, those poems, both my health and my diseases, while they gave me, little of them as I could understand, a thousand new notions about scenery and man, a sense of poetic melody and luxuriance as yet utterly unknown. They clung in with all my discontent, my melancholy, my thirst after my life of action and excitement, however frivolous, insane, or even worse. I forgot the Corsair's sinful trade in his free and daring life, rather, I honestly eliminated the bad element in which, God knows, I took no delight -- and kept the good one. However that might be, the innocent, guilty pleasure grew on me day by day. Innocent because human -- guilty, because disobedient. But have I not paid the penalty?

One evening, however, I fell accidentally on a new book -- "The Life and Poems of J. Keats." I opened the story of his life -- became interested, absorbed -- and there I stood, I know not how long, on the greasy pavement, heedless of the passers who thrust me right and left, reading by the flaring gaslight that sad history of labour, sorrow, and death -- how the Highland cottar, in spite of disease, penny starvation itself, and the daily struggle to earn his bread by digging

and ditching, educated himself—how he toiled unceasingly with his hands—how he wrote his poems in secret on duty scraps of paper and old leaves of books—how thus he wore himself out, manful and godly, “bating not a jot of heart or hope,” till the weak flesh would bear no more; and the noble spirit, unrecognised by the lord of the soil, returned to God who gave it. I seemed to see in his history a sad presage of my own. If he, stronger, more self-restrained, more righteous far than ever I could be, had died thus unknown, unassisted, in the stern battle with social disadvantages, what must be my lot?

And tears of sympathy, rather than of selfish fear, fell fast upon the book.

A harsh voice from the inner darkness of the shop startled me.

“Hoot, laddie, ye’ll better no spoil my books wi’ greeting ower them!”

I replaced the book hastily, and was hurrying on, but the same voice called me back in a more kindly tone.

“Stop a wee, my laddie. I’m no angered wi’ ye. Come in, and we’ll just ha’ a bit crack thegither.”

I went in, for there was a gentility in the tone to which I was unaccustomed, and something whispered to me the hope of an adventure, as indeed it proved to be, if an event deserves that name which decided the course of my whole destiny.

“What war ye greeking about, then? What was the book?”

“Bethune’s *Life and Poems*, sir,” I said. “And certainly they did affect me very much.”

“Affect ye? Ah, Johnnie Bethune, puir fellow! Ye maunna take on about sic like laddies, or ye’ll greet your o’en out o’ your head. It’s mony a braw man beside Johnnie Bethune has gane Johnnie Bethune’s gate.”

Though unaccustomed to the Scotch accent, I could make out enough of this speech to be in nowise consoled by it. But the old man turned the conversation by asking me abruptly my name, and trade, and family.

“Hum, hum, widow, eh? ‘Pun body! work at Smith’s shop, eh? Ye’ll ken John Crossthwaite, thon’ ay? hum, hum, an’ ye’re desirous o’ reading books, vara weel—let’s see your capabilities.”

And he pulled me into the dim light of the little back window, shoved back his spectacles, and peering at me from underneath them, began, to my great astonishment, to feel my head all over.

“Hum, hum, a vara gude forehead—vara gude indeed. Cansative organs large, perceptive ditto. Imagination superabundant—mun be heeled. Renevolence, conscientiousness, ditto, ditto. Caution—no—that large—might be developed” with a quiet chuckle, “under a gude Scot’s education. Just turn your head into profile, laddie. Hum, hum. Back o’ the head a’thegither defective. Firmness sma’—love of approbation unco-

bis. Beware o’ leeing, as ye live, ye’ll need it. Philoprogenitiveness gude. Ye’ll be fond o’ harms, I’m guessing.”

“Of what?”

“Children, laddie,—children.”

“Very,” answered I, in utter dismay, “at what seemed to me a magical process for getting at all my secret failings.”

“Hum, hum! Amative and combative organs sma’—a general want o’ healthy animalism, as my friend Mr. Deville wad say. And ye want to read books?”

I confessed my deane, without, alas! confessing that my mother had forbidden it.

“Vara weel, thon books I’ll lend ye, after I’ve had a crack wi’ Crossthwaite about ye, gin I find his opinion o’ ye satisfactory. Come to me tho day after tomorrow. An’ mind, here are my rules—a’ damage done to a book to be paid for, or na mair books lent, ye’ll mind to take no books without leave, specially ye’ll mind no to read in bed o’ nights,—industrious folks ought to be sleepin’ betwene, an’ I’ll no be a party to burning pun weans in their beds, and lastly, ye’ll observe not to read mair than five books at once.”

I assured him that I thought such a thing impossible, but he smiled in his saturnine way, and said,—

“We’ll see this day fortnight. Now, thou I’ve observed ye for a month past over that aristocrat Byron’s poems. An’ I’m willing to teach the young idea how to shoot—but no to shoot itself, so ye’ll just leave alone that vinegary, soul-destroying trash, and I’ll lend ye, gin I hear a gude report o’ ye, ‘*The Paradise Lost*,’ o’ John Milton—a gran’ classic model, and for the doctrine o’ it, it’s just about as gude as ye’ll hear elsewhere the noo. So gang your gite, and tell John Crossthwaite, privately, and Sandy Mackaye wad like to see him the mornin’ night.”

I went home in wonder and delight. Books! books! books! I should have my fill of them at last. And when I said my prayers at night, I thanked God for this unexpected boon, and then remembered that my mother had forbidden it. That thought checked the thanks, but not the pleasure. Oh, parents! are there not real sins enough in the world already, without your defiling it, over and above, by inventing new ones?

CHAPTER III

SANDY MACKAYE.

THAT day fortnight came,—and the old Scotchman’s words came true. Four books of his I had already, and I came in to borrow a fifth, whereon he began with a solemn chuckle.

“Eh, laddie, laddie, I’ve been treating ye as the grocers do their new ‘prentices. They

first gie the boys three days' free warren among the figs and the sugar-candy, and they get scunnered wi' sweets after that. Noo, then, my lal, ye've just been reading four books in three days—and here's a fifth. Ye'll no open this again."

"Oh!" I cried, piteously enough, "just let me finish what I am reading. I'm in the middle of such a wonderful account of the *Hornets of Jorilla*."

"Hornets or wasps, a swarm of them ye're like to have at this rate, and a verry brail substitute ye'll find them for the Attie hee. Now tak' tent. I'm no in the habit of speakin' without deliberation, for it saves a man a great deal of trouble in changing his mind. If ye canna traduce to me a page o' Virgil by this day three months, ye read no more o' my books. Deontory reading is the bane o' lals. Ye mair begin with self-restaurant and method, my man, gin ye intend to gie yonself a liberal education. So I'll just mak' yon a present of an auld Latin grammar, and ye mair begin where your betters ha' begun before you."

"But who will teach me Latin?"

"Hoot! man! whell teach a man anything except himself?" It's only gentk folks and pun aristocratic bodies that go to be spoilt wi' tutors and pedagogues, crammin' and loadin' them wi' knowledge, as ye'd load a gun, to shoot it all out again, just as it went down, in a college examination, and faigot all about it after."

"Ah!" I sighed, "if I could have gone to college!"

"What for, then? My father was a Highland farmer, and yet he was a weel learned man, and 'Sandy, my lad,' he used to say, 'a man kens just as much as he's taught himself, and na mair. So get wisdom, and wi' all your gettin', get understanding.' And so I did. And mony's the Greek exercise I've written in the cowbyres. And mony's the page o' Virgil, too, I've turned into good Dawrie Scotch to see that's dead and gane, pun hizzie, sitting under the same plaid, with the sheep feeding round us, up among the hills, looking out ower the broad blue sea, and the wee haven wi' the fishing cobbles—"

There was a long solemn pause. I cannot tell why, but I loved the man from that moment, and I thought, too, that he began to love me. "Those few words seemed a proof of confidence, perhaps all the deeper, because accidental and unconscious."

I took the Virgil which he lent me, with Hamilton's literal translation between the lines, and an old tattered Latin grammar; I felt myself quite a learned man—actually the possessor of a Latin book! I regarded as something almost miraculous the opening of this new field for my ambition. Not that I was consciously, much less selfishly, ambitious. I had no idea as yet to be anything but a tailor to the end, to make clothes—perhaps in a less infernal atmosphere—but

still to make clothes, and live thereby. I did not suspect that I possessed powers above the mass. My intense longing after knowledge had been to me like a girl's first love—a thing to be concealed from every eye—to be looked at askance, even by myself, delicious as it was, with holy shame and trembling. And thus it was not cowardice merely, but natural modesty, which put me on a limited plan of concealing my studies from my mother, and even from my sister.

I slept in a little lean-to garret at the back of the house, some ten feet long by six wide. I could just stand upright against the inner wall, while the roof on the other side ran down to the floor. There was no fireplace in it, or any means of ventilation. No wonder I coughed all night accordingly, and woke about two every morning with choking throat and aching head. My mother often said that the room was "too small for a Christian to sleep in, but where could she get a better?"

Such was my only study. I could not use it as such, however, at night, without discovery, for my mother carefully looked in every evening, to see that my candle was out. But when my kind cough woke me, I rose, and creeping like a mouse about the room to my mother and sister slept in the next chamber, and every sound was audible through the narrow partition—I drew my darling books out from under a board of the floor, one end of which I had gradually loosened at odd minutes, and with them a rushlight, earned by running on messages, or by taking bits of work home, and finishing them for my fellows.

No wonder that with this scanty rest, and this complicated exertion of hands, eyes, and brain, followed by the long dreary day's work of the shop, my health began to fail; my eyes grew weaker and weaker, my cough became more acute; my appetite failed me daily. My mother noticed the change, and questioned me about it, affectionately enough. But I durst not, alas! tell the truth. It was not one offence, but the arrears of months of disobedience which I should have had to confess; and so arose infinite false excuses, and potty prevarications, which embittered and clogged still more my already overtaken spirit. About my own ailments—formidable as I believe they were—I never had a moment's anxiety. The expectation of early death was as unnatural to me as it is, I suspect, to almost all. Had I not hopes, plans, desires, infinite? Could I die while they were unfulfilled? Even now, I do not believe I shall die yet. I will not believe it—but let that pass.

Yes, let that pass. Perhaps I have lived long enough—longer than many a grey-headed man.

There is a race of mortals who become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age.

And might not those days of mine then have counted as months?—those days when, before starting forth to walk two miles to the shop at six o'clock in the morning, I sat some three or four hours shivering on my bed, putting myself into cramped and painful postures, not daring even to cough, lest my mother should fancy me unwell, and come in to see me, poor dear soul!—my eyes aching over the page, my feet wrapped up in the bedclothes, to keep them from the miserable pain of the cold, longing, watching, dawn after dawn, for the kind summer mornings, when I should need no candle light, look at the picture awhile, ye comfortable folks, who take down from your shelves what looks you like best at the moment, and then lie back, amid prints and statuettes, to grow wise in an easy chair, with a blazing fire and a camphire lamp. 'The lower classes uneducated!' Perhaps you would be so too, if learning cost you the privation which it costs some of them.

But this concealment could not last. My only wonder is, that I continued to get whole months of undiscovered study. One morning, about four o'clock, as might have been expected, my mother heard me stirring, came in, and found me sitting cross legged on my bed, stitching away, indeed, with all my might, but with a Virgil open before me.

She glanced at the book, clutched it with one hand and my arm with the other, and sternly asked,—

"Where did you get this heathen stuff?"

A lie rose to my lips, but I had been so gradually entangled in the bathed meshes of a system of concealment, and consequent prevarication, that I felt as if one direct falsehood would run forever my fast failing self-respect, and I told her the whole truth. She took the book and left the room. It was Saturday morning, and I spent two miserable days, for she never spoke a word to me till the two ministers had made their appearance, and drank their tea on Sunday evening, then at last she opened—

"And now, Mr Wigginton, what account have you of this Mr Mackaye, who has seduced my unhappy boy from the paths of obedience?"

"I am sorry to say, madam," answered the dark man, with a solemn snuffle, "that he proves to be a most objectionable and altogether unregenerate character. He is, as I am informed, neither more nor less than a Chartist and an open blasphemer."

"He is not!" I interrupted, angrily. "He has told me more about God, and given me better advice, than any human being, except my mother."

"Ah! madam, so thinks the unconverted heart, ignorant that the god of the Deist is not the God of the Bible—a consuming fire to all but His beloved elect; the god of the Deist, unhappy youth, is a mere self-invented, all-indulgent phantom—a will o' the wisp,

deluding the unwary, as he has deluded you, into the slough of carnal reason and shameful profligacy."

"Do you mean to call me a profligate?" I retorted fiercely, for my blood was up, and I felt I was fighting for all which I prized in the world. "If you do, you lie. Ask my mother when I ever disobeyed her before. I have never touched a drop of anything stronger than water, I have slaved over hours to pay for my own candle, I have—I have no sins to accuse myself of, and neither you nor any other person know of any. Do you call me a profligate because I wish to educate myself and rise in life?"

"Ah!" growled my poor mother to herself, "still more in need of sin!"

"The old Adam, my dear madam, you see—standing as he always does, on his own filthy rags of works, while all the imaginations of his heart are only evil so continually. Listen to me, poor sinner—"

"I will not listen to you," I cried, the accumulated disgust of years bursting out once and for all, "for I hate and despise you, eating my poor mother here out of house and home. You are one of those who creep into widow's houses, and for pretence make long prayers. You, sir, I will hear," I went on, turning to the dear old man who sat by, shaking his white locks, with a sad and puzzled air, "for I love you."

"My dear sister Locke," he began, "I really think sometimes—that is, Alton—with your leave, brother—I am almost disposed—but I wish to defer to your superior zeal—yet, at the same time, perhaps, the desire for information, however carnal in itself, may be an instrument in the Lord's hands—you know what I mean. I always thought him a gracious youth, madam, didn't you? And perhaps—I only observe it in passing; the Lord's people among the dissenting connections are apt to undervalue human learning as a means of course I mean only as a means. It is not generally known, I believe, that our revered Puritan patriarchs, Howe and Baxter, Owen and many more, were not altogether unacquainted with heathen authors, nay, that they may have been called absolutely learned men. And some of our leading ministers are inclined—no doubt they will be led rightly in so important a matter—to follow the example of the Independents in educating their young ministers, and turning Satan's weapons of heathen mythology against himself, as St. Paul is said to have done. My dear boy, what books have you now got by you of Mr Mackaye's?"

"Milton's Poems and a Latin Virgil."

"Ah!" growled the dark man, "will poetry, will Latin save an immortal soul?"

"I'll tell you what, sir, you say yourself that it depends on God's absolute counsel whether I am saved or not. So, if I am elect, I shall be saved whatever I do; and if

I am not, I shall be damned whatever I do; and in the meantime you had better mind your own business, and let me do the best I can for this life, as the next is all settled for me."

This flippant, but after all not unreasonable speech, seemed to silence the man, and I took the opportunity of running upstairs and hanging down my Milton. The old man was speaking as I re-entered.

"And you know, my dear madam, Mr Milton was a true converted man and a Puritan."

He was Oliver Cromwell's secretary," I asked.

"Did he teach you to disobey your mother?" asked my mother.

I did not answer, and the old man, after turning over a few leaves, as if he knew the book well, looked up.

"I think, madam, you ought let the youth keep these books, if he will promise, as I am sure he will, to see no more of Mr Mackaye."

I was ready to burst out crying, but I made up my mind and answered,—

"I must see him once again, or he will think me so ungrateful. He is the best friend that I ever had, except you, mother. Besides, I do not know if he will lend me any, after this."

My mother looked at the old minister, and then gave a sullen assent. "Promise me only to see him once - but I cannot trust you. You have deceived me once, Alton, and you may again."

"I shall not, I shall not," I answered proudly. "You do not know me"—and I spoke true.

"You do not know yourself, my poor dear, foolish child!" she replied—and that was true too.

"And now dear friends," said the dark man, "let us join in offering up a few words of special intercession."

We all knelt down, and I soon discovered that by the special intercession was meant a string of bitter and groundless slanders against poor me, twisted into the form of a prayer for my conversion, "if it were God's will." To which I responded with a closing "Amen," for which I was sorry afterwards, when I recollected that it was said in merely insolent mockery. But the little faith I had was breaking up fast - not altogether, surely, by my own fault.

1 The portraits of the minister and the missionary are surely exceptions to their class, rather than the average. The Baptists have had their Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall, and among miscellaneous Dr Carey, and noble spirits in plenty. But such men as those who excited Alton Locke's disgust are to be met with in every sect, in the Church of England, and in the Church of Rome. And it is a real and fearful scandal to the young, to see such men listened to as God's messengers, in spite of their utter want of any manhood or virtue, simply because they are "orthodox," each according to the shibboleths of his hearers, and possess that vulpine "discretion of divines," whose miraculous might Dean Swift sets forth in his "Essay on the

At all events, from that day I was emancipated from modern Puritanism. The ministers both avoided all serious conversation with me, and my mother did the same, while with a strength of mind, rare among women, she never alluded to the scene of that Sunday evening. It was a rule with her never to return to what was once done and settled. What was to be might be prayed over. But it was to be endured in silence, yet wider and wider ever from that time opened the gulf between us.

I went trembling the next afternoon to Mackaye and told my story. He first scolded me severely for disobeying my mother. "If that begins o' that gate, laddie, ends by disobeying God and his own conscience. Gin ye're to be a scholar, God will make you one - and if not, ye'll no mak' yourself one in spite o' Him and His commandments." And then he filled his pipe and chuckled away in silence, at last, he exploded in a horse laugh.

"So ye gied the ministers a bit o' yer mind? 'The deil's among the tailors' in gude earnest, as the sang says. There's Johnnie Crossthwaite - kicked the Papist priest out o' his house yesticeen, pur in ministers, it's ill times wi' them! They gang about keekling and screeching after the working men, like a hen that's hat'ed ducklings, when she sees them tak' the water. Little Dunkeld's coming to London sune, I'm thinking."

Hich' an' a parish, a parish, a parish,
Hich' an' a parish as little Dunkeld,
They hac' strik't the minister, hanged the parson,
Dung down the steeple, and drucken the bell.

"But may I keep the books a little while, Mr Mackaye?"

"Keep them till ye die, gin ye will. What is the worth o' them to me? What is the worth o' anything to me, pur an' deevil, that ha' no half-a-dizen years to live, it the furthest God bless ye, my bairn, gang hame, and mind your mother, or it's little gude books'll do ye."

CHAPTER IV

TAILORS AND SOLDIERS.

I WAS now thrown again utterly on my own resources. I read and re-read Milton's "Poems" and Virgil's "Æneid" for six more months at every spare moment, thus spending over them, I suppose, all in all, far more time than most gentlemen have done. I found, too, in the last volume of Milton a few of his select prose works - the "Areopagitica," the "Defence of the English People,"

"Fates of Clergymen." Such men do exist, and prosper, and as long as they are allowed to do so Alton Locke will meet them, and be scandalised by them. - F.

and one or two more, in which I gradually began to take an interest, and, little of them as I could comprehend, I was awed by their tremendous depth and power, as well as excited by the utterly new trains of thought into which they led me. Terrible was the amount of bodily fatigue which I had to undergo in reading at every spare moment, while walking to and fro from my work, while sitting up, often from midnight till dawn, stitching away to pay for the tallow candle which I burnt, till I had to resort to all sorts of uncomfortable contrivances for keeping myself awake, even at the expense of bodily pain—Heaven forbid that I should weary my readers by describing them! Young men of the upper classes, to whom study pursues it as intensely as you will—is but the business of the day, and every spare moment relaxation; little you guess the frightful drudgery undergone by a man of the people who has vowed to educate himself,—to live at once two lives, each as severe as the whole of yours,—to bring to the self-imposed toil of intellectual improvement, a body and brain already worn out by a day of tedious manual labour. I did it. God forbid, though, that I should take credit to myself for it. Hundreds more have done it, with still fewer advantages than mine. Hundreds more, an ever increasing army of martyrs, are doing it at this moment of some of them, too, perhaps you may hear hereafter.

I had read through Milton, as I said, again and again, I had got out of him all that my youth and my unregulated mind enabled me to get. I had devoured, too, not without profit, a large old edition of "Foxe's Martyrs," which the venerable minister lent me, and now I was hungering again for fresh food, and again at a loss where to find it.

I was hungering, too, for more than information—for a friend. Since my intercourse with Sandy Mackaye had been stopped, six months had passed without my once opening my lips to any human being upon the subjects with which my mind was haunted day and night. I wanted to know more about poetry, history, politics, philosophy—all things in heaven and earth. But, above all, I wanted a faithful and sympathising ear into which to pour all my doubts, discontents, and aspirations. My sister Susan, who was one year younger than myself, was growing into a slender, pretty, hectic girl of sixteen. But she was altogether a devout Puritan. She had just gone through the process of conviction of sin and conversion; and being looked upon at the chapel as an especially gracious professor, was either unable or unwilling to think or speak on any subject, except on those to which I felt a growing distaste. She had shrunk from me, too, very much, since my forcible attack that Sunday evening on the dark minister, who was her special favourite. I remarked it, and it was a fresh cause of unhappiness and perplexity.

At last I made up my mind, come what would, to force myself upon Crossthwaite. He was the only man whom I knew who seemed able to help me, and his very reserve had invested him with a mystery, which served to heighten my imagination of his powers. I waylaid him one day coming out of the workroom to go home, and plunged at once desperately into the matter.

"Mr. Crossthwaite, I want to speak to you. I want to ask you to advise me."

"I have known that a long time."

"Then why did you never say a kind word to me?"

"Because I was waiting to see whether you were worth saying a kind word to. It was but the other day, remember, you were a bit of a boy. Now, I think, I may trust you with a thing or two. Besides, I wanted to see whether you trusted me enough to ask me. Now you've broke the ice at last, in with you, head and ears, and see what you can fish out."

"I am very unhappy—"

"That's no new disorder that I know of."

"No, but I think the reason I am unhappy is a strange one, at least, I never read of but one person else in the same way. I want to educate myself, and I can't."

"You must have real precious little, then, if you think yourself in a strange way. Bless the boy's heart! And what the dickens do you want to be educating yourself for, pray?"

This was said in a tone of good-humoured banter, which gave me courage. He offered to walk homewards with me, and, as I shambled along by his side, I told him all my story and all my griefs.

I never shall forget that walk. Every house, tree, turning, which we passed that day on our way, is indissolubly connected in my mind with some strange new thought which arose in me just at each spot, and recurred, so are the mind and the senses connected, as surely as I repress it.

I had been telling him about Sandy Mackaye. He confessed to an acquaintance with him, but in a reserved and mysterious way, which only heightened my curiosity.

We were going through the Horse Guards, and I could not help lingering to look with wistful admiration on the huge monstachioed war machines who sauntered about the courtyard.

A tall and handsome officer, blazing in scarlet and gold, cantered in on a superb horse, and, dismounting, threw the reins to a dragoon as grand and gandy as himself. Did I envy him? Well—I was but seventeen. And there is something noble to the mind, as well as to the eye, in the great, strong man, who can fight—a completeness, a self-restraint, a terrible sleeping power in him. As Mr. Carlyle says, "A soldier, after all, is one of the few remaining realities of the age. All other professions almost promise one thing, and perform—alas! what?"

But this man promises to fight, and does it; and, if he be told, will veritably take out a long sword and kill me."

So thought my companion, though the mood in which he viewed the fact was somewhat different from my own.

"Come on," he said poovishly, clenching me by the arm, "what do you want dawdling? Are you a nursery-maid, that you must stare at those red-coated butchers?" And a deep curse followed.

"What harm have they done you?"

"I should think I owed them turn enough."

"What?"

"They cut my father down at Sheffield,—perhaps with the very swords he helped to make,—because he would not sit still and stare, and see us starving round him, while those who fattened on the sweat of his brow, and on those lungs of his, which the sword-grinding dust was eating out day by day, were wantoning on venison and champagne. That's the harm they've done me, my chap!"

"Poor fellows!—they only did as they were ordered, I suppose."

"And what business have they to let the machines be ordered? What right, I say—what right has any free, reasonable soul on earth, to sell himself for a shilling a day to murder any man, right or wrong—even his own brother or his own father—just because such a whiskered, profligate jackanapes as that officer, without learning, without any god except his own looking-glass and his opera-dancer—a fellow who, just because he is born a gentleman, is set to command grey-headed men before he can command his own meanest passions. Good heavens! that the lives of free men should be estimated to such a stuffed cockatoo; and that free men should be such traitors to their country, traitors to their own flesh and blood, as to sell themselves, for a shilling a day and the smirks of the nursery-maids, to do that fellow's bidding!"

"What are you a-grumbling about here, my man?—gotten the cholera?" asked one of the dragoons, a huge, stupid-looking lad.

"About you, you young long-legged cut-throat," answered Crossthwaite, "and all you crew of traitors."

"Help, help, comrades o' mine!" quoth the dragoon, bursting with laughter, "I'm gaun to be noothered wi' a little booy that's gone mad, and torned Chartist."

I dragged Crossthwaite off, for what was just to the soldiers, I saw, by his face, was fierce enough earnest to him. We walked on a little, in silence.

"Now," I said, "that was a good-natured fellow enough, though he was a soldier. You and he might have cracked many a joke together, if you did but understand each other,—and he was a country-man of yours, too."

"I may crack something else besides

jokes with him some day," answered he, moodily.

"Then my word, you must take care how you do it. He is as big as four of us."

"That vile aristocrat, the old Italian poet—what's his name?—Ariosto—ay!—he know which quarter the wind was making for, when he said that firearms would be the end of all your old knights and gentlemen in armor, that hewed down unarmed innocents as if they had been sheep. Gunpowder is your true leveller—lash physical strength! A boy's a man with a musket in his hand, my chap!"

"God forbid," I said, "that I should ever be made a man of in that way, or you either. I do not think we are quite big enough to make fighters, and if we were, what have we got to fight about?"

"Big enough to make fighters?" said he, half to himself, "or strong enough, perhaps?"—or clever enough?—and yet Alexander was a little man, and the Petit Caporal, and Nelson, and Caesar, too, and so was Saul of Tarsus, and weakly he was into the bargain. Napoleon was a dwarf and so was Attila, Shakespeare was lame, Alfred, a rickety weakling, Byron, clubfooted,—so much of body *occur* spirit brutes force *versus* genius—genius!"

I looked at him, his eyes glared like two balls of fire. Suddenly he turned to me.

"Locke, my boy, I've made an ass of myself, and got into a rage, and broken a good old resolution of mine, and a promise that I made to my dear little woman—bless her!—and said things to you that you ought to know nothing of for this long time, but those red-coats always put me beside myself. God forgive me!" And he held out his hand to me cordially.

"I can quite understand your feeling deeply on one point," I said, as I took it, "after the sad story you told me,—but why so bitter on all? What is there so very wrong about things, that we must begin fighting about it?"

"Bless your heart, poor innocent! What is wrong?—what is not wrong? Wasn't there enough in that talk with Mackaye, that you told me of just now, to show anybody that, who can tell a hawk from a handsaw?"

"Was it wrong in him to give himself such trouble about the education of a poor young fellow, who has no tie on him, who can never repay him?"

"No, that's just like him. He feels for the people, for he has been one of us. He worked in a printing office himself many a year, and he knows the heart of the working man. But he didn't tell you the whole truth about education. He daren't tell you. No one who has money dare speak out his heart,—not that he has much certainly, but, the cunning old Scot that he is, he lives by the present system of things, and he won't speak ill of the bridge which carries him over—till the time comes."

I could not understand whither all this ended, and walked on, silent and somewhat angry, at least in the least slight cast on Mackaye.

"Don't you see, stupid?" he broke out at last. "What did he say to you about gentlemen being crummed by tutors and professors? Have not you as good a right to them as any gentleman?"

"But he told me they were no use—that every man must educate himself."

"Oh! all very fine to tell you the grapes are sour, when you can't reach them. Bah."

"Can't you see what comes of education?" he thought, provided he be a gentleman, can be doctored up at school and college, enough to make him play his part decently—his mighty part of ruling us, and riding over our heads, and picking our pockets, as parson, doctor, lawyer, and member of Parliament—whereas you, now, for instance, cleverer than ninety-nine gentlemen out of a hundred, if you had one-tenth the trouble taken with you that is taken with every pig-headed son of an aristocrat—"

"Am I clever?" asked I, in honest surprise.

"What! haven't you found that out yet? Don't try to put that on me. Don't a girl know when she's pretty, without asking her neighbours?"

"Really, I never thought about it."

"More simple than you. Old Mackaye has, at all events, though, canny Scotchman that he is, he'll never say a word to you about it, yet he makes no secret of it to other people. I heard him the other day telling some of our friends that you were a thorough young

"I blushed slightly, between pleasure and a new feeling, was it ambition?"

"Why, have not you a right to aspire to a college education as any do nothing there at the abbey, lad?"

"I don't know that I have a right to anything."

"What, not become what Nature intended you to become? What has she given you brains for, but to be educated and used? Oh! I heard a fine lecture upon that at our club the other night. There was a man there a gentleman, too, but a thorough-going people's man, I can tell you, Mr. O'Flynn. What an orator that man is, to be sure! The Irish Exchanges, I hear they call him in Consultation Hall. Isn't he the man to pitch into the Manningtons? 'Gentlemen and ladies,' says he, 'how long will a diabolic society—no, an offshoot society it was—how long will an effete, emasculate, and effeminate society, in the diabolic selfishness of its eclecticism, refuse to acknowledge what my immortal countryman, Burke, calls the "Dei voluntatem in rebus revoltantem"—the revelation of Nature's will in the phenomena of matter? the cerebration of each in the prophetic sacrament of the yet undeveloped possibilities of his

mentation? The form of the brain alone, and not the possession of the vile goods of wealth and rank, constitute man's only right to education—to the glories of art and science. Those beaming eyes and roscate lips beneath me proclaim a heavy of undeveloped Aspasias, of embryo Cleopatra, destined by Nature, and only restrained by man's injustice, from ruling the world by their beauty's eloquence. Those massive and beetling brows, gleaming with the lamplike flames of patriotic wisdom what is needed to unfold them into a race of Shrike sparrows and of Gracchi, ready to proclaim with sword and lyre the divine harmonies of liberty, equality, and fraternity, before quaking universe?"

"It sounds very grand," replied I, meekly, "and I should like very much certainly to have a good education. But I can't see whose injustice keeps me out of one if I can't afford to pay for it."

"Whose? Why, the parsons, to be sure. They've got the monopoly of education in England, and they get their bread by it at their public schools and universities, and of course it's their interest to keep up the price of their commodity, and let no man have a taste of it who can't pay down handsomely. And so those aristocrats of college dons go on rolling in riches, and fellowships and scholarships, that were bequeathed by the people's friends in old times, just to educate poor scholars like you and me, and give us our rights as freemen."

"But I thought the clergy were doing so much to educate the poor. At least, I hear all the dissenting ministers grumbling at their continual interference."

"Ay, educating them to make them slaves and bigots. They don't teach them what they teach their own sons. Look at the miserable smattering of general information—just enough to serve as sauce for their gut first and last lesson of 'Obey the powers that be' whatever they be, leave us alone in our comforts, and stave patiently, do, like good boys, for it's God's will. And then, if a boy does show talent in school, do they help him up in life? Not they, when he has just learnt enough to what his appetite for more, they turn him adrift again, to sink and chudge—to do his duty, as they call it, in that state of life to which society and the devil have called him."

"But there are innumerable stories of great Englishmen who have risen from the lowest ranks."

"Ay, but where are the stories of those who have not risen—of all the noble geniuses who have ended in desperation, drunkenness, starvation, suicide, because no one would take the trouble of lifting them up, and enabling them to walk in the path which Nature had marked out for them? Dead men tell no tales, and this old whitened sepulchre, society, ain't going to turn informer against itself."

"I trust and hope," I said, sully, "that if God intends me to rise, He will open the way for me, perhaps the very struggles and sorrows more than ever wealth and prosperity could."

"True, Alton, my boy! and that's my only comfort. It does make much of us, this bitter battle of life. We working men, when we do come out of the furnace, come out, not tinsel and *papier maché*, like those fops of red-tape statesmen, but steel and granite, Alton, my boy! that has been seven times tried in the fire, and woo to the *papier maché* gentleman that runs against us! But," he went on sadly, "for one who comes safe through the furnace, there are a hundred who crack in the burning. You are a young bear, my lad, with all your sorrows before you, and you'll find that a working man's training is like the Red Indian children's. The few who are strong enough to stand it grow up warriors, but all those who are not fire and water proof by nature—just die, Alton, my lad, and the tribe thinks itself well rid of them."

So that conversation ended. But it had implanted in my bosom a new seed of mingled good and evil, which was destined to bear fruit, precious perhaps as well as bitter. God knows it has hung on the tree long enough. Sour and harsh from the first, it has been many a year in ripening. But the sweetness of the apple, the potency of the grape, as the chemists tell us, are born out of acidity—a developed sourness. Will it be so with my thoughts? Dare I assert, as I sit writing here, with the wild waters slipping past the cabin windows, backwards and backwards ever, every plunge of the vessel one forward leap from the old world—worn-out world I had almost called it, of sham civilisation and real paucity—dare I hope ever to return and triumph? Shall I, after all, lay my bones among my own people, and hear the voices of freemen whisper in my dying ears?

Silence, dreaming heart! Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof, and the good thereof also. Would that I had known that before! Above all, that I had known it on that night, when first the burning thought arose in my heart, that I was unjustly used; that society had not given me my rights. It came to me as a revelation, celestial-infernal, full of glorious hopes of the possible future in store for me through the perfect development of all my faculties, and full, too, of fierce present rage, wounded vanity, bitter grudgings against those more favoured than myself, which grew in time almost to cursing against the God who had made me a poor untutored working-man, and seemed to have given me genius only to keep me in a *Tantalus*' hell of unsatisfied thirst.

Ay, respectable gentlemen and ladies, I will confess all to you—you shall have, if you enjoy it, a fresh opportunity for indulg-

ing that supreme pleasure which the press lately affords you of insulting the classes whose powers must of you know as little as you do their sufferings. Yes, the Chartist poet is vain, conceited, ambitious, uneducated, shallow, inexperienced, envious, ferocious, scurrilous, seditious, traitorous—Is your charitable vocabulary exhausted? Then ask yourselves, how often have you yourself honestly resisted and conquered the temptation to any one of these sins, when it has come across you just once in a way, and not as they came to me, as they come to thousands of the working-men, daily and hourly, till their tortments do, by length of time, become their elements? What, are we virtuous, too? Yes! And if those who have, like you, still care more, what wonder if those who have nothing, care of something? Prodigate too? Well, though that imputation as a generality is utterly calumnious, though your amount of respectable annual enjoyment per annum is a hundred times as great as that of the most self-indulgent artisan, yet, if you had ever felt what it is to want, not only every luxury of the senses, but even bread to eat, you would think more mercifully of the man who makes up by rare excesses, and those only of the limited kinds possible to him, for long intervals of dull privation, and says in his madness, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" We have our sins, and you have yours. Ours may be the more gross and barbaric, but yours are none the less damnable, perhaps all the more so, for being the sleek, subtle, respectable, religious sins they are. You are frantic enough if our part of the press calls you hard names, but you cannot see that your part of the press repays it back to us with interest. We see those insults, and feel them bitterly enough, and do not forget them, alas! soon enough, while they pass unheeded by your delicate eyes as trivial truisms. Horrible, unprincipled, villainous, seditious, frantic, blasphemous, are epithets, of course, when applied to—to how large a portion of the English people, you will some day discover to your astonishment. When will that day come, and how? In thunder, and storm, and garments rolled in blood? Or like the dew on the mown grass, and the clear shining of the sunlight after April rain?

Yes, it was true. Society had not given me my rights. And woe unto the man on whom that idea, true or false, rises lurid, filling all his thoughts with sallow glare, as of the pit itself. Be it true, be it false, it is equally a woe to believe it, to have to live on a negation, to have to worship for our only idea, as hundreds of thousands of us have this day, the hatred of the things which are Ay, though one of us here and there may die in faith, in sight of the promised land, yet is it not hard, when looking from the top of Pisgah into "the good time coming," to watch the years slipping away one by one, and death crawling nearer and nearer, and

the people wearying themselves in the fire for very vanity, and Jordan not yet passed, the promised land not yet entered, while our little children die around us, like lambs beneath the knife, of cholera, and typhus, and consumption, and all the diseases which the good time can and will prevent, which, as science has proved, and you the rich confess, might be prevented at once, if you dared to bring in one bold and comprehensive measure, and not sacrifice yearly the lives of thousands to the idol of vested interests and a majority in the House. Is it not hard to men who smelt beneath such things to help crying aloud—"Then cursed Molech-Mammon, take my life if thou wilt; let me die in the wilderness, for I have deserved it, but these little ones in mines and factories, in typhus-cellers, and Tooting pandemoniums, what have they done?" If not in their fathers' cause, yet still in theirs, were it so great a sin to die upon a barricade?"

Or after all, my working brothers, is it true of our promised land, even as of that Jewish one of old, that the *priests'* feet must first cross the mystic stream into the good land and large which God has prepared for us?

Is it so indeed? Then in the name of the Lord of Hosts ye priests of His, why will ye not awake, and arise, and go over Jordan, that the people of the Lord may follow you?

CHAPTER V.

THE SCIENTIST'S MOTIVE.

My readers will perceive, from what I have detailed, that I was not likely to get any very positive ground of comfort from Crosshwaite, and from within myself there was daily less and less hope of any. Daily the struggle became more intolerable between my duty to my mother and my duty to myself—that inward thirst for mental self-improvement, which, without any clear consciousness of its sanctity or inspiration, I felt, and could not help feeling, that I *must* follow. No doubt it was very self-willed and ambitious of me to do that which rich men's sons are flogged for not doing, and rewarded with all manner of prizes, scholarships, fellowships, for doing. But the nineteenth year is a time of life at which self-will is apt to exhibit itself in other people besides tailors, and those religious persons who think it no sin to drive their sons on through classics and mathematics, in hopes of gaining them a station in life, ought not to be very hard upon me for driving myself on through the same path without any such selfish hope of gain—though perhaps the very fact of my having no wish or expectation of such advantage will constitute in their eyes my sin and folly, and prove that I was

following the dictates merely of a carnal lust, and not of a proper worldly prudence. I really do not wish to be flippant or sneering. I have seen the evil of it as much as any man, in myself and in my own class. But there are excuses for such a fault in the working-man. It does sour and madden him to be called presumptuous and ambitious for the very same aspirations which are lauded up to the skies in the sons of the rich—unless, indeed, he will do one little thing, and so make his peace with society. If he will desert his own class, if he will try to become a shabby gentleman, a parasite, and, if he can, a Maminourte, the world will compliment him on his noble desire to "*rise in life*." He will have won his spurs, and be admitted into that exclusive pale of knighthood, beyond which it is a sin to carry arms even in self defence. But if the working genius dares to be true to his own class—to stay among them—to regenerate them—to defend them—to devote his talents to those among whom God placed him and brought him up—then he is the demagogue, the incendiary, the fanatic, the dreamer. So you would have the monopoly of talent, too, exclusive worklings? And yet you pretend to believe in the miracle of Pentecost, and the religion that was taught by the carpenter's Son, and preached across the world by fishermen!

I was several times minded to argue the question out with my mother, and assert for myself the same independence of soul which I was now earning for my body by my wages. Once I had resolved to speak to her that very evening; but, strangely enough, happening to open the Bible, which, alas! I did seldom at that time, my eye fell upon the chapter where Jesus, after having justified to His parents His absence in the temple, while hearing the doctors and asking them questions, yet went down with them to Nazareth after all, and was subject unto them. The story struck me vividly as a symbol of my own duties. But on reading further, I found more than one passage which seemed to me to convey a directly opposite lesson, where His mother and His brethren, fancying Him mad, attempted to interfere with His labours, and asserting their family rights as reasons for retaining Him, met with a peremptory rebuff. I puzzled my head for some time to find out which of the two cases was the more applicable to my state of self-development. The notion of asking for teaching from on high on such a point had never crossed me. Indeed, if it had, I did not believe sufficiently either in the story or in the doctrines connected with it, to have tried such a resource. And so, as may be supposed, my growing self-conceit decided for me that the latter course was the lifting one.

And yet I had not energy to carry it out. I was getting so worn out in body and mind from continual study and labour, started food, and want of sleep, that I could not face the thought of an explosion, such as I knew

must ensue, and I lingered on in the same unhappy state, becoming more and more morose in manner to my mother, while I was as assiduous as ever in all filial duties. But I had no pleasure in home. She seldom spoke to me. Indeed, there was no common topic about which we could speak. Besides, ever since that fatal Sunday evening, I saw that she suspected me and watched me. I had good reason to believe that she set spies upon my conduct. Poor dear mother! God forbid that I should uncease thee for a single care of thine, for a single suspicion even, prompted as they all were by a mother's anxious love. I would never have committed those things to paper, hadst thou not been far beyond the reach or hearing of them, and only now, in hopes that they may serve as a warning, in some degree to mothers, but ten times more to children. For I sinned against thee, deeply and shamefully, in thought and deed, while you didst never sin against me, though all thy caution did but hasten the fatal explosion which came, and perhaps must have come, under some form or other, in any case.

I had been detained one night in the shop; till late, and on my return my mother demanded, in a severe tone, the reason of my stay, and on my telling her, answered as severely that she did not believe me, that she had too much reason to suspect that I had been with bad companions.

"Who dared to put such a thought into your head?"

She "would not give up her authorities, but she had too much reason to believe them."

Again I demanded the name of my slanderer, and was refused it. And then I burst out, for the first time in my life, into a real fit of rage with her. I cannot tell how I dared to say what I did, but I was weak, nervous, irritable—my brain excited beyond all natural tension. Above all, I felt that she was unjust to me, and my good conscience, as well as my pride, rebelled.

"You have never trusted me," I cried—"you have watched me—"

"Did you not deceive me once already?"

"And if I did," I answered, more and more excited, "have I not slaved for you, stunted myself of clothes to pay your rent? Have I not run to and fro for you like a slave, while I know all the time you did not respect me or trust me? If you had only treated me as a child and an idiot, I could have borne it. But you have been thinking of me all the while as an incarnate fiend—dead in trespasses and sins—a child of wrath and the devil. What right have you to be astonished if I should do my father's works?"

"You may be ignorant of vital religion," she answered; "and you may insult me. But if you make a mock of God's word, you leave my house. If you can laugh at religion, you can deceive me."

The pent-up scepticism of years burst forth.

"Mother," I said, "don't talk to me about religion, and election, and conversion, and all that—I don't believe one word of it. Nobody does, except good kind people—(like you, alas! I was going to say, but the devil stopped the words at my lips)—who must needs have some reason to account for their goodness. That Bowyer—he's a soft heart by nature, and as he is, so he does—religion has had nothing to do with that, any more than it has with that black fixed, canting scoundrel who has been telling you lies about me. Much his heart is changed! He carries sneer and slanderer in his face—and sneak and slanderer he will be, elect or none. Religion! Nobody believes in it. The rich don't, or they wouldn't fill their churches up with pews, and shut the poor out, all the time they are calling them brothers. They believe the gospel! Then why do they leave the men who make their clothes to starve in such hells on earth as our workroom? No more do the tradespeople believe in it, or they wouldn't go home from sermon to sand the sugar, and put slot leaves in the tea, and send out lying puffs of their vaunted-up goods, and grind the last farthing out of the poor creatures who rent their wretched stinking houses. And as for the workmen—they laugh at it all, I can tell you. Much good religion is doing for them! You may see it's fit only for women and children—for go where you will, church or chapel, you see hardly any thing but bonnets and babies! I don't believe a word of it,—once and for all. I'm old enough to think for myself, and a free thinker I will be, and believe nothing but what I know and understand."

I had hardly spoken the words, when I would have given worlds to recall them—but it was to be—and it was.

Sternly she looked at me full in the face, till my eyes dropped before her gaze. Then she spoke steadily and slowly.

"Leave this house this moment. You are no son of mine henceforward! Do you think I will have my daughter polluted by the company of an infidel and a blasphemer?"

"I will go," I answered, heroically, "I can get my own living at all events!" And before I had time to think, I had rushed up stairs, packed up my bundle, not forgetting the precious books, and was on my way through the frosty echoing streets under the cold glare of the winter's moon.

I had gone perhaps half a mile, when the thought of home rushed over me—the little room where I had spent my life—the scene of all my childish joys and sorrows—which I should never see again, for I felt that my departure was forever. Then I longed to see my mother once again—not to speak to her—for I was at once too proud and too cowardly to do that—but to have a look at her through the window. One look—for all

the while, though I was boiling over with rage and indignation, I felt that it was all on the surface—that in the depths of our hearts I loved her and she loved me. And yet I wished to be angry, wished to hate her. Strange contradiction of the flesh and spirit!

Hastily and silently I retraced my steps to the house. The gate was pullock. I cautiously stole over the palings to the window—the shutter was closed and fast. I longed to knock—I lifted my hand to the door, and dare not, indeed, I knew that it was useless, in my dread of my mother's habit of stern determination. That room—that mother I never saw again. I turned away, sickened at heart, I was clambering back again, looking behind me towards the window, when I felt a strong grip on my collar, and turning round, had a policeman's lantern flashed in my face.

"Hallo, young un, and what do you want here?" with a strong emphasis, after the fashion of policemen, on all his pronouns.

"Hush! or you'll alarm my mother!"

"Oh! eh! Forgot the latch-key, you sneaking Don Juan, that's it is it? Late home from the Victory?"

I told him simply how the case stood, and entreated him to get me a night's lodging, assuring him that my mother would not admit me, or I asked to be admitted.

The policeman seemed puzzled, but after scratching his hat in lieu of his head for some seconds, replied,—

"This here is the dodge—you goes outside and lies down on the kerb-stone, whereby I spurs you asleeping in the streets, contrary to act o' Parliament; whereby it is my duty to take you to the station house, whereby you gets a night's lodging free, gracious, for nothing, and company provided by her Majesty."

"Oh, not to the station house!" I cried, in shame and terror.

"Weary well, then you must keep moving all night continually, whereby you avoids the hact, or else you goes to a twopenny-rope shop and gets a lie down. And your bundle you'd best leave at my house. Twopenny-rope society a'n't particular. I'm going off my heart, you walk home with me and leave your traps. Everybody knows me—Costello, V 21, that's my number."

So on I went with the kind-hearted man, who preached solemnly to me all the way on the fifth commandment. But I heard very little of it, for before I had proceeded a quarter of a mile, a deadly faintness and dizziness came over me, I staggered, and fell against the railings.

"And have you been a drinking arter all?"

"I never a drop in my life—nothing but bread and water this fortnight."

And it was true. I had been prying for my own food, and had stunted myself to such an extent, that between starvation, want of sleep, and over exertion, I was worn

to a shadow, and the last drop had filled the cup, the evening's scene and its consequences had been too much for me, and in the middle of an attempt to explain matters to the policeman, I dropped on the pavement, bruising my face heavily.

He picked me up, put me under one arm and my bundle under the other, and was proceeding on his march, when three men came rolling up.

"Hallo, Poleax—Costello. What's that? Work for us? A demp, unpleasant body?"

"Oh, Mr Bromley, sir! Hope you're well, sir! Werry run go this here, an! I finds this cove in the streets. He says his mother turned him out o' doors. He seems very fair spoken, and very bad in he's head, and very bad in he's chest, and very bad in he's legs, he does. And I can't come to no conclusions respecting my conduct in this here case, now!"

"Mainmalise the Health of Towns Commission," suggested one.

"Bleed him in the great toe," said the second.

"Put a blister on the back of his left eyeball," said a third.

"Case of male asterisks," observed the first. "Rj Aqua pumpis puræ quantum suff. Applicatur exte. io pte re nata. J. Bromley, M.D., and don't he wish he may get through!"

"Tip up your dadille, my boy," said the second speaker. "I'll tell you what, Bromley, this fellow's very bad. He's got no more pulse than the Philico sever. Run him into the next pot'us. Here you liv hold of him, Bromley—that last round with the cabman nearly put my hancus out."

The huge, hilly, pea-jacketed medical student for such I saw at once he was—laid hold of me on the right tenderly enough, and walked me off between him and the policeman.

I fell again into a faintness, from which I was awakened by being shoved through the folding doors of a gin-shop, into a glare of light and hubbub of blackguardism, and placed on a settle, while my conductor called out,—

"Pots round, Mary, and a go of brandy hot with, for the patient. Here, young un, toss it off, it'll make your hair grow."

I feebly answered that I never had drunk anything stronger than water.

"High time to begin then: no wonder you're so ill. Well, if you won't, I'll make you—"

And taking my head under his arm, he seized me by the nose, while another poured the liquor down my throat—and certainly it revived me at once.

A drunken drab pulled another drunken drab off the settle to make room for the "poor young man," and I sat there with a confused notion that something strange and dreadful had happened to me, while the party drained their respective quarts of

TAILOR AND POET

porter, and talked over the last boat race with the Leander.

"Now, then, gentlemen," said the policeman, "if you think he's recovered, we'll take him home to his mother; she ought for to take him in, surely."

"Yes, if she has as much heart in her as a dried walnut."

But I resisted stontly, though I longed to vindicate my mother's affection, yet I could not face her. I entreated to be taken to the station house, this denied, in my desperation, to break the bar glasses, which, like Doll Tensheet's abuse, only elicited from the policeman a solemn "Very well," and under the unwonted excitement of the brandy, struggled so fiercely, and talked so incoherently, that the medical students interfered.

"We shall have this fellow in phrenitis, or laryngitis, or dothens-entitis, or some other itis, before long, if he's aggravated."

"And whichever it is, it'll kill him. He has no more stamina left than a yard of pump water."

"I should consider him chargeable to the parish," suggested the bar-keeper.

"Exactly as my Solomon of licensed victuallers. Get a workhouse order for him, Costello."

"And I should consider, also, sir," said the licensed victualler, with increased importance, "having been a guardian myself, and knowing the facts, as the parish couldn't refuse, because they're in power to recover all expenses out of his mother."

"To be sure, it's all the unnatural old witch's fault."

"No, it is not," said I, faintly.

"Wait till your opinion's asked, young man. Go kick up the authorities, policeman."

"Now, I'll just tell you how that it works, gentlemen," answered the policeman, solemnly. "I goes to the overseer—werry good sort o' man—but he's in bed. I knocks for half an hour. He puts he's nightcap on o' windy, and sends me to the relieving officer. Werry good sort of man he too, but he's in bed. I knocks for another half-hour. He puts he's nightcap on o' windy, sends me to the medical officer for a certificate. Medical officer's gone to a midwifery case. I hunts him for an hour or so. He's got hold of a babby with thier heads, or snunnat else, and two more women a-calling out for him like blazes. 'Hell come to morrow morning.' Now, I just asks your opinion of that there most procrastinationest go."

The big student, having cursed the parochial authorities in general, offered to pay for my night's lodging at the public house. The good man of the house demurred at first, but relented on being reminded of the value of a medical student's custom, whereon, without more ado, two of the rough diamonds took me between them, carried me upstairs, undressed me, and put me into

bed, as tenderly as it they had been women.

"He'll have tantrums to fore morning, I'm afraid," said one.

"Very likely to turn to typhus," said the other.

"Well, I suppose—it's a horrid bore, but

What must be must. Man is but dust,
If you can't get crumb, you must just eat crust."

Send me up a gin of hot with, and I'll sit up with him till he's asleep, dead, or better."

"Well, then, I'll stay too; we may just as well make a night of it here as well as anywhere else."

And he pulled a short black pipe out of his pocket, and sat down to meditate with his feet on the hobs of the empty grate; the other man went down for the liquor, while I, between the brandy and exhaustion, fell fast asleep, and never stirred till I woke the next morning with aacking headache, and saw the big student standing by my bedside, having, as I afterwards heard, sat by me till four in the morning.

"Hullo, young un, come to your senses? Headache, eh? Slightly comatose, I suppose? We'll give you some soda and salvolatin', and I'll pay for your breakfast."

And so he did, and when he was joined by his companions then way to St George's, they were very anxious, having heard my story, to force a few shillings on me 'for luck,' which, I need not say, I promptly refused, assuming them that I could and would get my own living, and never take a farthing from any man.

"That's a plucky dog, though he's a tailor," I heard them say, as, after overwhelming them with thanks, and vowing amid shouts of laughter, to repay them every farthing I had cost them, I took my way, sick and stunned, towards my dear old Sandy Mackaye's street.

Rough diamonds indeed! I have never met you again, but I have not forgotten you. Your early life may be a course, too often a profligate one—but you know the people, and the people know you, and your tenderness and care, bestowed without hope of repayment, cheers daily many a poor soul in hospital wards and fever-cellars—to meet its reward some day at the people's hands. You belong to us at heart, as the Paris barricades can tell. Alas! for the society which stifles in after life too many of your better feelings, by making you mere flunkys and parasites, dependent for your livelihood on the caprices and luxuries of the rich.

CHAPTER VI

THE DULWICH GALLERY

SANDY MACKAYE received me in a characteristic way, growled at me for half-an hour

for quarrelling with my mother, and when I was at my wit's end, suddenly offered me a bed in his house and the use of his little sitting-room—and, bliss too great to hope of his books also, and when I talked of payment, told me to hold my tongue and mind my own business. So I settled myself at once; and that very evening he installed himself as my private tutor, took down a Latin book, and set me to work on it.

"An' mind ye, laddie," said he, half in jest and half in earnest, "gum I find ye playing truant, and reading a' sorts o' nonsense instead of minding the scholastic methods and proprieties, I'll just bring ye in a bill at the year's end o' twa gunnaws a week for lodgings and tuition, and tak' the law o' ye, so mind and read what I tell ye. Do ye comprehend noo?"

I did comprehend, and obeyed him, determining to repay him some day—and somehow—how I did not very clearly see. Thus I put myself more or less into the old man's power, foolishly enough the wise world will say. But I had no suspicion in my character, and I could not look at those keen grey eyes, when, after staring into vacancy during some long preachment, they suddenly flashed round at me, and through me, full of fun and quaint thought, and kindly earnestness, and fancy that man less honest than his face seemed to proclaim him.

By the-by, I have as yet given no description of the old eccentric's abode—an unpardonable omission, I suppose, in these days of Dutch painting and *fix*. But the omission was correct, both historically and artistically, for I had as yet only gone to him for books, books, nothing but books, and I had been blind to everything in his shop but that fairy land of shelves, filled, in my simple fancy with inexhaustible treasures, wonder working, omnipotent, as the magic seal of Solomon.

It was not till I had been settled and at work for several nights, in his sanctum behind the shop, that I began to become conscious what a strange den that sanctum was.

It was so dark, that without a gaslight in one but he could see to read there, except on very sunny days. Not only were the shelves which covered every inch of wall crammed with books and pamphlets, but the little window was blocked up with them, the floor was piled with bundles of them, in some places three feet deep, apparently in the wildest confusion—though there was some mysterious order in them which he understood, and symbolised, I suppose, by the various strange and ludicrous nick-names of their tickets—for he never was at fault moment if a customer asked for a book though it were buried deep in the chaotic stratum. Out of this book-alluvium a hole seemed to have been dug near the fireplace, just big enough to hold his arm-chair and a table, book-strewn like everything else, and

armished with odds and ends of MSS., and a snuffer-tray containing scraps of half-smoked tobacco—"pipe-dotties," as he called them, which were carefully re-smoked over and over again, till nothing but ash was left. His whole culinary utensils—for he looked as well as ate in this strange hole—were an old rusty kettle, which stood on one oh, and a blue plate, which, when washed, stood on the other. A barrel of true Aberdeen meal peered out of a corner, half-buried in hooks, and "a keg o' whusky, the gift o' recus," peeped in like case out of another.

This was his only food. "It was a' wisdom," he used to say, "in London Bread all o' alum and bones, and sic filth—meat over-driven till it was a' braxy—water kipped wi' dead men's juice. Naething was safe but gude Scotch parritch and Athole rose." He carried his water-horror so far as to walk some quarter of a mile every morning to fill his kettle at a favourite pump. "Was he a cannibal, to drink out o' that murrain hand by, right under the kirkyard?" But it was little he either ate or drank—he seemed to live upon tobacco. From four in the morning till twelve at night, the pipe never left his lips, except when he went into the outer shop. "It promoted meditation, and drove awa' the lusts o' the flesh. Ech! it was worthy o' that auld tyrant Jamie, to write his counter-blast to the poor man's fiction! 'The hypocrite' to gang preaching the virtues o' evil-savoured smoke 'ad lemons abigendos'—and then rail again tobacco, as if it was no as gude for the purpose as auld rage and horn shavings!"

Sandy Mackaye had a great fancy for political caricatures, rows of which, there being no room for them on the walls, hung on strings from the ceiling, like clothes hung out to dry—and among them dangled various books to which he had taken an antipathy, principally *High Tory* and *Ben-thamite*, crushed, impaled through their covers, and suspended in all sorts of torturing attitudes. Among them, right over the table, figured a copy of *Icon Basilike*, dressed up in a paper shirt, all drawn over with figures of flames and devils, and surmounted by a peaked paper cap, like a victim at an *auto da-fé*. And in the midst of all this chaos grinned from the chimney-piece, among pipes and pens, punches of salt and scraps of butter, a tall cast of Michael Angelo's well-known skinless model—his pristine white defaced by a cap of soot upon the top of his scalpless skull, and every muscle and tendon thrown into horrible relief by the dirt which had lodged among the cracks. There it stood, pointing with its ghastly arm towards the door, and holding on its wrist a label with the following inscription.

Here stand, the working man,
Get more off me if you can."

I questioned Mackaye one evening about

those hanged and crucified books, and asked him if he ever sold any of them.

"Ou, ay," he said; "if folks are fools enough to ask for them, I'll just answer a fool according to his folly."

"But," I said, "Mr Mackaye, do you think it right to sell books of the very opinions of which you disapprove so much?"

"Hoot, laddie, it's just a spoiling o' the Egyptians, so mind y'r book, and dinna tak' in hand cases o' conscience for ither folk. Ye'll ha' waik enough wi' yer ain before ye're done."

And he folded round his knees his Joseph's coat, as he called it, an old dressing-gown with one plaid sleeve, and one blue one, red shawl skirts, and a black broad-cloth back, not to mention innumerable patches of every imaginable stuff and colour, filled his pipe, and buried his nose in "Harrington's Oceana." He read at least twelve hours every day of his life, and that exclusively old history and politics, though his favourite books were Thomas Carlyle's works. Two or three evenings in the week, when he had seen me safe settled at my studies, he used to disappear mysteriously for several hours, and it was some time before I found out, by a chance expression, that he was attending some meeting or committee of working men. I begged him to take me there with him. But I was stopped by a laconic answer.

"When ye're ready."

"And when shall I be ready, Mr Mackaye?"

"Read yer book till I tell ye."

And he twisted himself into his best coat, which had once been black, squeezed on his little Scotch cap, and went out.

I now found myself, as the reader may suppose, in an element far more congenial to my literary tastes, and which compelled far less privation of sleep and food in order to find time and means for reading, and my health began to mend from the very first day. But the thought of my mother haunted me, and Mackaye seemed in no hurry to let me escape from it, for he insisted on my writing to her in a penitent strain, informing her of my whereabouts, and offering to return home if she should wish it. With feelings strangely mingled between the desire of seeing her again and the dread of returning to the old drudgery of surveillance, I sent the letter, and waited a whole week without any answer. At last, one evening, when I returned from work, Sandy seemed in a state of unusual exhilaration. He looked at me again and again, winking and chuckling to himself in a way which showed me that his good spirits had something to do with my concerns; but he did not open on the subject till I had settled to my evening's reading. Then, having brewed himself an unusually strong mug of whisky-fouldy, and brought out with great ceremony a clean pipe, he commenced

"Alton, laddie, I've been fechtin' Philistines for ye the day."

"Ah! have you heard from my mother?"

"I wadna say that exactly, but there's been a gran' bairn body wi' me that calls himsel' your uncle, and a braw young callant, a bairn o' us, I'm thinking."

"Ah! that's my cousin George; and tell me—do tell me, what you said to them."

"Ou—that'll be mair concern o' mine than o' yourn. But ye're no going back to your mither."

My heart leapt up with—joy, there is no denying it—and then I burst into tears.

"And she won't see me? Has she really cast me off?"

"Why, that'll be verri much as ye prosper, I'm thinking. Ye're an unaccredited hero, the noo, as Thomas Carlyle has it. 'But gin ye do weel by yonself,' saith the Psalmist, 'ye'll find a' men speak well o' ye'—if ye gang thru' gate. But ye're to gang to see your uncle at his shop o' Monday next, at one o'clock. Now stunt your gaitin', and read awa'."

On the next Monday I took a holiday, the first in which I had ever indulged myself, and having spent a good hour in scrubbing away at my best shoes and Sunday suit, started, in fear and trembling, for my uncle's establishment.

I was agreeably surprised, on being shown into the little back office at the back of the shop, to meet with a tolerably gracious reception from the good-natured Maunmonte. He did not shake hands with me, it is true;—was I not a poor relation? But he told me to sit down, commended me for the excellent character which he had of me both from my master and Mackaye, and then entered on the subject of my literary tastes. He heard I was a precious clever fellow. No wonder, I came of a clever stock, his poor dear brother had plenty of brains for everything but business. "And you see, my boy" (with a glance at the big ledgers and lousy shop without), "I knew a thing or two in my time, or I should not have been here. But without capital, I think brains a curse. Still we must make the best of a bad matter; and if you are inclined to help to raise the family name—not that I think much of book writers myself—poor starving dovels—half of them—but still people do talk about them—and a man might get a snug thing as news paper editor, with interest, or clerk to something or other—always some new company in the wind now—and I should have no objection, if you seemed likely to do us credit, to speak a word for you. I've none of your mither's confounded Puritanical notions, I can tell you, and, what's more, I have, thank Heaven, as fine a city connexion as any man. But you must mind and make yourself a good accountant—learn double entry on the Italian method—that's a good practical study; and if that old Sawney is soft enough to teach you other things gratis, he may as well teach

you that too. I'll bet he knows something about it—the old Scotch fox. There now—that'll do—there's five shillings for you—mind you don't lose them—and if I hear a good account of you, why, perhaps—but there's no use making promises."

At this moment a tall, handsome young man, whom I did not at first recognise as my cousin George, swung into the office, and shook me cordially by the hand.

"Hallo, Alton, how are you? Why, I hear you're coming out as a regular genius—breaking out in a new place, upon my honour! Have you done with him, governor?"

"Well, I think I have. I shall have a talk with him, my boy. I'm sorry I can't see more of him, but I have to meet a party on business at the West End at two, and Alderman Tumbail and family dine with us this evening, don't they? I think our small table will be full."

"Of course it will. Come along with me, and we'll have a chat in some quiet out-of-the-way place. This city is really so noisy that you can't hear your own ears, as our dean says in lecture."

So he called me off, down back streets and alleys, a little puzzled at the extreme cordiality of his manner. Perhaps, it sprang, as I learned afterward to suspect, from his consistent and perpetual habit of ingratiating himself with every one whom he approached. He never cut a chimney sweep if he knew him. And he found it pay. The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Perhaps it sprang also, as I began to suspect in the first hundred yards of our walk, from the desire of showing off before me the university clothes, manners, and gossip, which he had just brought back with him from Cambridge.

I had not seen him more than three or four times in my life before, and then he appeared to me merely a tall, handsome, conceited, sluggish boy. But I now found him much improved—in all externals at least. He had made it his business, I know, to perfect himself in all athletic pursuits which were open to a Londoner. As he told me that day—he found it pay, when one got among gentlemen. Thus he had gone up to Cambridge a capital skater, rower, pugilist—and billiard player. Whether or not that last accomplishment ought to be classed in the list of athletic sports, he contrived, by his own account, to keep it in that of paying ones. In both these branches he seemed to have had plenty of opportunities of distinguishing himself at college, and his tall, powerful figure showed the fruit of these exercises in a stately and confident, almost martial, carriage. Something jaunty, perhaps swaggering, remained still in his air and dress, which yet sat not ungracefully on him; but I could see that he had been mixing in society more polished and artificial than that to which we had either of us been

accustomed, and in his smart Rochester, well-cut trousers, and delicate French boots, he excited, I will not deny it, my boyish admiration and envy.

"Well," he said, as soon as we were out of the shop, "which way? Got a holiday? And how did you intend to spend it?"

"I wanted very much," I said, meekly, "to see the pictures at the National Gallery."

"Oh! ah! pictures don't pay, but, if you like—much better once at Dulwich—that's the place to go to—you can see the others any day—and at Dulwich, you know, they've got why, let me see—" And he ran over half-a-dozen outlandish names of painters, which, as I have never again met with them, I am inclined on the whole to consider as somewhat extemporaneous creations. However, I agreed to go.

"Ah! capital—very nice quiet walk, and convenient for me—very little out of my way home. I'll walk there with you."

"One word for your neighbour and two for yourself," thought I, but on we walked. To see good pictures had been a long-cherished hope of mine. Every thing beautiful in form or colour was beginning of late to have an intense fascination for me. I had, now that I was emancipated, gradually dared to feed my greedy eyes by passing sturs into the paint shop windows, and had had from them a thousand new notions, new emotions, new longings after beauties of Nature, which seemed destined never to be satisfied. But pictures alone were no ones—had been, in my mother's eyes, Anathema Marmatha, as vile I speak and Pagan vanities, the rage of the smart woman no less than the simple itself. And now, when it came to the point, I hesitated at an act of such awful disobedience, even though unknown to her. My cousin, however, laughed down my scruples, told me I was out of the leading strings now, and, which was true enough, that it was "a * * * deal better, to amuse oneself in picture galleries without leave, than live a life of sneaking and lying under petticoat government, as all householders were sure to do in the long run." And so I went on, while my cousin kept up a running fire of chat the whole way, intermixing shrewd, bold observations upon every woman who passed, with snatches at the fellows of the college to which we were going—their idleness and luxury—the large grammar-school which they were bound by their charter to keep up, and did not—and hints about private interest in high quarters, through which their wealthy uselessness had been politely overlooked, when all similar institutions in the kingdom were subject to the searching examination of a government commission. Then there were stories of boat races and gay noblemen, breakfast parties, and lectures on Greek plays, flavoured with a spice of Cambridge slang, all equally new to me—glimpses into a world of wonders, which made me feel, as I shambled

along at his side, trying to keep step with his stides, more weakly, and awkward, and ignorant than ever.

We entered the gallery. I was in a fever of expectation.

The rich sombre light of the rooms, the rich heavy warmth of the stove-heated air, the brilliant and varied colouring and gilded frames which embroidered the walls, the hushed earnestness of a few artists who were copying, and a few visitors who were lounging from picture to picture, struck me at once with mysterious awe. But my attention was in a moment concentrated on one figure opposite to me at the farthest end. I hurried straight towards it. When I had got half way up the gallery I looked round for my companion. He had turned aside to some picture of a Venus which caught my eye also, but which, I remember now, only raised in me then a shudder and a blush, and a fancy that the clergyman must be really as bad as my mother had taught me to believe, if they could allow in their galleries pictures of undressed women. I have learnt to view such things differently now, thank God. I have learnt that to the pure all things are pure. I have learnt the meaning of that great saying—the foundation of all art, as well as all modesty, all love, which tells us how “the man and his wife were both naked, and not ashamed.” But this book is the history of my mental growth, and my mistakes as well as my discoveries are steps in that development, and may bear a lesson in them.

How I have tumbled! But as that day was the turning point of my whole short life, I may be excused for lingering upon every feature of it.

Timidly, but eagerly, I went up to the picture and stood entranced before it. It was Guido's St Sebastian. All the world knows the picture, and all the world knows, too, the defects of the master, though in this instance he seems to have risen above himself, by a sudden inspiration, into that true naturalness, which is the highest expression of the Spiritual. But the very defects of the picture, its exaggeration, its theatricality, were especially calculated to catch the eye of a boy awaking out of the narrow dulness of Puritanism. The breadth and vastness of light and shade upon those manly limbs, so grand and yet so delicate, standing out against the background of lurid night, the helplessness of the bound arms, the arrow quivering in the shrinking side, the upturned brow, the eyes in whose dark depths enthusiastic faith seemed conquering agony and shame, the parted lips, which seemed to ask, like those martyrs in the Revelations, reproachful, half-resigned, “O Lord, how long?”—Gazing at that picture since, I have understood how the idolatry of painted saints could arise in the minds even of the most educated, who were not disciplined by that stern regard for fact which is—or ought to

be—the strength of Englishmen. I have understood the heart of that Italian girl, whom some such picture of St Sebastian, perhaps this very one, excited, as the Venus of Praxiteles the Grecian boy, to hopeless love, madness, and death. Then I had never heard of St Sebastian. I did not dream of any connection between that, or indeed any picture, and Christianity, and yet, as I stood before it, I seemed to be face to face with the ghost of my old Puritan forefathers, to see the spirit which supported them on pillories and scaffolds—the spirit of that true St Margaret, the Scottish maiden whom Claverhouse and his soldiers chained to a post on the sea sands to die by inches in the rising tide, till the sound of her hymns was slowly drowned in the dash of the hungry leaping waves. My heart swelled within me, my eyes seemed bursting from my head with the intensity of my gaze, and great tears, I knew not why, rolled slowly down my face.

A woman's voice close to me, gentle, yet of deeper tone than most, woke me from my trance.

“You seem to be deeply interested in that picture.”

I looked round, yet not at the speaker. My eyes, before they could meet hers, were caught by an apparition the most beautiful I had ever yet beheld. And what what have I seen equal to her since? Strange, that I should love to talk of her. Strange, that I fret at myself now because I cannot set down on paper line by line, and hue by hue, that wonderful loveliness of which—But no matter. Had I but such an imagination as Petrarch, or rather, perhaps, had I his delicate cold self-consciousness, what volumes of simile and conceits I might pour out, connecting that peerless face and figure with all lovely things which heaven and earth contain. As it is, because I cannot say all, I will say nothing, but repeat to the end again and again,—Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beyond all statue, picture, or poet's dream. Seventeen—slight but rounded, a masque and features delicate and regular, as if fresh from the chisel of Praxiteles—I must try to describe after all, you see—a skin of alabaster (præter flowers, Horace and Aristotle would have said, more true to Nature), stained with the faintest flush, auburn hair, with that peculiar cupped wave seen in the old Italian pictures, and the warm, dark hazel eyes which so often accompany it, lips like a thread of vermilion, somewhat too thin, perhaps—but I thought little of that then, with such perfect finish and grace in every line and hue of her features and her dress, down to the little fingers and nails which showed through her thin gloves, that she seemed to my fancy fresh from the innermost chamber of some enchanted palace, “where no air of heaven could visit her cheek too roughly.” I dropped my eyes, quite dazzled. The question was repeated by

a lady who stood with her, whose face I remarked then as I did to the last, alas!—too little, dazzled at the first by outward beauty, perhaps because so utterly unaccustomed to it.

"It is indeed a wonderful picture," I said, timidly. "May I ask what is the subject of it?"

"Oh! don't you know?" said the young beauty, with a smile that thrilled through me. "It is St Sebastian."

"I—I am very much ashamed," I answered, colouring up, "but I do not know who St Sebastian was. Was he a Popish saint?"

A tall, stately old man, who stood with the two ladies, laughed kindly. "No, not till they made him one against his will, and at the same time, by putting him into the mill which grinds old folks young again, converted him from a grizzled old Roman tribune into the young Apollo of Popery."

"You will puzzle you hearer, my dear uncle," said the same deep toned woman's voice which had first spoken to me. "As you volunteered the saint's name, Lillian, you shall also tell his history."

Simply and shortly, with just feeling enough to send through me a fresh thrill of delighted interest, without trenching the least on the most stately reserve, she told me the well-known history of the saint's martyrdom.

If I seem minute in my description, let those who read my story remember that such courteous dignity, however natural, I am bound to believe, it is to them, was to me an utterly new excellence in human nature. All my mother's Spartan nobleness of manner seemed unexpectedly combined with all my little sister's careless ease.

"What a beautiful poem the story would make!" said I, as she recovered my thoughts.

"Well spoken, young man," answered the old gentleman. "Let us hope that you seeing a subject for a good poem will be the first step towards your writing one."

As he spoke, he bent on me two clear gray eyes, full of kindness, mingled with practised discernment. I saw that he was evidently a clergyman, but what his tight silk stockings and peacock hat denoted I did not know. There was about him the air of a man accustomed equally to thought, to men, and to power. And I reminded somewhat maliciously, that my cousin, who had strutted up towards us on sheer, no talking to two ladies, the instant he caught sight of those black silk stockings and that strange hat, fell suddenly in countenance, and sidling off somewhat meekly into the background, became absorbed in the examination of a Holy Family.

I answered something humbly, I forget what, which led to a conversation. They questioned me as to my name, my mother, my business, my studies; while I revelled in the delight of stolen glances at my now-found

Venus Victrix, who was as forward as any of them in her questions and her interest. Perhaps she enjoyed, at least she could not help seeing, the admiration for herself which I took no pains to conceal. At last the old man cut the conversation short by a quiet "Good morning, sir," which astonished me. I had never heard words whose tone was so courteous and yet so chillingly peremptory. As they turned away, he repeated to himself once or twice, as if to fix them in his mind, my name and my master's, and awoke in me, perhaps too thoughtlessly, a tumult of vague hopes. Once and again the beauty and her companion looked back towards me, and seemed talking of me, and my face was burning scarlet, when my cousin swung up in his hard, off-hand way.

"By Jove, Alton, my boy! you're a knowing fellow. I congratulate you! At your years, indeed! to use a dean and two beauties at the first throw, and hook them fast!"

"A dean!" I said, in some trepidation.

"Ay, a live dean—didn't you see the cloven foot sticking out from under his shon-buckle? What news for your mother! What will the ghosts of your grandfathers to the seventh generation say to this, Alton? Colloguing in Pagan picture-galleries with shovel-hatted Philistines! And that's not the worst, Alton," he ran on, "those daughters of Moab—those daughters of Moab—"

"Hold your tongue," I said, almost crying with vexation.

"Look there, if you want to save your good temper. There, she is looking back again—not at poor me, though. What a lovely girl she is! and a real lady—/au noble—the real genuine girl, as Sam Slick says, and no mistake. By Jove, what a face, what hands! what feet! what a figure—in spite of crinolines and all abominations! And didn't she know it? And didn't she know that you knew it too?"

And he ran on, descending coarsely on beauties which I dared not even have profaned by naming, in a way that made me, I knew not why, mad with jealousy and indignation. She seemed mine alone in all the world. What right had any other human being, above all, he, to dare to mention her? I turned again to my St Sebastian. That movement only brought on me a fresh volley of banter.

"Oh, that's the dodge, is it? to catch intellectual ladies?—to fall into an extatic attitude before a picture—But then we must have Alton's genius, you know, to find out which the fine pictures are. I must read up that subject, by-the-by. It might be a paying one among the dons. For the present, here goes in for an attitude. Will this do, Alton?" And he arranged himself admiringly before the picture in an attitude so absurd and yet so graceful, that I did not know whether to laugh at him or hate him.

"At all events," he added, dryly, "it will be as good as playing the evangelical at Carus's tea-parties, or taking the sacrament

regularly for fear one's testimonials should be refused." And then he looked at me, and through me, in his intense, confident way, to see that his hasty words had not injured him with me. He used to meet one's eye as boldly as any man I ever saw, but it was not the simple gaze of honesty and innocence, but an imperious, searching look, as if defying scrutiny. His was a true mesmeric eye, if ever there was one. No wonder it worked the miracles it did.

"Come along," he said, suddenly seizing my arm. "Don't you see they're leaving?" Out of the gallery after them, and get a good look at the carriage and the arms upon it. I saw one standing there as we came in. It may pay us, you, that is, to know it again."

We went out, I holding him back, I knew not why, and arrived at the outer gate just in time to see them enter the carriage and drive off. I gazed to the last, but did not stir.

"Good boy," he said, "knowing still. If you had looked, or showed the least sign of recognition, you would have broken the spell."

But I hardly heard what he said, and stood gazing stupidly after the carriage as it disappeared. I did not know then what had happened to me. I know now, alas! too well.

CHAPTER VII

TRUE LOVE

THAT I said, I did not know what had happened to me. I did not attempt to analyse the intense, overpowering instinct which from that moment made the lovely vision I had seen the focal point of all my thoughts. Even now, I can see nothing in those feelings of mine but simple admiration—adoration if you will of physical beauty. Doubtless there was more—doubtless I had seen pretty faces before, and know that they were pretty, but they had passed from my retina, like the prints of beauties which I saw in the shop windows, without exciting a thought—even a conscious emotion of complacency. But this face did not pass away. Day and night I saw it, just as I had seen it in the gallery. The same playful smile—the same glance alternately turned to me, and the glowing picture above her head, and that was all I saw or felt. No child ever nestled upon a father's shoulder with feelings more reverentially pure, than those with which I counted over day and night each separate fragment of that ever-in-loveliness. Romantic? extravagant? Yes, if the world be right in calling a passion romantic just in proportion as it is not merely hopeless, but pure and unselfish, drawing its delicious power from no hope or faintest desire of enjoyment but merely from simple delight in its object—then my

passion was most romantic. I never thought of disparity in rank. Why should I? That could not blind the eyes of my imagination. She was beautiful, and that was all, and all in all, to me, and had my stations been exchanged, or mine then exchanged, had I been King Cophetua, and she the beggar maid, I should have gloried in her just as much.

Beloved sleepless hours, which I spent in picturing that scene to myself, with all the brilliancy of fresh recollection! Beloved hours! how soon you passed away! Soon—soon my imagination began to fade, the traces of her features on my mind's eye became confused and dim, and then came over me the fierce desire to see her again, that I might renew the freshness of that charming image. There grew upon an agony of longing—an agony of weeks, and months, and years. Where could I find that fair again? was my ruling thought from morning until eve. I knew that it was hopeless to look for her at the gallery where I had first seen her. My only hope was, that at some place of public resort at the West End I might catch, it but for a moment, an inspiring glance of that radiant countenance. I lingered round the Brompton and Hyde Park Gates, but in vain. I peered into every carriage, every hansom that passed me in the thoroughfares in vain. I stood patiently at the doors of exhibitions, and concerts, and playhouses, to be shoved back by policemen, and insulted by footmen, but in vain. Then I tried the fashionable churches, one by one, and sat in the free seats, to listen to prayers and sermons, not a word of which, alas! I cared to understand, with my eyes searching carefully every pew and gallery, face by face, always fancying, in self-termining waywardness, that she might be just in the part of the gallery which I could not see. Oh! miserable days of hope deferred, making the heart sick! Miserable growing of disappointment with which I returned at nightfall, to force myself down to my books! Equally miserable rack of hope on which my nerves were stretched every morning when I rose, counting the hours till my days work should begin, and my mind search begin again! At last "my torment did by length of time become my friend." I remained steadily as ever to the studies which I had at first neglected, much to Mickle's wonder and disgust, and the vain hunt after that face became a part of my daily task, to be got through with the same dull, sullen effort, with which all I did was now transacted.

Mickle, I suppose, at first attributed my absence and idleness to my having got into bad company. But it was some weeks before he gently enough told me his suspicions, and they were answered by a burst of tears, and a passionate denial, which set him at rest forever. But I had not courage to tell him what was the matter with

me. A sacred modesty as well as a sense of the impossibility of explaining my emotions, held me back. I had a half dead, too, to confess the whole truth, of his ridiculing a fancy, to say the least, so utterly impracticable, and my only confidant was a picture in the National Gallery, in one of the faces of which I had discovered some likeness to my Venus, and there I used to go and stand at spite half hours, and feel the happier for staring and staring, and whispering to the dead canvas the extravagances of my idolatry.

But soon the bitter draught of disappointment began to breed harsher thoughts in me. Those fine gentlemen who rode past me in the park, who rolled by in carriages, sitting face to face with ladies, as richly dressed, if not as beautiful, as she was—they could see her when they liked—why not I? What right had their eyes to a feast denied to mine? They, too, who did not appreciate, whose that hearty as I did—for who could worship her like me? At least they had not sullied for her as I had done, they had not stood in rain and frost, fatigue and blank despair—watching—watching—month after month, and I was making coats for them! The very garment I was stitching fit, night, in a day's time, be in her presence touching her dress, and its wearers howling, and smiling, and whispering—he had not bought that bliss by watching in the rain. It made me mad to think of it.

I will say no more about it. That is a period of my life on which I cannot even now look back without a shudder.

At least, after perhaps a year or more, I summoned up courage to tell my story to Sandy Mackaye, and burst out with complaints more pardonable, perhaps, than reasonable.

"Why have I not as good a right to speak to her, to move in the same society in which she moves, as any of the fops of the day? Is it because these aristocrats are more intellectual than I? I should not fear to measure brains against most of them now, and gave me the opportunities which they have, and I would do if I did not outstrip them. Why have I not the opportunities? Is that fault of others to be visited on me? Is it because they are more refined than I? What right have they, if this refinement be so necessary a qualification, a difference so deep—that without it, there is to be an everlasting gulf between man and man—what right have they to refuse to let me share in it, to give me the opportunity of acquiring it?"

"Wad ye ha' them set up a dancing academy for working-men, wi' 'manners tocht here to the lower classes?' They'll no break up their ain monopoly; trust them for it! Na, if ye want to get among them, I'll tell ye the way o't. Write a book o' poems, and ca' it 'A Voice fra' the Goose, by a Working Tailor'—and then—why,

afit, a dozen years or so of starving and scribbling for your bread, ye'll ha' a chance o' finding yoursel' a lion, and a flunkie, and a licker o' trenchers—ane that jokes for his dinner, and sells his soul for a fine lady's smile—till ye presume to think they're in earnest, and fancy yoursel' a man o' the same blude as they, an' fa' in love wi' one of them—and then they'll teach you your level, and send ye off to gangie whisky like him, or leave ye to die in a ditch as they did wi' poor Thom."

"Let me die, anywhere or anyhow, if I can but be near her—see her!"

"Married to another body?—and nursing another body's bairns? Ah, boy, hoy—da ye think that was what ye were made for, to please yoursel' wi' a woman's smiles, or e'en a woman's kisses—o' to please yoursel' at all? How dave expect ever to be happy, or strong, in a minute, as long as ye go on looking to enjoy yoursel'—yoursel'?" I ha' tried it. Money was the year I looked for nought but my ain pleasure, and got it too, when it was a'—

Sandy Mackaye, bonny Sandy Mackaye,
There he sits singing the long number's day,
Lassie's gae to him,
And kiss him, and woo him,
Na but is sa merry as Sandy Mackaye.

An' muckle good can't o't. Ye may fancy I'm talking like a soul, disappointed and cauld. But I tell ye nae. I've got that's worth living for, though I am down hearted at times, and fancy us wrong, and there's na hope for us on earth, we be a' sic hairs—a' hairs, I think, 'a universal hairs-rock substratum,' as Mr Carlyle says. I'm a great fan often mysel', specially when I'm praying. Do ye think I'd live on here in this mescal dille, crankit an' lame-baird o' a body, if it was not for The Cause, and for the poor young fellows that come in to me whiles to get some book learning about the gran' an' Roulin times, when folks didna care for themselves, but for the nation, and a man counted wife, and him, and money, as dross and dung, in comparison with the great Roman city, that was the mother of them a', and wad last on, free and glorious, after they and their bairns were i' dead thegither? Hoot, man! If I hadna The Cause to care for and to work for, whether I ever see it triumphant on earth or no—I'd just tak' the cauld-water cure off Waterloo Bridge, and mak' mysel' a case for the Humane Society."

"And what is The Cause?" I asked.

"Wad I tell ye? We want no ready-made fictions o' The Cause. I dinna haud it that French indoctrinating pedants, that took to stick free opinions into a man as ye'd stick pins into a pincushion, so far out again the first shake. Na—The Cause must find a man, and tak' haud o' him, willy-nilly, and grow up in him like an inspiration, till he can see nocht but in the light o't. Poor bairn!" he went on, looking with a half sad, half comic face at me—"poor bairn—like a

young bear, wi' a' yon sorrows before ye! This time seven years ye'll ha' no need to come speeing and questioning what The Cause is, and the Gran' Cause, and the Only Cause worth working for on the earth o' fidd! And now gang ye gite, and mak' hne feathers for foul birds, I'm gaun wha ye'll be gangin' too, before long."

As I went sully out o' the shop, he called me back.

"Stay a wee, harrn, there's the Roman History for ye. There ye'll read what The Cause is, and how they that seek then an aro no worthy thereof."

I took the book, and found in the legends of Brutus, and Cæsar, and Scævola, and the retreat to the Mons Sacri, and the Gladiator's war, what The Cause was, and forgot awhile in those tales of antique heroism and patriotic self-sacrifice my own selfish longings and sorrows.

But, after all, the very advice which was meant to cure me of those selfish longings, only tended, by diverting me from my living inward life, to turn my thoughts more than ever inward, and tempt them to feed on their own substance. I passed whole days on the workroom floor in brooding silence—my mind peopled with an incoherent rabble of phantasies patched up from every object of which I had ever read. I could not control my day-dreams; they swept me away with them over sea and land, and into the bowels of the earth. My soul escaped on every side from my civilised dungeon of brick and mortar, into the great free world from which my body was debased. Now I was the corsair in the pride of freedom on the dark blue sea. Now I wandered in fairy caverns among the bones of primeval monsters. I fought at the side of Leonidas, and the Maccabees who stabbed the Sultan's elephant, and saw him crushed beneath its falling bulk. Now I was a hunter in tropic forests—I heard the parrots scream, and saw the humming-birds flit on from gorgeous flower to flower. Gradually I took a voluntary pleasure in calling up these images, and working out their details into words with all the accuracy and care for which my small knowledge gave me materials. And as the self-indulgent habit grew on me, I began to live two lives—one mechanical and outward, one inward and imaginative. The thread passed through my fingers without my knowing it, I did my work as a machine might do it. The dingy, stinking room, the wan faces of my companions, the scanty meals which I snatched, I saw dimly, as in a dream. The tropics, and Greece, the imaginary battles which I fought, the phantasies into whose mouths I put my thoughts, were real and true to me. They met me when I woke—they floated along beside me as I walked to work—they acted their fantastic dramas before me through the sleepless hours of night. Gradually certain

figures among them became familiar—certain personages grew into coherence, as embodiments of those few types of character which had struck me the most, and played an analogous part in every fresh fantasia. Sandy Mackaye's face figured inconspicuously enough as Leonidas, Brutus, a Pilgrim Father, and gradually, in spite of myself and the fear with which I looked on the recurrence of that dream, Lillian's figure re-entered my fairyland. I saved her from a hundred dangers, I followed her through dragon-guarded caverns and the corridors of magic castles. I walked by her side through the forests of the Amazon.

And now I began to crave for some means of expressing these fancies to myself. While they were mere thoughts, parts of me, they were unsatisfactory, however delicious. I longed to put them outside me, that I might look at them and talk to them as permanent, independent things. First I tried to sketch them on the white washed walls of my garret, on scraps of paper begged from Mackaye, or picked up in the workroom. But from my ignorance of any rules of drawing, they were utterly devoid of beauty, and only excited my disgust. Besides, I had thoughts as well as objects to express—thoughts strange, sad, wild, about my own feelings, my own destiny, and drawing could not speak them for me.

Then I turned instinctively to poetry with its rules I was getting rapidly conversant. There were dreams of imitation urged me on, and when I tried, the grace of rhyme and metre covered a thousand defects. I tell my story, not as I saw it then, but as I see it now. A long and lonely voyage, with its monotonous days and sleepless nights—its sickness and heart loneliness—has given me opportunities for analysing my past history which were impossible then, until the ceaseless rush of new images, the ceaseless ferment of their recombination, in which my life was passed from sixteen to twenty-five. The poet, I suppose, must be a seer as long as he is a worker, and a seer only. He has no time to philosophise—to "think about thinking," as Goethe, I have somewhere read, says that he never could do. It is too often only in sickness and prostration and sheer despair, that the hazy vanity and swift digestion of his soul can cease, and give him time to know himself and God's dealings with him, and for that reason it is good for him, too, to have been afflicted.

I do not write all this to boast of it, I am ready to bear snickers at my romance—my day-dreams—my impractical habits of mind, for I know that I deceive them. But such was the appointed growth of my uneducated mind, no more unhealthy a growth, if I am to believe books, than that of many a carefully trained one. High born gentlemen, they tell me, have their idle visions as well as we workmen; and Oxford has seen of late years as wild Imaginations conceived as ever were fathered by a

real republic. For, indeed, we have the same flesh and blood, the same God to teach us, the same devil to mislead us, whether we choose to believe it or not. But there were excuses for me. We Londoners are not accustomed from our youth to the poems of a great democratic genius, as the Scotchmen are to their glorious Burns. We have no chance of such an early acquaintance with poetic wit as that which enabled John Bethune, one of the great unrepresented—the starving Scotch day labourer, breaking stones upon the parish roads, to write at the age of seventeen such words as these

Hail, hallow'd evening! sacred hour to me!
Thy clouds of grey, thy vocal melody,
Thy deep silence oft to me have brought
A sweet exchange from toil to peaceful thought
Ye purple heavens! how often has my eye,
Wearied with its long gaze on drudgery,
Look'd up and found refreshment in the hues
That gild thy vast with colouring profuse!

O, evening grey! how oft have I admired
Thy airy tenuity, when rich upon thee
The glowing murmur of the olden time
Until their very souls flow'd forth in rhyme
And I have listened, till my spirit grew
Familiar with their deathless strains, and drew
From the same source some portion of the glow
Which fill'd their spirits when from earth below
They soared thy golden nothings! And I
Have consecrated thee, bright evening sky,
My fount of inspiration! and I fling
My spirit on thy clouds an offering
To the great Deity of living day,
Who bathed transfigured o'er thee this purple ray

After all, our dreams do little harm to the rich. Those who consider Chartistism as synonymous with devil-worship, should bless and encourage them, for the very reason for which we working men ought to dread them, for, quickened into pious activity by the low, novel, ungering press, they help to excavate and to set all but the noblest minds among us. Here and there a Thomas Cooper, sitting in Stafford gaol, after a youth spent in cobbling shoes, vents his treasures of classical and historical learning in a "Paragon of Suicides," or a prince becomes the poet of the poor, no less for having fed his boyish fancy with "The Arabian Nights" and "The Pilgrim's Progress." But, with the most of us, sedentary and monotonous occupations, as has long been known, create of themselves a morbidly meditative and fantastic turn of mind. And what else, in Heaven's name, ye fine gentlemen what else can a working-man do with his imagination, but dream? What else will you let him do with it, oh ye education pedants, who fancy that you can teach the masses as you would drill soldiers, every soul alike, though you will not bestir yourselves to do even that? Are there no differences of rank—(God's rank, not man's—among us? You have discovered, since your schoolboy days, the fallacy of the old nomenclature which civilly classed us all together as "the snobs," "the blackguards," which even—so strong

is habit—tempted Burke himself to talk of us as "the swinish multitude." You are finding yourselves wrong there. A few more years' experience, not in mis-educating the poor, but in watching the poor really educate themselves, may teach you that we are not all by nature dolts and idiots; that there are differences of brain among us, just as great as there is between you, that there are those among us whose education ought not to end, and will not end, with the putting off of the parish cup and liveries, whom it is cruelty, as well as folly, to toss back into the hell of more material drudgery, as soon as you have—if, indeed, you have been even so honestful as that excited in them a new thirst of the intellect and imagination. If you provide that craving with no wholesome food, you at least have no right to blame it if it shall gorge itself with poison.

Dare for once to do a strange thing, and let yourself be laughed at, go to a workman's meeting—a Chartist meeting, if you will, and look honestly at the faces and brows of those so called mechanics, whom your venal caricaturists have taught you to believe a mixture of cur-dog and baboon—we, for our part, shall not be ashamed to show foreheads against your laughing House of Commons—and then say, what employment can those men find in the soulless routine of mechanical labor for the mass of brain which they almost universally possess? They must either dream or agitate, perhaps they are now learning how to do both to some purpose.

But I have found, by sad experience, that there is little use in declamation. I had much better simply tell my story, and leave my readers to judge of the facts, if, indeed, they will be so far courteous as to believe them.

CHAPTER VIII

FOUNT IN A DARK PLACE

So I made my first attempt at poetry—need I say that my subject was the beautiful Lillan? And need I say, too, that I was as utterly disgusted at my attempt to express her in words, as I had been at my trial with the pencil? It chanced also, that after humming out half a dozen verses, I met with Mr. Tennyson's poems, and the unequalled sketches of women that I found there, whither they had, with the rest of the book, a new and abiding influence on my mind, were quite enough to show me my own fatal incompetency in that line. I throw my verses away, never to resume them. Perhaps I perceived thereby the depth of my affection. On mightiest feelings are always those which remain most unspoken. The most intense lovers and the greatest poets have generally, I think, written very little personal love poetry, while they have

shown in fictitious characters a knowledge of the passion too painfully intimate to be spoken of in the first person.

But to escape from my own thoughts, I could not help writing something, and to escape from my own private sorrows, writing on some matter with which I had no personal concern. And so, after much casting about for subjects, Childe Harold and the old missionary records contrived to celebrate a spiritual wedding in my brain, of which occasional marriage came a proportionately abundant offspring.

My hero was not to be a pirate, but a pious sea rover, who, with a crew of saints, or at least uncommonly fine fellows, who could be very manly and jolly, and yet all be good Christians of a somewhat vague and Unitarian cast of doctrine (for my own was becoming rapidly so), set forth under the red cross flag to colonise and convert one of my old paradises,—a South Sea Island.

I forgot most of the lines—they were probably great trash, but I hugged them to my bosom as a young mother does her first child.

"Twas sunset to the lone Pacific world,
The rich gleams falling in the western sky,
Within the still lagoon the sails were furled,
The red cross flag alone was flaming high.
Before them was the low and palm-fringed shore,
Behind, the outer ocean a baffled roar.

After which valiant plunge in *medium* verse, came a great lump of description, after the manner of youths—of the island, and the white houses, and the banana groves, and above all, the single volcano towering over the whole, which,

Shaking a awful Isle with thundering shocks
Reproved the worshippers of stunes and stocks

"Then how a line of foam appears on the Lagoon, which is supposed at first to be a shoal of fish, but turns out to be a troop of naked island beauties, swimming out to the ship. The decent missionaries were certainly guiltless of putting that into my head, whether they ever saw it or not—a great many things happening in the South Seas at which they find it convenient to say nothing. I think I picked it up from Wallis, or Cook, or some other plain-spoken voyager.

The crew gaze in pardonable admiration, but the hero, in a long speech, reproves them for their light-mindedness, reminds them of their sacred mission, and informs them that—

The soldiers of the cross should turn their eyes
From carnal lusts and heathen vanities

Beyond which inimitable assertion I never got, for this being about the fiftieth stanza, I stopped to take breath a little, and reading and re-reading, patching and touching continually, grew so accustomed to my lant lug's face, that, like a mother, I could not tell whether it was handsome or hideous, in

sense or nonsense. I have since found out that the true plan, for myself at least, is to write off as much as possible at a time, and then lay it by and forget it for weeks, if I can, for months. After that, on returning to it, the mind regards it as something altogether strange and new, and can, or rather ought to, judge of it as it would of the work of another pen.

But really, between content and disgust, fancying myself one day a great new poet, and the next a mere twaddler, I got so puzzled and anxious, that I determined to pluck up courage, go to Mackaye, and ask him to solve the problem for me.

"Heh, son, poetry! I've been expecting it. I suppose it's the appointed gift of a workman's intellectual life, that some lust of versification. Awel, awel—let's hear."

Blushing and trembling, I read my verses aloud in as resonant and magnificent a voice as I could command. I thought Mackaye's upper lip would never stop quivering on his lower lip protruding. He chuckled intensely at the unfortunate rhyme between "shocks" and "stocks." Indeed it kept him in chuckling matter for a whole month afterwards, but when I had got to the shoal of naked girls, he could bear no more, and burst out—

"What the devil's there in harlotry and idolatry here in England, that ye can grasp cringing after it in the 'Cannibal Islands'! Are ye gonn to be like they poor distressed bodies, that wud sinna be an Hahm dog howl, than an English nightgale sing, and wimma haken to Mr. John Thomas till he calls himself Giovanni 'Ghomassino', or do ye tak' yonself for a singing bird, to go all yon days twiddledumdeeing out into the lift, just for the lust o' being yon an' clan chatter? Will ye be a man or a hintie? 'Coral Islands' Pacific! What do ye ken about Pacifics? Are ye a Cockney or a Cambridged Islander? Dinna stand there, ye gowk, as fastidious as a docken, but tell me thit Where do ye live?"

"What do you mean, Mr. Mackaye?" asked I, with a doleful and disappointed visage.

"Mean why, if God had meant ye to write about Pacifics, He'd ha put ye there—and because He means ye to write about London town He's put ye there—and given ye an aften sharp taste o' the ways o' it, and I'll gie ye another. Come along wi' me."

And he seized me by the arm, and hastily giving me time to put on my hat, marched me out into the streets, and away through Chancery Market to St. Giles's.

It was a foul, chilly, foggy Saturday night. From the butchers' and greengrocers' shops the gaslights flared and flickered, wild and ghastly, over haggard groups of shipshod duty women, bargaining for scraps of stale meat and frost-bitten vegetables, wrangling about short weight and bad quality. Fish-

stalls and fruit stalls hued the edge of the grassy pavement, sending up odours as foul as the language of sellers and buyers. Blood and sewer-water crawled from under doors and out of spouts, and reeked down the gutters among offal, animal and vegetable, in every stage of putrefaction. Foul vapours rose from cowsheds and slaughter-houses, and the doorways of undrained alleys, where the inhabitants carried the filth out on their shoes from the back-yard into the court, and from the court up into the main street, while above, hanging like chills over the streets—those narrow, howling torrents of filth, and poverty, and sin—the houses with their teeming hail of life were piled up into the dingy cho—night. A ghastly, deafening, sickening sight it was. Go, scented Bol Giovanni! and see what London is! and then go to the library which God has given thee—no often fears in vain—and see what science says this London might be!

"Ay," he muttered to himself, as he strode along, "sing awa, get yourself wi' child wi' pretty fancies and gair' words, like the rest of the poets, and gang to hell for it."

"To hell, Mr. Mackaye?"

"Ay, to a vera real hell, Alton Locke, hullo—a worse one than any hells' kitchen, or subterranean in Smithfield that ye'll hear o' in the pulpits—the hell on earth o' being a Banker, and a humbug, and a useless peacock, wasting God's gifts on your ain lusts and pleasures—and kenning it—and not being able to get out o' it, for the chains o' vanity and self-indulgence. I've warned ye. Now, look there—"

He stopped suddenly before the entrance of a miserable alley—

"Look! there's not a soul down that yard but's either beggar, drunkard, thief, or worse. Write about that! Say how ye saw the mouth o' hell, and the twa pillars thereof at the entry—the pawnbroker's shop o' one side and the gin palace at the other—twae monstrous devils, eating up men, and women, and bairns, body and soul. Look at the jaws o' the monsters, how they open and open, and swallow in another victim and another. Write about that."

"What jaws, Mr. Mackaye?"

"They faulding-doors o' the gin-shop, gouse. Are na they a mair dunnable man-devouring na than any red-hot statue Moloch, or wicker Gogmagog, wherein the auld Britons burnt their prisoners? Look at these barefooted, bare-backed hizzies, with their arms round the men's necks, and their mouths full o' vitriol and beastly words. Look at that Irishwoman pouring the gin down the babbie's throat. Look at that rail o' a boy gaun out o' the pawnshop, where he's been pilking the handkerchief he stole i' the morning, into the gin-shop, to buy beer poisoned wi' grains o' paradise, and cocculus indicus, and nut, and a dunnable, maddenin', thirst-breeding, lust-breeding drugs!

Look at that girl that went in wi' a shawl on her back and cam' out wi'out ane! Drunkards frae the breasts—harlots frae the cradle!—damned before they're born! John Calvin had an inkling o' the truth there, I'm a'most driven to think, wi' his reprobation devil's doctrines!"

"Will—but—Mr. Mackaye, I know nothing about these poor creatures."

"Then ye ought. What do ye ken about the Pacht? Which is, maist to your business?—thae bare-backed hizzies that play the harlot o' the other side o' the world, or these—these thousands o' bare-backed hizzies that play the harlot o' your ain side—made out o' your ain flesh and blude? You a poet! True poetry, like true charity, my laddie, begins at home. If ye'll be a poet at a', ye mair be a Cockney poet, and while the Cockneys be what they be, ye mair write, like Jeremiah of old, a' lamentation, and mourning, and woe, for the sins o' your people. Gin ye want to learn the spirit o' a people's poet, down wi' your Bible and read thae auld Hebrew prophets, gin ye wad learn the style, read your Burns frae morning till night; and gin ye'd learn the matter, just gang after your nose, and keep your eyes open, and ye'll no miss it."

"But all this is so—so unpoetical!"

"Hush! Is there na the heaven above them there, and the hell beneath them? and God frowning, and the devil grinning? No poetry that! Is no the vera idea of the classic tragedy defined to be, man conquered by circumstances? Canna ye see it there? And the vera idea of the modern tragedy, man conquering circumstances?—and I'll show ye that, too—in many a garret where no eye but the good God's enters, to see the patience, and the fortitude, and the self-sacrifice, and the love stronger than death, that's shining in thae dark places o' the earth. Come wi' me, and see."

We went on through a back street or two, and then into a large, miserable house, which, a hundred years ago, perhaps, had witnessed the luxury, and mingled to the laughter of some one great fashionable family, alone there in their glory. Now every room of it held its family, or its group of families—a phalanx of all the fiends!—its grand staircase, with the carved balustrades rotting and crumbling away piecemeal, converted into a common sewer for all its inmates. Up stair after stair we went, while wails of children, and curses of men, steamed out upon the hot stifling rush of air from every doorway, till, at the topmost story, we knocked at a garret door. We entered. Bare it was of furniture, comfortless, and freezing cold; but, with the exception of the plaster dropping from the roof, and the broken windows patched with rags and paper, there was a scrupulous neatness about the whole, which, contrasted strangely with the filth and slovenliness outside. There was no bed in the room—no table. On a broken chair by the chimney

sat a miserable old woman, fancying that she was warming her hands over embers which had long been cold, shaking her head, and rattling to herself with palsied lips about the guardians and the workhouse; while upon a few rags on the floor lay a girl, ugly, small-pox marked, hollow eyed, emaciated, her only bedclothes the skirt of a large band-some new riding habit, at which two other girls, wan and tawdry, were still lunging busily, as they sat right and left of her on the floor. The old woman took no notice of us as we entered, but one of the girls looked up, and, with a pleased gesture of recognition, put her finger up to her lips, and whispered, "Ellen's asleep."

"I'm not asleep, dems," answered a faint, uncertainly voice, "I was only praying 'Is that Mr. Mackaye?'"

"Ay, my lassie, but ha' ye gotten na fire the night?"

"No," said one of them, bitterly, "we've earned no fire to night, by fair trade or foul either."

The sick girl tried to raise herself up and speak, but was stopped by a frightful fit of coughing and expectation, as painful, apparently, to the sufferer as it was, I confess, disgusting even to me.

I saw Mackaye slip something into the hand of one of the girls, and whisper, "A half hundred of souls," to which she replied with an eager look of gratitude that I never can forget, and hurried out. Then the sufferer, as if taking advantage of her absence, began to speak quickly and eagerly.

"Oh, Mr. Mackaye - dear, kind Mr. Mackaye - do speak to her, and do speak to poor Lizzy here! I'm not afraid to say it before her, because she's more gentle like, and hasn't learnt to say bad words yet - but do speak to them, and tell them not to go the bad way, like all the rest. Tell them I'll never prosper. I know it is want that drives them to it, as it drives all of us - but tell them it's best to starve and the honest girls, than to go about with the shame and the curse of God on their hearts, for the sake of keeping this poor, miserable, vile body together a few short years more in this world o' sorrow. Do tell them, Mr. Mackaye."

"I'm thinking," said he, with the tears running down his old, withered face, "ye'll mak' a better preacher at that text than I shall, Ellen."

"Oh no, no, who am I, to speak to them? - 'tis no merit o' mine, Mr. Mackaye, that the Lord's kept me pure through it all. I should have been just as bad as any of them, if the Lord had not kept me out of temptation, in His great mercy, by making me the poor, ill-favored creature I am. From that time I was burnt when I was a child, and had the small pox after wards, oh! how sinful I was, and I pinned and rebelled against the Lord!" And now I see it was all His blessed mercy to keep me out of evil, pure and unspotted for my dear Jesus, when He

comes to take me to Himself. I saw him last night, Mr. Mackaye, as plain as I see you now, all in a flame of beautiful white fire, smiling at me so sweetly, and He showed me the wounds in His hands and His feet, and He said, "Ellen, my own child, those that suffer with me here, they shall be glorified with me hereafter, for I'm coming very soon to take you home."

Sandy shook his head at all this with a strange expression of face, as if he sympathized and yet disagreed, respected and yet smiled at the shape which her religious ideas had assumed, and I remarked to the meantime that the poor girl's neck and arm were all scoured and distorted, apparently from the effects of a burn.

"Ah," said Sandy, at length, "I tauld ye ye were the better preacher of the two, ye've more comfort to gie Sandy than he has to gie the like o' ye. But how is the wound in your back the day?"

Oh, it was wonderfully better! the doctor had come and given her such blessed ease with a great tank leather he had put under it, and then she did not feel the boards through so much. "But oh, Mr. Mackaye, I'm so afraid it will make me live longer to keep me away from my dear Saviour. And there's one thing, too, that's breaking my heart, and making me long to die this very minute, even if I didn't go to Heaven at all, Mr. Mackaye." (And she burst out crying, and between her sobs it came out, as well as I could gather, that her notion was, that her illness was the cause of keeping the girls in "the bad way," as she called it.) "For Lizzy here, I did hope that she had repented of it after all my talking to her, but since I've been so bad, and the girls have had to keep me most o' the time, she's gone out of nights just as bad as ever."

Lizzy had laid her face in her hands the greater part of this speech. Now she looked up passionately, almost fiercely.

"Repent - I have repented - I repent of it every hour - I hate myself, and hate all the world because of it, but I must - I must. I cannot see her starve, and I cannot starve myself. When she first fell sick she kept on as long as she could, doing what she could, and then between us we only earned three shillings a week, and there was ever so much to take off for fire, and twopenny for the rent, and twopenny for candles, and then we were always getting fined, because they never gave us out the work till too late, on purpose, and then they lowered prices again, and now Ellen can't work at all, and there's four of us with the old lady, to keep off two's work that couldn't keep themselves alone."

"Doesn't the parish allow the old lady anything?" I ventured to ask.

"They used to allow half a crown for a bit, and the doctor ordered Ellen things from the parish, but it wasn't half o' 'em she ever got, and when the meat came, it was half times not fit to eat, and when it was,

her stomach turned against it. If she was a lady she'd be cockered up with all sorts of soups and jellies, and nice things, just the minute she fancied 'em, and lie on a water bed instead of the bare floor—and she ought, but where's the parish 'll do that? And the hospital wouldn't take her in because she was incurable, and, besides, the old m' wouldn't let her go—not into the union neither. When she's in a good humour like, she'll sit by her by the hour, holding her hand and kissing of it, and nursing of it for all the world like a doll. But she won't hear of the workhouse, so now, these last three weeks, they takes off all her pay, because they says she must go into the house, and not kill her daughter by keeping her out—as if they want a killing her themselves."

"No workhouse—no workhouse!" said the old woman, turning round suddenly, in a clear, lofty voice. "No workhouse, su, for an officer's daughter."

And she relapsed into her stupor.

At that moment the other girl entered with the coals—but without staying to light the fire, ran up to Ellen with some tumpety duntty she had bought, and tried to persuade her to eat it.

"We have been telling Mr Mackaye everything," said poor Tazzy.

"A pleasant story, isn't it? Oh! if that tin. Truly, as we're making that riding-habit for, would just spare only half the money that goes in dressing her up to ride in the park, to send us out to the colonies, wouldn't I be an honest girl there—maybe an honest man's wife! Oh! my God! wouldn't I save my fingers to the bone for him! Wouldn't I mend my life tiffen! I couldn't help it—it would be like getting into heaven out of hell. But now—we must—we must—I tell you I shall go mad soon, I think, or take to drink. When I passed the gin shop down there just now, I had to run like mad for fear I should go in—and if I once took to that—Now then to work again. Make up the fire, Miss * * * *, please do!"

And she sat down and began stitching frantically at the riding habit, from which the other girl had hardly lifted her hands or eyes for a moment during our visit.

We made a motion as if to go.

"God bless you," said Ellen; "come again soon, dear Mr Mackaye."

"Good bye," said the chier girl, "and good night to you. Night and day's all the same here—we must have this home by even o'clock to-morrow morning. My lady's gang to ride early they say, whoever she may be, and we must just sit up all night. It's often we haven't had one a week together, from four in the morning till two the next morning sometime still! Still, still! 'Somebody's' wrote about that—I'll learn to do it'll sound fitting like, up here."

"Better sing hymns," said Ellen.

"Hymns for * * * * *" answered the other, and then burst into a peculiar wild, ringing, and fiendish laugh—has my reader never heard it?

I pulled out the two or three shillings which I possessed, and tried to make the girls take them, for the sake of poor Ellen.

"No, you're a working-man, and we won't feel on you—you'll want it some day—all the trade's going the same way as we, as fast as ever it can!"

Sandy and I went down the stairs.

"Poetic element! You lassie, rejoicing in her dishonourment and not her beauty, like the miss of Peterborough in auld time, —is there na poetry there? That poor lassie, dying on the bare boards and seeing her Saviour in her dreams, is there na poetry there, callant? That auld body owie the fire, wi' her 'an officer's dochter,' is there na poetry there? That ither, prostituting herself to buy food for her freen—is there na poetry there?—tragedy?"

'With hues as when some mighty painter dips
His pen in dyes of earthquake and eclipse.'

Ay, Shelley's gran', always gran', but Frost is grander—God and Satan are grander. All around ye, in every gin shop and costermonger's cellar, are God and Satan at death-grips, every garret is a hell or Paradise. Last of Paradise regained—and will ye think it beneath ye to be the 'People's Poet'?"

CHAPTER IX

POETRY AND POETS.

IN the history of individuals, as well as in that of nations, there is often a period of sudden blossoming—a short luminous summer, not without its tornadoes and thunder-gleams, in which all the best seeds of past observation leap forth together into life, and form, and beauty. And such with me were the two years that followed. I thought—I talked poetry to myself all day long. I wrote nightly on my return from work. I am astonished, on looking back, at the variety and quantity of my productions during that short time. My subjects were intentionally and professedly Cockney ones. I had taken Mackaye at his word. I had made up my mind, that if I had any poetic power, I must do my duty therewith in that station of life to which it had pleased God to call me, and look at everything simply and faithfully as a London artisan. To this, I suppose, is to be attributed the little variety and originality for which the public have kindly praised my verses,—a grandeur which sprang not from the atmosphere whence I drew, but from the honesty and single-mindedness with which, I hope, I laboured. Not from the atmosphere, indeed

—that was ungemal enough; crime and poverty, all-devouring competition, and hopeless struggles against Mammon and Moloch, amid the roar of wheels, the ceaseless stream of pile, hard faces, intent on gain, or brooding over woe, and endless prison-walls of brick, beneath a lurid, crushing sky of smoke and mist. It was a dark, noisy, thunderous element, that London life, a troubled sea that could not rest, casting up noise and dirt, resonant of the clanking of chains, the grinding of remorseless machinery, the wail of lost spirits from the pit. And it did its work upon me, it gave a gloomy coloring, a glare as of some Dantean "Inferno," to all my utterances. It did not excite me, or make me fierce—I was too much inured to it—but it crushed and subdued me, it deepened in me that peculiar melan choly of intellectual youth, which Mr. Carlyle has christened forever by one of his momentary nicknames, "Weltschmerz." I buttoned on my own melancholy. I believed, I loved to believe, that every face I passed bore the traces of discontent as deep as was my own—and was I so far wrong? Was I so far wrong either in the gloomy tone of my own poetry? Should not a London poet's work just now be to cry, like the Jew of old, about the walls of Jerusalem—"Woe, woe to this city!" Is this a time to listen to the voices of singing men and singing women? or to cry, "Oh, that my heart were a fountain of tears, that I might weep for the sins of my people!" Is it not unbecomingly, also, that it is in this vein that the London poets have always been greatest? Which of poor Hood's lyrics have an equal chance of immortality with "The Song of the Shirt" and "The Bridge of Sighs," among, as they do, right out of the depths of that Inferno, sublime from their very sympathy? Which of Charles Mackay's lyrics can compare for a moment with the Eschylean grandeur, the terrible rhythmic lilt of his "Cholera Chant"?—

"Dance on the stream the vapours lay,
Thick as wool on the cold highway,
Spongy and slim each hoary lump,
Shone over the street so dull and damp,
The monotonous mild not pierce the cloud
That swathed the city like a shroud
There stood three shapes on the bridge alone,
Three figures by the cooling stone,
Gaunt and tall and undefined,
Specter blith of mist and wind

"I see his footmarks east and west—
He's a little bit of a poet,
He's a little bit of a poet,
He's a little bit of a poet,
Were men as wise as men might be,
They would not work for you, for me,
For him that cometh over the sea,
But they will not hear the warning voice
The children come—He's a little bit of a poet,
He shall be lord of the swarming town,
And mow them down, and mow them down!"

Not that I neglected, on the other hand

every means of extending the wanderings of my spirit into sunnier and more verdant pathways. If I had to tell the gay ones above of the gloom around me, I had also to go forth into the sunshine to bring home if it were but a wild flower guland to those that sat in darkness and the shadow of death. That was all that I could offer them. The reader shall judge, when he has read this book throughout, whether I did not at last find for them something better than even all the beauties of Nature.

But it was on canvas, and not among realities, that I had to choose my garlands, and herein the picture galleries became more than ever my favorite haunt, I was going to say, but, alas! it was not six times a year that I got access to them. Still, when once every May I found myself, by dint of a hard saved shilling, actually within the walls of that, to me, enchanted palace, the Royal Academy Exhibition. Oh, ye rich! who gaze round you at will upon your prints and pictures, if hunger is, as they say, a better teacher than any Ule invents, and fasting itself may become the handmaid of luxury, you should spend, as I did perform, weeks and months shut out from every glimpse of Nature, if you would taste her beauties even on canvas, with perfect richness and childish self-abandonment. How I loved and like those painters! how I thanked Christ for very transparent, shink-chimmed pool, holding for every rain cloud down, Cooper, for every knot of quiet cattle beneath the cool, grey willows, Stanfield, for every snowy peak, and sheet of foam-fringed supphur—each and everyone of them a leaf out of the magic book which else was ever closed to me. Again, I say, how I loved and blest those painters! On the other hand, I was not neglecting to read as well as to write poetry, and, to speak first of the highest, I know no book, always excepting Milton, which at once so quickened and excited my poetical view of man and his hisory, as that great prose poem, the single epic of modern days, Thomas Carlyle's "French Revolution." Of the general effect which his works had on me, I shall say nothing. It was the same as they have had, thank God, on thousands of my class and of every other. But that book above all first recalled me to the overwhelming and yet counseling knowledge that there was such thing as Duty, to teach me to see in history not the mere farcical tragedy of man's crimes and follies, but the dealings of a righteous Ruler of the universe, whose ways are in the great deep, and whom the sins and errors, as well as the virtues and discoveries of man, must obey and justify.

Then, in a happy day, I fell on Alfred Tennyson's poetry, and found there, astonished and delighted, the embodiment of thoughts about the earth around me which I had conceived because I fancied them peculiar to myself. Why is it that the latest

poet has generally the greatest influence over the minds of the young? Surely not for the mere claim of novelty? The reason is, that he, living amid the same hopes, the same temptations, the same sphere of observation as they, gives niterance and outward form to the very questions which, vague and wordless, have been exercising their hearts. And what endeared Tennyson especially to me, the working man, was, as I afterwards discovered, the altogether democratic tendency of his poems. True, all great poets are by their other democrats, seers of man only as man, singers of the joys, the sorrows, the aspirations common to all humanity, but in Alfred Tennyson there is an element especially democratic, truly levelling, not his political opinions, about which I know nothing, and care less, but his handling of the trivial every-day sights and sounds of Nature brought up as I understand, in a part of England which possesses not much of the picturesque and nothing of that which the vulgar call sublime, he is leant to see thit in all Nature, in the hedgerow and the sand-hank, as well as in the alp-peak and the ocean waste, is a world of true sublimity, — a minute infinite, — an over-fertile garden of poetic images, the roots of which are in the unfathomable and the eternal, as truly as any phenomena which astonishes and awes thit ye. The descriptions of the desolate pools and creeks where the dying swin floated, the hint of the silvery marsh mosses by Mamma's mead, came to me like revelations. I always knew there was something beautiful, wonderful, sublime, in those flowery dykes of Battersea Fields, in the long gravelly sweep of that lone tidil shore, and here was a man who had put them into words for me! This is what I call democratic — the revelation of the poetry which lies in common things. And surely all the age is tending in that direction — in Landseer and his dogs — in Fielding and his downs with a host of noble fellow-artists — and in all authors who have really seized the nation's mind, from Crabbe and Burns, and Wordsworth, to Hood and Dickens, the great tide sets ever onward, outward, towards that which is common to the many, not that which is exclusive to the few — towards the likeness of Him who causes His rain to fall on the just and on the unjust, and His sun to shine on thit evil and the good, who knoweth the crittle upon a thousand hills, and all the beasts of the field are in His sight.

Well — I must return to my story. And here someone may ask me, "But did you not find this true spiritual democracy, this universal knowledge and sympathy, in Shakespeare whae all other poets?" It may be my shame to have to confess it, but though I find it now, I did not then. I do not think, however, my case is singular from what I can ascertain, there is even with regularly educated minds a period of life at

which that great writer is not appreciated, just on account of his very greatness, on account of the deep and large experience which the true understanding of his plays requires — experience of man, of history, of art, and above all of those sorrows whereby, as Hazekiah says, and as I have learnt almost too well — "whereby men live, and in all which is the life of the spirit." At seventeen, indeed, I had devoured Shakespeare, though merely for the food to my fancy which his plots and incidents supplied, for the gorgeous colouring of his scenery; but at the period of which I am now writing, I had exhausted that source of mere pleasure, I was craving for more explicit and dogmatic teaching than any which he seemed to supply, and for three years, strange as it may appear, I hardly ever looked into his pages. Under what circumstances I afterwards returned to his exhaustless treasures, my readers shall in due time be told.

So I worked away manfully with such tools and stock as I possessed, and of course produced, at first, like all young writers, some sufficiently servile imitations of my favourite poets.

"Fie!" said Sandy, "wha wants mon gels atween Burns and Tennyson? A guid stock birth, but gi' ye'd cross the braid ye in munnle the squits, and no the manner, o' the men. Wha munn ilk a one the noo stile his neebor's harness before he glints out o' windows? Mak' a style for yoncel, laddie, ye're na man Scotch him than ye are Lancashire him, see ging ye an gate and leave them to ging thurs, and just mak' a gran', brode, simple Saxon style for yours!"

"But how can I, till I know what sort of a style it ought to be?"

"Oh! but yeon's amazing like Foin Sheulan's answer to his father. 'Tom,' says the auld man, 'I'm thinking ye munn tak' a wife.' 'Verri wel, father,' says the puer skellam, 'and wha's wife shall I tak'?' 'Wha's style shall I tak'?' say all the oddunts the noo. Mak' a style as ye would mak' a wife, by marrying her a' to yoncel', and ye'll mune munn ken what's your style till it's made, than ye'll ken what your wife's like till she's been mony a year by your milt."

"My dear Mackaye," I said, "you have the most unmerciful way of jussing difficulties, and then leaving poor fellows to lay the ghost for themselves."

"Hech, then, I'm a'thogither a negative teacher, as they ca' it, than the new lallans. I'll gang out o' my gate to tell a man his kye are laired, but I'm no obligate thereto to pu' them out for him. After a', nae man is rid o' a difficulty till he's conquered it single-handed for himself. And a, I'm nae poet, munn s the guide hap for you."

"Why, then?"

"Och, och! they're puer, fockless, cfabbat, unpractical hodies, they poets. But if it's yon doom, ye munn dree it; and I'm sair

aford ye ha' gottin the disense o' genius, mair's the pity, and maun writo, I suppose, willy-nilly. Some's folks hoodels are that made o' catgut, that they canna star without charruping and serocking."

However, *astro percutus*, I wrote on, and in about two years and a half had got to gether "Songs of the Highway," enough to fill a small octavo volume, the circumstances of whose birth shall be given hereafter. Whether I ever attained to anything like an original style, readers must judge for themselves—the readers of the said volume, I mean, for I have inserted none of those poems in this, my autobiography, first, because it seems too like pulling my own works, and next, because I do not want to injure the as yet not over-giant sale of the same. But, if anyone's emotion is so far excited that he wishes to see what I have accomplished, the best advice which I can give him is, to go forth and buy all the working men's poetry which has appeared during the last twenty years, without favour or exception, among which he must needs, of course, find mine, and also, I am happy to say, a great deal which is much better and more instructive than mine.

CHAPTER X.

HOW FOLK TURN CHARTISTS.

THOSE who read my story only for amusement, I advise to skip this chapter. Those, on the other hand, who really wish to ascertain what working-men actually do suffer—to see whether their political discontent has not its roots, not merely in fanciful ambition, but in misery and slavery most real and agonising—those in whose eyes the accounts of a system, or rather inhuman absence of all system, which involves starvation, nakedness, prostitution, and long imprisonment in dungeons worse than the cells of the Inquisition, will be invested with something at least of tragic interest, may, I hope, think it worth their while to learn how the clothes which they wear are made, and to listen to a few occasional statistics, which, though they may seem to the wealthy mere lists of dull figures, are to the workmen symbols of terrible physical realities—of hunger, degradation, and despair.

Well, one day our employer died. He had been one of the old sort of fashionable West-End tailors in the fast decreasing honourable trade, keeping a modest shop, hardly to be distinguished from a dwelling-house, except by his name on the window

blinds. He paid good prices for work, though not as good, of course, as he had given twenty years before, and pinned himself upon having all his work done at home. His workrooms, as I have said, wore no Elysiums, but still as good, alas! as those of three tailors out of four. He was proud, luxurious, foppish, but he was honest and kindly enough, and did many a generous thing by men who had been long in his employ. At all events, his journeyman could live on what he paid them.

But his son, succeeding to the business, determined like Rehoboam of old, to go a-head with the times. Fined with the great spirit of the nineteenth century—at least with that one which is vulgarly considered its especial glory—he resolved to make it so to be rich. His father had made money very slowly of late. While dozens, who had begun business long after him, had now retired to luxurious ease and suburban villas. Why should he remain in the minority? Why should he not get rich as fast as he could? Why should he stick to the old, slow-going, honourable trade? Out of some 450 West-End tailors, there were not one hundred left who were old-fashioned and stupid enough to go on keeping down their own profits by having all their work done at home and at first-hand. Honourable scruples! The Government knew none such. Were not the army clothes, the post-office clothes, the policeman's clothes, furnished by contractors and sweatshops, who hired the work at low prices, and let it out again to journeyman at still lower ones? Why should he pay his men two shillings where the Government paid them one? Were there not cheap houses even at the West End, which had saved several thousands a year merely by reducing their workmen's wages? And if the workmen chose to take lower wages, he was not bound actually to make them a present of more than they asked for! They would go to the cheapest market for anything they wanted, and so must he. Besides, wages had really been quite exorbitant. Half his men threw each of them as much money away in gin and beer yearly, as would pay two workmen at a cheap house. Why was he to be robbing his family of comforts to pay for their extravagance? And charging his customers, too, unnecessarily high prices—it was really robbing the public!

Such, I suppose, were some of the arguments which led to an official announcement, one Saturday night, that our young employer intended to enlarge his establishment, for the purpose of commencing business in the "show trade," and that, emulous of Messrs Aaron, Levi, and the rest of that class, magnificent alterations were to take place in the premises, to make room for which our workrooms were to be demolished, and that for that reason—for of course it was only for that reason—all work would in

* Facts still worse than those which Mr Locke's story contains have been made public by the *Morning Chronicle* in a series of noble letters on "Labour and the Poor," which we entreat all Christian people to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. "That will be better for them," as Mahomet, in similar cases, used to say.

future be given out, to be made up at the men's own homes.

Our employer's arguments, if they were such as I suppose, were reasonable enough according to the present code of commercial morality. But strange to say, the auditory, inaudible to the delight with which the public would view the splendid architectural improvements with taste too grovelling to appreciate the glories of plate glass shop fronts and large scroll work—too selfish to rejoice, for its own sake, in the beauty of arabesques and chandeliers, which, though they never might behold, the astonished public would with souls too niggardly to leap for joy at the thought that gents would henceforth buy the registered gaudy vest, and the perfect classic cream seasonless pale top hat a crown cheaper than ever—or that needy noblemen would pay three pounds ten, instead of five pounds, for their footmen's liveries—received the words, eldritch as they were, in sullen silence, and actually, when they got into the street, broke out in to-morrows, perhaps into execrations.

"Silence!" said Crossthwaite, "wills have us—come down to the nearest house of call, and talk it out like men, instead of gawling in the street, like fish-fags."

So down we went. Crossthwaite, taking my arm, staid on in moody silence—once muttering to himself bitterly, —

"Oh yes, all right and natural! What can the little sharks do but follow the big ones?"

We took a room, and Crossthwaite coolly saw us all in, and locking the door, stood with his back against it.

"Now then, mind, 'One and all,' as the Corn-lawmen say, and no peaching. If any man is scandalous enough to carry tales, I'll —"

"Do what?" asked Jimmy Dawnes, who had settled himself on the table with a pipe and a pot of porter. "You and the King of the L'indal Islands, as I know of, to cut a corner out of?"

"No, but if a poor man's prayer can bring God's curse down upon a traitor's head—it may stay on his rascally shoulders till it rots."

"If its soul was pots and pans—look at Sheela's bones, that sold penknives in the street six months ago, now a raving in his own carriage, all along of turning sweater. If God's curse is like that I'll be happy to take any man's share of it."

Some new idea seemed twinkling in the fellow's cunning idiotic face as he spoke. I, and others also, shuddered at his words, but we all forgot them a moment afterwards, as Crossthwaite began to speak.

"We were all bound to expect this Every working tailor must come to this at last, on the present system, and we are only lucky in having been spared so long. You all know where this will end—in the same misery as fifteen thousand out of twenty,

thousand of our class are enduring now. We shall become the slaves, often the bodily prisoners, of Jews, maddlemen, and swelters, who draw their livelihood out of our starvation. We shall have to face, as the next have, ever decreasing prices of labour, ever-increasing profits made out of that labour by the contractors who will employ us—arbitrary fines, inflicted at the caprice of henchlings—the competition of women, and children, and starving Irish—our hours of work will increase one-third, our actual pay decrease to less than one half, and in all this we shall have no hope, no chance of improvement in wages, but ever more penury, slavery, misery, as we are pressed on by those who are sucked by tithe—almost by hundreds yearly, out of the honourable trade in which we were brought up, into the infernal system of contract work, which is devouring our trade and many others, body and soul. Our wives will be forced to sit up night and day to help us—our children must labour from the cradle without chance of going to school, hardly of breathing the fresh air of Heaven—our boys, as they grow up, must turn beggars or paupers—our daughters, as thousands do, must eke out their miserable earnings by prostitution. And after all, a whole family will not gain what one of us had been doing, as yet, single handed. You know there will be no hope for us. There is no use appealing to Government or Parliament. I don't want to talk politics here. I shall keep them for another place. But you can collect as we as I can, when a deputation of us went up to a member of Parliament—one that was reputed a philosopher, and a political economist, and a liberal—and set before him the ever-increasing pauperism and misery of our trade and of those connected with it, you recollect his answer—that, however glad he would be to help us, it was impossible—he could not alter the laws of nature that wages were regulated by the amount of competition among the men themselves, and that it was no business of Government, or anyone else, to interfere in contracts between the employer and employed, that those things regulated themselves by the laws of political economy, which it was madness and suicide to oppose. He may have been a wise man. I only know that he was a rich one. Everyone speaks well of the bridge which carries him over. Everyone favours the laws which fill his pockets to be God's laws. But I say this: If neither Government nor members of Parliament can help us, we must help ourselves. Help yourselves, and Heaven will help you. Combination among ourselves is the only chance. One thing we can do—sit still."

"And starve?" said someone.
"Yes, and starve! Better starve than sit still—say, it is a to give me, to the system. It is a sin to add our weight to the crowd of citizens who are now choking and

strangling each other to death, as the prisoners did in the Black Hole of Calcutta. Let those who will, turn beasts of prey, and feed upon their fellows, but let us at least keep ourselves pure. It may be the law of political civilisation, the law of nature, that the rich should eat up the poor, and the poor eat up each other. Then I here rise up and curse that law, that civilisation, that nature. Either I will destroy them, or they shall destroy me. As a slave, as an incarcerated labourer on my fellow-sufferers, I will not live. So help me God! I will take no work home to my house, and I call upon everyone here to combine, and to sign protest to that effect."

"What's the use of that, my good Mr. Crosshwaite?" interrupted someone, quietly. "Don't you know what came of the strike a few years ago when this price and sweating came in? The masters made fine promises and never kept 'em, and the men who stood out had their places filled up with poor devils who were glad enough to take the work at any price—just as ours will be. There's no use kicking against the pricks. All the rest have come to it, and so must we. We must live some how, and half a loaf is better than no bread, and even that half loaf will go into other men's mouths, if we don't stir up at it at once. Besides, we must force others to strike. We may strike and starve ourselves, but what's the use of a dozen striking out of 20,000?"

"Will you sign the protest, gentlemen, or not?" asked Crosshwaite, in a determined voice.

Some half dozen said they would, if the others would.

"And the others won't. Well, after all, one man must take full responsibility, and I am that man. I will sign the protest by myself. I will sweep a sweeping—I will turn cross gatherer, rag picker, I will starve myself, and see my wife starve with me, but do the wrong thing I will not! The Cause wants martyrs. If I must be one, I must."

All this while my mind had been under going a strange perturbation. The notion of escaping that infernal workroom and the company I met there—of taking my work home, and thereby, as I hoped, gaining more time for study—at least, having my head on the spot roundly at every odd moment, was most enticing. I had hailed the proposed change as a blessing to me, till I heard Crosshwaite's arguments; not that I had not known the facts before, but it had never struck me till then that it was a real sin against my class to make myself a party in the system by which they were allowing themselves (under temptation enough, God knows) to be enslaved. But now I looked with horror on the gulf of poverty before me, into the vortex of which not only I, but my whole trade, seemed irresistibly sucked. I

thought with shame and remorse of the few shillings which I had earned at various times by taking piecework home, to buy my candles for study. I whispered my doubts to Crosshwaite as he sat, pale and determined, watching the excited and querulous discussions among the other workmen.

"What? So you expect to have time to read? Study, after sixteen hours a day stitching? Study, when you cannot earn money enough to keep you from wasting and shrinking away day by day? Study, with your heart full of shame and indignation, fresh from daily insult and injustice? Study, with the black bond of despair and poverty in front of you? Little time, or little strength will you have to study, if you are making the same coats you make now, at half the price."

I put my name down beneath Crosshwaite's on the paper which he handed me, and went out with him.

"Ay," he muttered to himself, "be slaves—what you are worthy to be, that you will be! You are not combing your hair, not starving, you are not idle, and therefore you are not free. Oh! for six hundred men like Barabbas's Marseillais—who knew how to die!"

"Surely, Crosshwaite, if matters were properly represented to the Government, they would not, for their own existence sake, to put conscience out of the question, allow such a system to continue growing."

"Government? Government? You are a tailor, and not know that Government are the very authors of this system!" Not to know that they first set the example by getting the army and navy clothes made by contractors, and taking the lowest tenders! No to know that the police clothes, the postman's clothes, the convicts' clothes, are all contracted for on the infamous plan by sweaters, and sweaters' sweaters, and sweaters' sweaters' sweaters, till Government work is just a long list of lowest

resort to which a poor starved out wretch betakes himself to keep body and soul together! Why, the Government prices, in almost every department, are half, and less than half, the very lowest living price. I tell you, the senseless iniquity of Government

at these things will come out some day. It will be known, the whole abomination, and future generations will curse it with the tyrannies of the Roman emperors and the Norm barons. Why, it is a fact, that the colonels of the regiments—noblemen most of them—make their own vile profit out of us tailors—out of the pauperism of the men, the slavery of the children, the prostitution of the women. They get so much a uniform allowed them by Government to clothe the men with, and then—then, they let out the jobs to the contractors at less than half what Government give them, and pocket the

difference. And then you talk of appealing to (Government)!"

"Upon my word," I said, bitterly, "we tailors seem to owe the army a double grudge. They not only keep under other artisans, but they help to starve us first, and then shoot us, if we complain too loudly."

"Oh ho! your blood's getting up, is it? Then your in the humor to be told what you have been hankering to know so long—where Mackaye and I go at night. We'll strike while the non's hot, and go down to the Chartist meeting at * * * * *

"Parlon me, my dear fellow, I said. "I cannot bear the thought of being mixed up in conspiracy—join up in revolt and bloodshed. Not that I am afraid. Heaven knows, I am not. But I am too much harassed, miserable, already. I see too much wretchedness around me, to lend my aid in increasing the sum of suffering, by a single atom, among rich and poor, even by righteous vengeance."

"Conspiracy! Bloodshed! What has that to do with the Charter? It suits the venal Maimonite press well enough to jubilate them together, and cry 'Murder, rape, and robbery,' whenever the six points are mentioned, but they know, and every man of common sense ought to know, that the Charter is just as much an open political question as the Reform Bill, and ten times as much as Magna Charta was, when it got passed. What have the six points, right or wrong, to do with the question whether they can be obtained by moral force, and the pressure of opinion alone, or require what we call ultra necessities to get them acquired? Come along!"

So with him I went that night.

"Well, Alton! where was the treason and murder? Your nose must have been a sharp one, to smell out any there. Did you hear anything that astonished your weak mind so very exceedingly, after all?"

"The only thing that did astonish me, was to hear men of my own class—and lower still, perhaps, some of them—speak with such fluency and eloquence. Such a fund of information—such excellent English. Where did they get it all?"

"From the God who knows nothing about tanks. They're the unknown great—the unaccredited heroes, as Master Thomas Carlyle would say, whom the flunkies aloft have not acknowledged yet—though they'll be forced to, some day, with a vengeance. Are you convinced, once for all?"

"I really do not understand political questions, Crossthwaite."

"Does it want so very much wisdom to understand the rights and the wrongs of all that? Are the people represented? Are you represented? Do you feel like a man that's got anyone to fight your battle in Parliament, my young friend, oh?"

"I'm sure I don't know—"

"Why, what in the name of common

sense—what interest or feeling of yours or mine, or any man's you ever spoke to, except the shopkeeper, do Alderman A * * * or Lord C * * * D * * * represent? They represent property—and we have none. They represent rank—we have none. Vested interests—we have none. Large capitals—those are just what crush us. Irresponsibility of employers, slavery of the employed, competition among masters, competition among workmen, that is the system they represent—they preach it—they glory in it. Why, it is the very ogre that is eating us all up. They are chosen by the few, they represent the few, and they make laws for the many—and yet you don't know whether or not the people are represented."

We were passing by the door of the Victoria Theatre, it was just half-past time—and the beggary and rascality of London were pouring in to their low amusement, from the neighbouring gin-palaces and thieves' cellars. A herd of ragged boys, vomiting forth slang, filth, and blasphemy, pushed past us, compelling us to take good care of our pockets.

"Look there! look at the amusements, the training, the civilisation, which the Government permits to the children of the people!—these licensed pits of darkness, tips of temptation, profligacy, and ruin, triumphantly yawning night after night—and then tell me that the people who see their children thus kidnapped into hell, are represented by a Government who licenses such things!"

"Would a change in the franchise cure that?"

"Household suffrage mightn't—but give us the Charter, and we'll see about it. Give us the Charter, and we'll send workmen into Parliament that shall soon find out whether something better can't be put in the way of the ten thousand boys and girls in London who live by theft and prostitution, than the tender mercies of the Victoria—a pretty name! They say the Queen's a good woman—and I don't doubt it. I wonder often if she knows what her precious namesake here is like?"

"But, really, I cannot see how a mere change in representation can cure such things as that."

"Why, didn't they tell us, before the Reform Bill, that extension of the suffrage was to cure everything? And how can you have too much of a good thing? We've only taken them at their word, we Chartists. Haven't all politicians been preaching for years that England's national greatness was all owing to her political institutions—to Magna Charta, and the Bill of Rights, and representative Parliaments, and all that? It was but the other day I got hold of some Tory paper, that talked about the English constitution, and the balance of queen, lords, and commons, as the 'Talismanic Palladium' of the country. 'Gad, we'll see if a move on-

ward in the same line won't better the matter. If the balance of classes is such a blessed thing, the sooner we get the balance equal, the better, for its rather lopsided just now, no one can deny. So, representative institutions are the talismanic palladium of the nation, are they? 'The palladium of the classes that have them, I dare say, and that's the very best reason why the classes that haven't got 'em should look out for the same palladium for themselves. What's sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose, isn't it?' We'll try—we'll see whether the talisman they talk of has lost its power all of a sudden since '32—whether we can't rub the magic ring a little for ourselves, and call up geni to help us out of the mire, as the shopkeepers and the gentlemen have done."

From that night I was a Chartist, heart and soul—and so were a million and a half more of the best artisans in England—at least, I had no reason to be ashamed of my company. Yes, I too, like Crossthwaite, took the upper classes at their word, bowed down to the idol of political institutions, and pinned my hopes of salvation on "the possession of one ten thousandth part of a taker in the national palace." True, I desired the Charter, at first (as I do, indeed, at this moment), as a means to glorious ends—not only because it would give a chance of elevation, a free sphere of action, to lowly worth and talent, but because it was the path to reforms,—social, legal, sanitary, educational,—to which the wisest Tories—certainly not the great and good Lord Ashley—would not object. But soon, with me, and I am afraid with many, many more, the means became, by the frailty of poor human nature, an end, an idol in itself. I had so made up my mind that it was the only method of getting what I wanted, that I neglected, alas! but too often, to try the methods which lay already by me. "If we had but the Charter"—was the excuse for a thousand lazinesses, procrastinations. "If we had but the Charter"—I should be good, and free, and happy. Fool that I was! It was within, rather than without, that I needed reform.

And so I began to look on man (and too many of us, I am afraid, are doing so) as the creature and puppet of circumstances—of the particular outward system, social or political, in which he happens to find himself. An abominable heresy, no doubt, but, somehow, it appears to me just the same as Benthamites, and economists, and high churchmen, too, for that matter, have been preaching for the last twenty years, with great applause from their respective parties. One set informs the world that it is to be regenerated by cheap bread, free trade, and that peculiar form of the "freedom of industry" which, in plain language, signifies "the despotism of capital," and which, whatever it means, is merely some outward system, circumstance

or "dodge," about man, and not in him. Another party's nostrum is more churches, more schools, more clergymen—excellent things in their way—better even than cheap bread, or free trade, provided only that they are excellent—that the churches, schools, clergymen, are good ones. But the party of whom I am speaking seem to us workmen to consider the quality quite a secondary consideration, compared with the quantity. They expect the world to be regenerated, not by becoming more a Church—none would gladly help them in bringing that about than the Chartists themselves, paradoxical as it may seem—but by being dosed somewhat more with a certain "Church system," circumstance, or "dodge." For my part, I seem to have learned that the only thing to regenerate the world is not more of any system, good or bad, but simply more of the spirit of God.

About the supposed omnipotence of the Charter I have found out my mistake. I believe no more in "Morrison's Pills-remedies," as Thomas Carlyle calls them. Talismans are worthless. The age of spirit-compelling spells, whether of parchment or carbuncle, is past if, indeed, it ever existed. The Charter will no more make men good, than political economy, or the observance of the Church Calendar—a fact which we workmen, I really believe, have, under the pressure of wholesome defeat and Godsent affliction, found out sooner than our more "enlightened" fellow-aiders. But, at that time, as I have confessed already, we took our letters at their word, and believed in Morrison's Pills. Only, as we looked at the world from among a class of facts somewhat different from theirs, we differed from them proportionably as to our notions of the proper ingredients in the said Pills.

But what became of our protest?

It was received—and disregarded. As for turning us off, we had, *de facto*, like Conolmans, banished the Romans, turned our master off. All the other hands, some forty in number, submitted and took the yoke upon them, and went down into the house of bondage, knowing whether they went. Every man of them is now a beggar, compared with what he was then. Many are dead in the prime of life of consumption, bad food and lodging, and the peculiar diseases of our trade. Some have not been heard of lately—we fancy them imprisoned in some sweaters' dens—but thereby hangs a tale, whereof more hereafter.

But it was singular, that everyone of the six who had merely professed their conditional readiness to sign the protest, were continuously discharged the next day, without any reason being assigned. It was evident that there had been a traitor at the meeting, and everyone suspected Jimmy Downes, especially as he fell into the new system with suspiciously strange alacrity.

But it was as impossible to prove the offence against him as to punish him for it. Of that wretched man, too, and his subsequent career, I shall have somewhat to say hereafter. Verily, there is a God who judgeth the earth!

But now behold me and my now intimate and beloved friend, Crossthwaite, with nothing to do—a gentlemanlike occupation, but, unfortunately, in our class involving starvation. What was to be done? We applied for work at several "honourable shops," but at all we received the same answer. Their trade was decreasing—the public ran daily more and more to the cheap show shops—and they themselves were forced, in order to compete with these latter, to put more and more of their work out at contract prices. *Pecunia domans Alton!* Having once been hustled out of the serious crowd of competing workmen, it was impossible to force our way in again. So, a week or ten days past, our little stocks of money were exhausted. I was downhearted at once, but Crossthwaite bore up gallantly enough.

"Katie and I can pick a crust together without snarling over it. And, thank God, I have no children, and never intend to have, if I can keep true to myself, till the good times come."

"Oh! Crossthwaite, are not children a blessing?"

"Would they be a blessing to me now? No, my lad—let these bring slaves into the world who will! I will never forget children to swell the numbers of those who are trampling each other down in the struggle for daily bread, to multiply in ever deepening poverty and misery to the rich man's luxury—perhaps his lust."

"Then you believe in the Malthusian doctrine?"

"I believe them to be an infernal lie, Alton Locke, though good and wise people like Miss Martineau may sometimes be deluded into preaching them. I believe there's room on English soil for twice the number there is now, and when we get the Charter we'll prove it, we'll show that God meant living human heads and hands to be blessings and not curses, to do and not to moulder. But in such times as these, let those who have wives be as though they had none—as St Paul said, when he told his people under the Roman emperor to be above begetting slaves and martyrs. A man of the people should keep himself as free from accumulations as he can just now. He will find it all the more easy to do and suffer for the people, when their turn comes."

And he set his teeth firmly, almost savagely.

"I think I can earn a few shillings, now and then, by writing for a paper. I know of if that won't do, I must take up agitating for a while and live by spouting, as many a Tory member as well as Radical ones do. A man may do worse, for he may do nothing

At all events, my only chance now is to help on the Charter, for the sooner it comes the better for me. And if I die—why, the little woman won't be long in coming after me, I know that well, and there's a tough business got well over for both of us!"

"Heeh," said Sam, —

"To every man
Death cometh but once a life—"

as my countryman, Mr Macanlay, says, in those grand Roman ballads o' his. But for ye, Alton, lad, ye're owie young to start off in the People's Church. Wechtant, s'ie just bide wi' me, and the laird o' meal in the corner there wina waste,—nae mair than it did wi' the widow o' Zacheus, a tale which comical as weel wi' the everlastin' righteousnesses, that I'm at times no inclined to consider it a' the gither my them."

But I, with thankfulness which vented itself through my eyes, hushing my lips alone too narrow for it, refused to eat the bread of idleness.

"Aweel, then, ye'll just mind the shop, and dust the books whiles, I'm getting auld and stiff, and ha'e need o' help in the laundries."

"No," I said, "you say so out o' kindness, but if you can afford no greater comforts than these, you cannot afford to keep me in addition to yourself."

"Heeh, then! How do ye ken that the auld Scot eats a' he mikes? I wusna him the spending sile o' Tweed, my man. But gin ye dant, why dunn ye pack up your deids, and the poems wi' them, and gang till your camus to the university? he'll surely put you in the way o' publishing them. He's bound to it by blude, and there's na shame in asking him to help you towards reaping the fruits o' your ain labours. A few pounds on a bond for repayment when the edition was auld, noo, I'd dae that for mysel', but I'm thinking ye'd better try to get a list o' subscribers. Dinna mind your independence, it's but spending the Egyptians, ye ken, and thae bit ballads will be their money's worth, I'll warrant, and tell them a wheen facts they're no that well acquainted wi'. Heeh! Johnnie, my Charist!"

"Why not go to my uncle?"

"I'm aye and spae selling bairn bodie! as there aught in his lugel about poetry, and the incommensurable value o' the products o' genius? Gang till the young scholars he's a canny me, too, and he'll ken it to be worth his while to fash himself a wee amount."

So I packed up my little bundle, and lay awake all that night in a fever of expectation about the as yet unknown world of green fields and woods through which my road to Cambridge lay.

CHAPTER XL

"THE YARD WHERE THE GENTLEMEN LIVE"

I MAY be forgiven, surely, if I run somewhat into detail about this my first visit to the country.

I had, as I have said before, literally never been farther afield than Fulham or Battersea Rise. One Sunday evening, indeed, I had got as far as Wandsworth Common, but it was March, and, to my extreme disappointment, the heath was not in flower.

But, usually, my Sundays had been spent entirely in study; which to me was rest, so worn out were both my body and my mind with the incessant drudgery of my trade, and the slender fare to which I restricted myself. Since I had lodged with Mackaye, certainly, my food had been better. I had not required to stint my appetite for money where with to buy candles, ink, and pens. My wages, too, had increased with my years, and altogether I found myself gaining in strength, though I had no notion how much I possessed till I set forth on this walk in Cambridge.

It was a glorious morning at the end of May, and when I escaped from the pall of smoke which hung over the city, I found the sky a sheet of cloudless blue. How I watched for the ending of the rows of houses, which lined the road for miles—the great roots of London, running far out into the country, up which poured past me an endless stream of food, and merchandise, and human beings—the sap of the huge metropolitan life tree! How each turn of the road opened a fresh line of terraces or villas, till hope deferred made the heart sick, and the country seemed—like the place where the rainbow touches the ground, or the El Dorado of Raleigh's (innocent settlers always a little farther off)! How, between gaps in the houses right and left, I caught tantalising glimpses of green fields, shut from me by dull lines of high-spiked palings! How I peeped through gates and over fences at trim lawns and gardens, and longed to stay, and admire, and speculate on the names of the strange plants and gaudy flowers, and then hurried on, always expecting to find something still finer ahead—something really worth stopping to look at—till the houses thickened again into a street, and I found myself, to my disappointment, in the midst of a town! And then more villas and palings, and then a village,—when would they stop, those endless houses?

At last they did stop. Gradually the people whom I passed began to look more and more rural, and more toil worn and ill-fed. The houses ended, cattle-yards and farm-buildings appeared; and right and left, far away, spread the low rolling sheet of green meadows and corn-fields. Oh, the joy! The lawns with their high elms and

firs, the green hedgerows, the delicate hue and scent of the fresh clover fields, the steep clay banks, where I stopped to pick up eggs of wild flowers, and became again a child,—and then recollected my mother, and a walk with her on the river bank towards the Red House. I hurried on again, but could not be unhappy, while my eyes ranged free, for the first time in my life, over the chequered squares of cultivation, over glittering meadows, and hills quivering in the green haze, while above hung the skylarks, pouring out their souls in melody. And then, as the sun grew hot, and the larks dropped one by one into the growing grain, the new daylight of the blessed silence! I listened to the stillness, for none had been my native element, I had become in London quite unconscious of the ceaseless roar of the human sea, casting up mire and dirt. And now, for the first time in my life, the rushing, confusing hubbub had blown away, and left my brain calm and free. How I felt at that moment a capability of clear, bright meditation, which was new to me, as I believe it would have been to most Londoners in my position. I cannot help saying that our material atmosphere of excitement, physical as well as moral, is to blame for very much of the working men's restlessness and fierceness. As it was, I felt that every step forward, every breath of fresh air, gave me new life. I had gone fifteen miles before I recollected that for the first time for many months, I had not coughed since I rose.

So on I went, down the broad, bright road, which seemed to beckon me forward into the unknown expanses of human life.

"The world was all before me, where to choose

and I saw it both with my eyes and my imagination, in the temper of a boy broke loose from school. My heart kept hollering I loved and blessed the lands which lifted past me, and the cows which lay dreaming on the sward. I recollect stopping with delight at a picturesque descent into the road, to watch a nursery garden, full of roses of every shade, from brilliant yellow to darkest purple, and as I wondered at the innumerable variety of beauties which man's art had developed from a few poor and wild species, it seemed to me the most delightful life on earth, to follow in such a place the primordial trade of gardener Adam, to study the secrets of the flower world, the laws of soil and climate, to create new species, and gloat over the living fruit of one's own science and perseverance. And then I recollected the tailor's shop, and the Clutter, and the starvation, and the oppression, which I had left behind, and ashamed of my own selfishness, went hurrying on again.

At last I came to a wood—the first real wood that I had ever seen, not a mere party of stately park trees growing out of smooth turf, but a real wild copse, tangled branches

and grey stems fallen across each other, deep, rugged underwood of shrubs, and great ferns like princes' feathers, and gay boils of flowers, blue, and pink, and yellow, with butterflies flitting about them, and trailers that climbed and dangled from bough to bough—a poor, commonplace lot of copse, I dare say, in the world's eyes, but to me a fairy wilderness of beautiful forms, mysterious gleams and shadows, teeming with manifold life. As I stood looking wistfully over the gate, alternately at the inviting vista of the green embowered path, and then at the grim notice over my head, "All trespassers prosecuted," a young man came up the ride, dressed in velvet jacket and leather gaiters, sufficiently bedabbled with mud. A fishing rod and basket bespoke him some sort of destroyer, and I saw in a moment that he was "a gentleman." After all, there is such a thing as looking like a gentleman. There are men whose class no dirt or rags could hide, any more than they could Ulysses. I have seen such men in plenty among workmen, too, but, on the whole, the gentlemen by whom I do not mean just now the rich—have the superiority in that point. But not, please God, forever. Give us the same air, water, exercise, education, good society, and you will see whether this "haggardness," this "coarseness," etc. etc., for the list is too long to specify, be an accident, or a property, of the mind of the people.

"May I go into your wood?" asked I, at a venture, curiosity conquering pride.

"Well! what do you want there, my good fellow?"

"To see what a wood is like—I never was in one in my life."

"Humph! well—you may go in for that, and welcome. Never was in a wood in his life!—poor devil!"

"Thank you!" quoth I. And I slowly clambered over the gate. He put his hand carelessly on the top rail, vaulted over it like a deer, and then turned to stare at me.

"Hullo! I say—I forgot—don't go far in, or ramble up and down, or you'll disturb the pheasants."

I thanked him again for what license he had given me—went in, and lay down by the path-side.

Here, I suppose, by the rules of modern art, a picturesque description of the said wood should follow, but I am the most incompetent person in the world to write it. And, indeed, the whole scene was so novel to me, that I had no time to analyse, I could only enjoy! I recollect lying on my face and fingering over the delicately cut leaves of the weeds, and wondering whether the people who lived in the country thought them as wonderful and beautiful as I did;—and then I recollected the thousands whom I had left behind, who, like me, had never seen the green face of God's earth, and the answer of the poor gamin in St. Giles's, who,

when he was asked what the country was, answered, "*the yard where the gentlemen live when they go out of town*"—significant that, and pathetic,—then I wondered whether the time would ever come when society would be far enough advanced to open to even such as he a glimpse, if it were only once a year, of the fresh, clean face of God's earth,—and then I became aware of a soft mysterious hum, above me and around me, and turned on my back to look whence it proceeded, and saw the leaves, gold—green and transparent in the sunlight, quivering against the deep heights of the empyrean blue, and hanging in the sunbeams that pierced the foliage, a thousand insects, like specks of fire, that poised themselves motionless on thrilling wings, and darted away, and returned to hang motionless again,—and I wondered what they eat, and whether they thought about anything, and whether they enjoyed the sunlight. And then that brought back to me the times when I used to be dreaming in my crib on summer mornings, and watched the flies dancing reels between me and the ceilings,—and that again brought the thought of Susan and my mother, and I prayed for them not sadly—I could not be sad there—and prayed that we might all meet again some day and live happily together, perhaps in the country, where I could write poems in peace, and then, by degrees, my sentences and thoughts grew incoherent, and in happy, stupid animal comfort, I faded away into a heavy sleep, which lasted an hour or more, till I was awakened by the clots of cotton-couprising great black and red ants, who were trying to found a small Algeria in my left ear.

I rose and left the wood, and a gate or two on, stopped again to look at the same sportsman fishing in a clear silver brook. I could not help admiring with a sort of childish wonder the graceful and practised aim with which he directed his tiny bait, and called up mysterious dimples on the surface, which in a moment increased to splishings and stunglings of a great fish, compelled, as if by some invisible spell, to follow the point of the beading rod till he lay panting on the bank. I confess, in spite of all my class prejudices against "game-preserving aristocrats," I almost envied the man, at least I seemed to understand a little of the universally attractive charms which those same outwardly contemptible field sports possess: the fresh air, fresh fields and copses, fresh running brooks, the exercise, the simple freedom, the excitement just sufficient to keep alive expectation and banish thought.—After all, his trout produced much the same mood in him as my turnpike road did in me. And perhaps the man did not go fishing or shooting every day. The laws prevented him from shooting, at least, all the year round, so sometimes there might be something in which he

made himself of use. An honest, jolly face too he had—not without thought and strength in it. “Well, it is a strange world,” said I to myself, “where those who can, need not, and those who cannot, must!”

Then he came close to the gate, and I left it just in time to see a little group arrive at it—a woman of his own rank, young, pretty, and simply dressed, with a little boy, decked out as a Highlander, on a shaggy Shetland pony, which his mother, as I guessed her to be, was leading. And then they all met, and the little fellow held up a basket of provisions to his father, who kissed him across the gate, and hung his crook of fish behind the saddle, and patted the mother’s shoulder, as she looked up lovingly and laughingly in his face. Altogether, a joyous, genial bit of—Nature? Yes, Nature. Shall I grudge simple happiness to the few, because it is as yet, alas! impossible for the many?

And yet the whole scene contrasted so painfully with me—with my past, my future, my dreams, my wrongs, that I could not look at it, and with a swelling heart I moved on—all the faster because I saw they were looking at me and talking of me, and the fair wife threw after me a wistful, pitying glance, which I was afraid might develop itself into some offer of food or money—a thing which I scorned and dreaded, because it involved the trouble of a refusal.

Then, as I walked on once more, my heart smote me. If they had wished to be kind, why had I grudged them the opportunity of a good deed? At all events, I might have asked their advice. In a natural and harmonious state, when society really means brotherhood, a man could go up to any stranger, to give and receive, if not succour, yet still experience and wisdom. And was I not bound to tell them what I knew—was sure that they did not know? Was I not bound to preach the cause of my class wherever I went? Here were kindly people who, for aught I knew, would do right the moment they were told what it was wanted, if there was an accused artificial gulf between their class and mine, had I any right to complain of it, as long as I helped to keep it up by my false pride and surly reserve? No! I would speak my mind henceforth—I would testify of what I saw and knew of the wrongs, if not of the rights, of the artisan, before whomsoever I might come. Oh! without conclusion of half-an-hour’s self-tormenting scruple! How I kept it to myself to be shown.

I really fear that I am getting somewhat trivial and prolix. But there was hardly an incident in my two days’ tramping which did not give me some small fresh insight into the *terra incognita* of the country, and there may be those among my readers, to whom it is not uninteresting to look, for once, at even the smallest objects with a Cockney workman’s eyes.

Well, I trudged on—and the shadows

lengthened, and I grew footsore and tired; but every step was new, and gave me forward with fresh excitements for my curiosity.

At one village I met a crowd of little, noisy, happy boys and girls pouring out of a smart new Gothic schoolhouse. I could not resist the temptation of snatching a glance through the open door. I saw on the walls maps, music charts, and pictures. How I envied those little niches! A solemn, starchy elder, in a white cravat, evidently the parson of the parish, was patting children’s heads, taking down names, and laying down the law to a shrewd, prim young schoolmaster.

Presently, as I went up the village, the clergyman strode past me, headlong a thick stick and humming a chant, and joined a motherly looking wife, who, basket on arm, was popping in and out of the cottages, looking alternately serious and funny, cross and kindly—I suppose, according to the sayings and doings of the folks within.

“Come,” I thought, “this looks like work at least.” And as I went out of the village, I accosted a labourer, who was tugging my way, fork on shoulder, and asked him if that was the parson and his wife.

I was surprised at the difficulty with which I got into conversation with the man, at his stupidity, feigned or real. I could not tell which, at the dogged, suspicious reserve with which he eyed me, and asked me whether I was “one of they parts?” and whether I was a Londoner, and what I wanted on the tramp, and so on, before he seemed to think it safe to answer a single question. He seemed, like almost every labourer I ever met, to have something of his mind; to live in a state of perpetual fear and concealment. When, however, he found I was both a Cockney and a prisoner by, he began to grow more communicative, and told me, “Ees—that was the parson, sure enough.”

“And what sort of a man was he?”

“Oh! he was a main kind man to the poor, leastwise in the matter of visiting ‘em, and paying with ‘em, and getting ‘em to put into clubs, and such like, and his lady too. Not that there was any fault to find with the man about money—but ‘twas n’t to be expected of him.”

“Why, was he not rich?”

“Oh, rich enough to the likes of us. But his own tithes here arn’t more than a thirty pounds we hears tell, and if he’d had n’t summat of his own, he couldn’t do not no thing by the poor, as it be, he pays for that ere school all to his own pocket, next pint. All the rest o’ the tithes goes to some great lord or other—they say he draws a matter of a thousand a year out of the parish, and not a foot ever he set into it, and that’s the way with a main lot o’ parishes, up and down.”

This was quite a new fact to me. “And what sort of folks were the parsons all round?”

"Oh, some of all sorts, good and bad. About six and half a dozen. There's two or three nice young gent'lemen come'd round here now, but they're all what's 'em a call it?—sent o' papushes, leastwise, they has prayers in the church every day, and doesn't preach the Gospel, nohow, I hears by my wife, and she knows all about it, along of going to meeting. Then there's one over there now, as had to leave his living—he knows why. He got wife over seas. If he had been a poor man, he'd a been in * * *

"* * * gail, safe enough, and soon enough. Then there's two in the—as goes a hunting—not as I sees no harm in that, if a man's got plenty of money, he ought to enjoy himself, in course—but still he can't be here and there too, to once. Then there's two or three as is bad in their healths, or thinks themselves so, or else has livings summer' else, and they lives summer' or others, and has curates. Main busy chaps as they curates, always, and wonderful hands to preach, but then, just as they gets a little knowing like at it, and folks gets to like 'em, and run to hear 'em, all they jumps to summat better, and in course they're right to do so, and so we country folks get nought but the young cots, afore they're broke, y'en see."

"And what sort of a preacher was his parson?"

"Oh, he preached very good Gospel. Not that he went very often himself, because he couldn't make out the meaning of it, he preached too high, like. But his wife said it was uncommon good Gospel, and surely when he come to visit a body, and talked plain English, like, not acron-ways, he was a very pleasant man to hear, and his lady uncommon kind to nurse folk. They sot up with me and my wife, they two did, two whole nights, when we was in the fever, afore the officer could get us a nurse."

"Well," said I, "there are some good parsons left."

"Oh yes, there's some very good ones each one after his own way, and there'd I none on 'em, if they did but know how bad we labourers is off. Why, bless yo, I mind when they was very different. A new parson is a mighty change for the better, mostwise, we think. Why when I was a boy, we never had no schooling. And now mine goes and learns singing, and jobstafy, and ciphering, and sick like. Not that I sees no good in it. We was a sight better off in the old times, when there weren't no schooling. Schooling haint made wages rise, nor preaching neither."

"But surely," I said, "all this religious knowledge ought to give you comfort, even if you are badly off."

"Oh! religion's all very well for them as has time for it, and a very good thing—we ought all to mind our latter end. But I don't see now a man can hear sermons with an empty belly, and there's so much to fret a man, now, and he's so cruel tired coming

home o' nights, he can't nowise go to pray a lot, as gentlefolks does."

"But are you a ill off?"

"Oh! he'd had a good harvesting enough, but then he owed all that for ho's rent, and he's club money wasn't paid up, nor he's shop. And then, with he's wages—" (I forgot the sum—noller ten shillings), "how could a man keep his mouth full, when he had five children?" "And then, folks is so unmerciful. I'll jist tell you what they says to me, now, last time. 'I was over at the Board—'"

And thereon he rambl'd off into a long jumble of medical officers and relieving officers, and Farmer Thos, and Squire Phab, which indented a mind as ill educated as discontented. He curs'd, or rather grumbled at—for he had not spirit, it seem'd, to curse anything—the New Poor Law, because it "ate up the poor, flesh and bone,"—he mourn'd the "Old Law," when "the Vestry was forced to give a man whatsoever he axed for, and if they didn't he'd go to the magistrates and make 'em, and so sure as a man got a fresh child, he went and got another loaf allowed him next vestry, like a Christian,"—and so tinn'd through a gale, and set to work forking up some weeds on a fallow, leaving me many new thoughts to digest.

"That night, I got to some town or other, and there found a night's lodging, good enough for a walking traveller."

CHAPTER XII

CAMBRIDGE

WHEN I started again next mornog, I found myself so stiff and footsore, that I could hardly put one leg before the other, much less walk upright. I was really quite in despair, before the end of the first mile, for I had no money to pay for a lift on the coach, and I knew, besides, that they would not be passing that way for several hours to come. So, with aching back and knees, I made shift to limp along, bent almost double, and ended by sitting down for a couple of hours, and looking about me, in a country which would have seemed dreary enough, I suppose, to anyone but a freshly liberated captive, such as I was. At last I got up and limped on, stiffer than ever from my rest, when a gig drove past me towards Cambridge, drawn by a stout cob, and driven by a tall, fat, jolly looking farmer, who stared at me as he passed, went on, looked back, slacken'd his pace, looked back again, and at last came to a dead stop, and hailed me in a broad, nasal dialect—

"Whor be gangin'g, then, boh?"

"To Cambridge."

"Then'st na gat there that gate. Be'est thee honest man?"

"I hope so," said I, somewhat indignantly
 "Wh' it's trade?"

"A tailor," I said

"Tailor!—guide us! Tailor a trump?
 Barn's accustomed to tramp, then?"

"I never was out of London before," said
 I, meekly; for I was too worn out to be
 cross-lengthy and impudent as this cross
 examination seemed

"Oll gie thee lift, doe yow joomp in
 Gue on, powney! Tailor, then! Oh! ah!
 tailor," saith he

I obeyed most thankfully, and sat crouched
 together, looking up out of the corner of my
 eyes at the huge tower of brickcloth by my
 side, and comparing the two red shoulders
 of matton which held the rams, with my
 own wasted, white, woman-like fingers.

I found the old gentleman most inquisitive.
 He drew out of me all my story—questioned
 me about the way "Lannon folks" lived,
 and whether they got on shooting or "pit
 tomming"—whereby I found he meant skating
 —and broke in, every now and then, with
 ejaculations of childish wonder, and clumsy
 sympathy, on my accounts of London labour
 and London misery

"Oh, father, father! I wonders they
 hains it. Us'n in the fens wouldn't stand
 that likes. They'd rot, and rot, and rot,
 and tak' oot the duck gines to us—they
 would, as they did five-and-twenty year
 ago. Never to go beyond the houses—
 never to go beyond the houses! Kill me in
 a three months, that would, boy, then!"

"Are you a farmer?" I asked, at last,
 thinking that my turn for questioning was
 come

"I be an' varmer, I be yonm born
 Never paid rent in my life, nor never wot
 I farms my own land, and my fathers avore
 me, this ever so many hundred year. I've
 got the sword of 'em to home, and the
 hicknet that they sat with into the wars,
 then when they chopped off the king's head
 —what was th' name of um?"

"Charles the first?"

"Ees—that's the booy. We was Parliam-
 ment side true Britons all we was, down
 into the fens, and Oliver Cromwell, us dug
 Botsham hole, to the head of us. You coum
 down to M tholl, and I'll shaw ye a country
 I'll shaw 'co some at like hallocks to call,
 and some at like a field o' beans—I woot,
 —none o' this heve slawed up and downs o'
 hills" (though the country through which
 we drove was flat enough, I should have
 thought, to please myself), "to shinke a
 body's victuals out of his mwards—all so flat
 as a barn's floor, for forty mile an end—
 there's the country to live in—and your
 sons—or was you on 'em—everyone on 'em
 fifteen stone in his shoes, to patten agin'
 any man from Whitsea Mere to Denver
 Shuce, for twenty pounds o' gold, and
 there's the rummy to lay down, and let the
 man as dare cover it, down with his money,
 and on wi' his pattens, thirteen inch runners,

down the wind, again? ether a one o' the
 barns?"

And he jingled in his pocket a heavy bag
 of gold, and winked and chuckled, and then
 suddenly checking himself, repeated in a
 sad, dubious tone, two or three times, "your
 on 'em there was you on 'em there was,"
 and relieved his feelings, by springing the
 pony into a canter till he came to a public-
 house, where he pulled up, called for a pot
 of hot ale, and insisted on treating me. I
 assured him that I never drank fermented
 liquors

"Aw? Eh? How can you do that then?"

Die o' coudt the fen, that g'de, you woudl
 love ye then! they as dinnot tak' squits
 down ther, tak' their pennord o' elevation,
 then—women folk especial?

"What's elevation?"

"Oh! ho! ho!—you goo into dinggast's
 shop o' market-day, into Camlandge, and
 you'll see the little boxes, dozens and
 dozens, n' truly on the counter, and never
 a ven man's wife goo by, but what calls in
 for her pennord o' elevation, to last her out
 the week. Oh! ho! ho! Well it keeps
 women-folk quiet, it do, and it's mortal
 good agin' go pains."

"But what is it?"

"Opium, boy! alive, opium!"

"But doesn't it ruin their health? I
 should think it the very worst sort of
 drinkemess."

"Ow, well, you moe say that—mck th
 'em cruel thm then, it do, but what can
 ladies do i' th' age? Not it's a bad thing,
 it is. Harken you to me. Didst ever
 know one called Porter, to your trade?"

I thought a little, and recollected a man
 of that name, who had worked with us a
 year or two before a great friend of a
 certain scattered but much liked lady, brother
 of Crosshwaite's wife

"Well, I did once, but I have lost sight
 of him twelve months, or more."

The old man fixed sharp round on me,
 swinging the little gig almost over, and then
 twisted himself back again, and put on a
 fine familar like look of doggish, stolid
 reserve. We rolled on a few minutes in
 silence

"Doe you consider, now, that a mon
 mought be lost like, into Lannon?"

"How lost?"

"Why, you told o' they sweaters do
 you think a mon might get in wi' one o' they
 and they that mought be looking you in not
 to vind us?"

"I do, indeed. There was a friend of
 that man Porter got turned away from our
 shop, because he wouldn't pay some tyran-
 nical fine for being sane, as they called it,
 to the shopman, and he went to a sweater's
 —and then another, and his friends have
 been tracking him up and down this six
 months, and can hear no news of him."

"Aw? guile us! And what'n, think
 you, be gone wi' us?"

"I am afraid he has got into one of those dens, and has pawned his clothes, as dozens of them do, for food, and so can't get out."

"Pawned his clothes for victuals? To think o' that, noo! But if he had work, could he get victuals?"

"On!" I said "there's many a man who, after working seventeen or eighteen hours a day, Sundays and all, without even time to take off his clothes, finds himself brought in in debt to his tyrant at the week's end. And if he gets no work, the villain won't let him leave the house, he has to stay there starving, on the chance of an hour's job. I tell you I've known half-a-dozen men imprisoned in that way, in a little dungeon of a guilt, where they had hardly room to stand upright, and only just space to sit and work between their beds, without breathing the fresh air or seeing God's sun, for months together, with no victuals but a few slices of bread and butter, and a little slop of tea, twice a day, till they were starved to the very bone."

"Oh, my God! my God!" said the old man, in a voice which had a deeper tone of feeling than mine sympathily with others' sorrow was likely to have produced. There was evidently something behind all these enquiries of his. I longed to ask him if his name, too, was not Porter.

"Aw yow known Billy Porter? What was a like?" Tell me, now—what was a like, in the Lord's name! what was a like unto?"

"Very tall and bony," I answered.

"Ah! six feet, and more, and a yard across!—but a was stuv'd; a was a' thin, though, maybe, when yow sawn un? and beautiful fine hair, hadn't a, like a lass's?"

"The man I know had red hair," quoth I.

"Ow, ay, un? that it was, red as a rising sun, and the curls of un like golden ginnies! And thou knew'st Billy Porter! To think o' that, noo—"

Another long silence.

"Could yow find un, dee vow think, noo, into Lammion? Suppose now, there was a mon 'ud gie—maybe five pound—ten pound, twenty pound, by * * *—twenty pound down, for to ha' him brocht home safe and sound!—Could yow do't, bor?" I say, could yow do't?"

"I could do it as well without the money as with if I could do it at all. But have yow no guess as to where he is?"

He shook his head sadly.

"We—that's to say, thy as wants un—hav'n't heard tell of un vor this three year—three year come Whitsuntide is ever was—"

And he wiped his eyes with his cuff.

"If yow will tell me all about him, and where he was last heard of, I will do all I can to find him."

"Will ye, noo? will ye? The Lord bless ye for saying that"—and he grasped my hand in his great iron fist, and fairly burst out crying.

"Was he a relation of yours?" I asked, gently.

"My bairn—my bairn—my eldest bairn. Dinnot yow ax me no moor—linnot then, bor? Gie on yow powwucy, and yow goodleuk vor un."

Another long silence.

"I've a been to Lammion, looking vor un."

Another silence.

"I went up and down, up and down, day and night, day and night, to all pot houses as I could see, vor, says I, he was a ways a main chap to drink, he was. Oh, dooly mo! and I never got right on un—and noo I be most spent, I be—"

And he pulled up at another public-house, and tried this time a glass of brandy. He stopped, I really think, at every inn between that place and Cambridge, and at each tried some fresh compound, but his head seemed, from habit, utterly fit proof.

At last, we reached Cambridge, and began to pass groups of gay horsemen, and then those strange caps and gowns—ugly and unmeaning remnant of obsolete fashion.

The old man insisted on driving me up to the gate of Trinity, and there dropped me, after I had given him my address, entreating me to "vind the bairn, and coom to see him down to Metholl. But dinnot goo ax for Fumor Portol—thoy's all Porters there-away. Yow ax for Wooden-house Boh—that's me, and if I barn't to home, ax for Mucky Billy—that's my bairn!—we're all gutter our names down to ven, and if he barn't to home yow ax for Frog-hall—that's where my sister do live; and they'll all veel ye, and lodge ye, and welcome come. We be all alike one, doon in the ven, and do ye, do ye, vind my bairn!" And he trundled on, down the narrow street.

I was soon directed, by various smart-looking servants, to my cousin's rooms, and after a few mistakes, and wandering up and down noble courts and cloisters, swarming with gay young men, whose jaunty air and dress seemed strangely out of keeping with the stern antique solemnity of the Gothic buildings around, I espied my cousin's name over a door, and, uncertain how he might receive me, I gave a gentle, half-apologetic knock, which was answered by a loud "Come in!" and I entered on a scene even more incongruous than anything I had seen outside.

"If we can only keep away from that d * * * d Jesus as far as the corner, I don't care."

"If we don't run into that first Trinity before the willows, I shall care with a vengeance."

"If we don't, it's a pity," said my cousin. "Wadham ran up by the side of that first Trinity yesterday, and he said that they were as well gruelled as so many posters, before they got to the stile."

This unintelligible, and, to my inexperienced ears, blasphemous conversation,

proceeded from half-a dozen powerful young men, in low-crowned sailors' hats and flannel trousers, some in striped jerseys, some in shooting-jackets, some smoking cigars, some beating up eggs in sherry, while my cousin, dressed like "a fancy waterman," sat on the back of a sofa, puffing away at a huge meerschaum.

"Alton! why, what wind on earth has blown you here?"

By the tone, the words seemed rather an inquiry as to what wind would be kind enough to blow me back again. But he recovered his self-possession in a moment.

"Delighted to see you! Where's your portmanteau? Oh—left it at the Bull! Ah! I see. Very well, we'll send the gyp for it in a minute, and order some luncheon. We're just going down to the boat-race. Sorry I can't stop, but we shall all be fined—not a moment to lose. I'll send you in luncheon as I go through the butcheries; then, perhaps, you'd like to come down and see the race. Ask the gyp to tell you the way. Now, then, follow your noble captain, gentlemen—to glory and a supper!" And he bustled out with his crew.

While I was staring about the room, at the jumble of Greek books, boxing gloves, and lascivious prints of pretty women, a shrewd-faced, smart man entered, much better dressed than myself.

"What would you like, sir? Ox-tail soup, sir, or gravy soup, sir? Stilton cheese, sir, or Cheshire, sir? Old Stilton, sir, just now."

Fearing lest many words might betray my rank—and, strange to say, though I should not have been afraid of confessing myself an artisan before the "gentlemen" who had just left the room, I was ashamed to have my low estate discovered, and talked over with his companions, by the flunkey who waited on them—I answered, "Anything I really don't care," in an aristocratic and off-hand tone as I could assume.

"Porter or ale, sir?"

"Water," without a "thank you," I am ashamed to say, for I was not at that time quite sure whether it was well-bred to be civil to servants.

The man vanished, and re-appeared with a savoury luncheon, silver forks, snowy napkins, smart plates—I felt really quite a gentleman.

He gave me full directions as to my "way to the boats, sir," and I started out much refreshed; passed through back streets, dingy, dirty, and profligate-looking enough, out upon wide meadows, fringed with enormous elms, across a ferry, through a pleasant village, with its old grey church and spire, by the side of a sluggish river, alive with wherries, along a towing-path swarming with bold, bedizened women, who jeered with the rowers,—of their profession, alas! there could be no doubt. I had walked down some mile or so, and just as I

heard a cannon, as I thought, fire at some distance, and wondered at its meaning, I came to a sudden bend of the river, with a church-tower hanging over the stream on the opposite bank, a knot of tall poplars, weeping willows, rich lawns, sloping down to the water's side, gay with bonnets and shawls; while along the edge of the stream, light, gaily painted boats apparently waited for the race,—altogether the most brilliant and grateful group of scenery which I had beheld in my little travels. I stopped to gaze, and among the ladies on the lawn opposite, caught sight of a figure—my heart leapt into my mouth! Was it she at last? It was too far to distinguish features, the dress was altogether different. But was it not she? I saw her move across the lawn, and take the arm of a tall, venerable looking man, and his dress was the same as that of the dean at the Dulwich College—was it? was it not? To have found her, and a river between us! It was ludicrously miserable—miserably ludicrous. Oh, that accursed river, which debared me from certainty, from bliss! I would have plunged across—but there were three objections—first, that I could not swim, next, what could I do when I had crossed? and thirdly, it might not be she after all.

And yet I was certain—instinctively certain—that it was she, the idol of my imagination for years. If I could not see her features under that little white bonnet, I could imagine them there, they flashed up in my memory as fresh as ever. Did she remember my features, as I did hers? Would she know me again? Had she ever even thought of me, from that day to this? Fool! But there I stood, fascinated, gazing across the river, heedless of the racing boats, and the crowd, and the roar that was rushing up to me at the rate of ten miles an hour, and in a moment more, had caught me and swept me away with it, whether I would or not, along the towing path, by the side of the foremost boats.

Oh, the babel of horse and foot, young and old! the cheering, and the exhorting, and the obstructions of number this, and number that! and the yelling of the most sacred names, intermingled too often with oaths—And yet, after a few moments, I ceased to wonder either at the Cambridge passion for boat racing, or at the excitement of the spectators. "*Hon! soit qui mal y pense*." It was a noble sport—a sight such as could only be seen in England—some hundred of young men, who might, if they had chosen, been lounging effeminately about the streets, subjecting themselves voluntarily to that intense exertion, for the mere pleasure of toil. The true English stuff came out there, I felt that, in spite of all my prejudices—the stuff which has held Gibraltar and conquered at Waterloo—which has created a Birmingham and a Manchester, and coloured every quarter of

the globe—that grim, earnest, stubborn energy, which, since the days of the old Romans, the English possess alone of all the nations of the earth. I was as proud of the gallant young fellows as if they had been my brothers—of their courage and endurance (for one could see that it was no child's play, from the pale faces, and pinching lips), then strength and activity, so fierce and yet so cultivated, smooth, harmonious, as our kept time with our, and every back rose and fell in concert—and felt my soul stirred up to a sort of sweet madness, not merely by the shouts and cheers of the mob around me, but by the loud, fierce pulse of the rowlocks, the swift whispering rush of the long, snake-like eight oars, the swirl and gurgle of the water in their wake, the grim, breathless silence of the straining rowers. My blood boiled over, and fierce tears swelled into my eyes, for I, too, was a man and an Englishman, and when I caught sight of my cousin, pulling stroke to the second boat in the long line, with set teeth and flashing eyes, the great muscles on his bare arms springing up into knots at every rapid stroke, I ran and shouted among the maddest and the foremost.

But I soon tired, and, footsore as I was, began to find my strength fail me. I tried to drop behind, but found it impossible in the press. At last, quite out of breath, I stopped, and instantly received a heavy blow from behind, which threw me on my face. I looked up, and saw a huge long-legged grey horse, with his knees upon my back, in the act of falling over me. His rider, a little ferret visaged boy, dressed in sporting style, threw himself back in the saddle, and conveyed the horse in an instant, with a curse at me, as I rolled down the steep bank into the river, among the laughter and shouts of the women, who seemed to think it quite a grand act on the part of the horseman.

"Well saved, upon my word, my lord!" shouted out a rider beside him.

"Confound the such!" I'm glad he got his ducking. What do the fellows want here, getting in a gentleman's way?"

"For shame, Sandon!" the man is hurt," said another rider, a very tall and handsome man, who pulled up his horse, and, letting the crowd pass, sprang off to my assistance.

"Leave him alone, Lord Lynedale," said one of the women, "let him go home and ask his mamma to hang him out to dry."

"Why do you bother yourself with such muffs?" etc etc etc.

But I had scrambled out, and stood there dripping, and shaking with rage and pain.

"I hope you are not much hurt, my man?" asked the nobleman, in a truly gentlemanlike, because truly gentle voice, and he pulled out half-a-crown, and offered it to me, saying, "I am quite ashamed to see one

of my own rank behave in a way so unworthy of it."

But I, in my shame and passion, thrust back at once the coin and the civility.

"I want neither you nor your money," said I,umping off down the bank. "It serves me right, for getting among you enervated aristocrats."

How the nobleman took my answer I did not stay to see, for I was glad to escape the jeers of the bystanding blackguards, male and female, by scrambling over the fences and making my way across the fields back to Cambridge.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LOST HOLE MOUSE

ON my return, I found my cousin already at home, in high spirits at having, as he informed me, "bumped the first Trinity." I excused myself for my dripping state, simply by saying that I had slipped into the river. To tell him the whole of the story, while the insult still rankled fiercely in me, was really too disagreeable both to my memory and my pride.

Then came the question, "What had brought you to Cambridge?" I told him all, and he seemed honestly to sympathize with my misfortunes.

"Never mind, we'll make it all right somehow. Those pecuniary losses you must let me have them and look over them, and I dare say I shall persuade the governor to do something with them. After all, it's no loss for you, you couldn't have gone on tailoring—much too sharp a fellow for that—you ought to be at college, if one could only get you there. These scholarships, now, were meant for just such cases as yours, clever fellows who could not afford to educate themselves, but, like everything in the university, the people for whom they are meant never get them. Do you know what the golden canon is, Alton, for understanding all university questions?"

"No."

"Then I'll tell you. That the employment of any money whatsoever, for any purpose whatsoever, is a certain sign that it was originally meant for some purpose totally different."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Oh! you shall stay here with me a few days, and you'll soon find out. Hush! now, don't come the independent dodge. Our cousin may visit another, I hope, without contracting obligations, and all that. I'll find you a bedroom out of college and you'll live in my rooms all day, and I'll show you a thing or two. How do you like the university?"

"The buildings," I said, "strike me as very noble and reverent."

"They are the only noble and reverent things you'll find here, I can tell you. It's a system of humping, from one end to the other. But the Dons get their living by it, and their livings too, and then bishops, now and then, and I intend to do the same, if I have a chance. Do at Rome as Rome does." And he lighted his pipe, and winked knowingly at me.

I mentioned the profane use of sacred names, which had so disgusted me at the boat-race. He laughed.

"Ah! my dear fellow, it's a very fair specimen of Cambridge—shows what's the matter with us all—putting new wine into old bottles, and into young bottles, too, as you'll see at my supper party to-night."

"Really," I said, "I am not fit for presentation at any such unbecoming amusements."

"Oh! I'll lend you clothes till your own are dried, and as for behaviour, hold your tongue, and don't put your knife in your mouth, as quite rules enough to get any man mistaken for a gentleman here." And he laughed again in his peculiar sneering way.

"By the bye, don't get drunk, for in vino veritas. You know what that means."

"So well," I answered, "that I never intend to touch a drop of fermented liquor."

"Capital rule for a poor man. I've got a young man, in my class, who's a saint, keep sober on principle. It's great fun to have a man taking you into his confidence after the second bottle, and then to see the funk he's in next day, when he recollects he's shown you more of his hand than is good for his own game."

All this sickened me, and I tried to turn the conversation, by asking him what he meant by new wine in old bottles?

"Can't you see? The whole is monastic dress, unmarried fellows, the very names of the colleges. I dare say it did very well for the poor scholars in the Middle Ages, who, three fourths of them, turned either monks or priests, but it won't do for the young gentlemen of the nineteenth century. Those very names of colleges are of a piece with the rest. The colleges were dedicated to various sacred personages and saints, to secure their interest in heaven for the prosperity of the college, but who believes in all that now? And therefore the names must only so be desecrated. The men can't help it. They must call the colleges by their names."

"Why don't they alter the names?" I said.

"Because, my dear fellow, they are afraid to alter anything, for fear of humping the whole rotten old house down about their ears. They say themselves that the slightest innovation will be a precedent for destroying the whole system, but by Jove! Why shouldn't they be afraid of that, if they did not know that the whole system would not bear

canvassing an instant? That's why they retain statutes that can't be observed; because they know, if they once begin altering the statutes the least, the world would find out how they have themselves been breaking the statutes. That's why they keep up the farce of swearing to the Thirty-nine Articles, and all that, just because they know, if they attempted to alter the letter of the old forms, it would come out, that half the young men of the university don't believe those words of them at heart. They know the majority of us are at heart neither Churchmen nor Christians, nor even decently moral. But the one thing they are afraid of is scandal. So they connive at the young men's ill doings, they take no real steps to put down profligacy, and, in the meantime, they just keep up the forms of Church of Englandism, and pray devoutly that the whole humping may last out their time."

Then to a hundred who have no personal influence over the gownsmen. A man may live here from the time he's a freshman, to the time he's taken his degree, without ever being spoken to as if he had a soul to be saved, unless he happens to be one of the Summertime party, and they are getting fewer and fewer every year, and in ten years more there won't be one of them left, at the present rate. Besides, they have no influence over the rest of the under-graduates. They are very good, as the fellows in their way, I do believe, but they are not generally men of talent, and they keep entirely to themselves, and know nothing, and care nothing, for the questions of the day."

And so he ramblod on complaining and sneering, till supper-time, when we went out and loitered about the venerable cloisters, while the room was being cleared and the cloth laid.

To desecrate a Cambridge supper party among gay young men is a business as little suited to my taste as to my powers. The higher classes ought to know pretty well what such things are like, and the working men are not altogether ignorant, seeing that Peter Pears and other university men have been running Alma Mater's shame to as lucrative account in their functions as the Irish scribblers have that of their mother country. But I must say, that I was utterly disgusted, and when, after the removal of the tables, the whole party, twelve or fourteen in number, sat to work to drink hard and deliberately at milk punch, and bishop, and copus, and grog, and I know not what other inventions of bacchanalium brevis, and to sing, one after another, songs of the most brutal and low, I was glad to escape into the cool night air, and under pretence of going home, wander up and down the King's Parade, and watch the tall gables of King's College Chapel, and the classic front of the senate house, and the stately tower of St Mary's, as they stood, stern and silent,

bathed in the still glory of the moonshine, and seeming to watch, with a steadfast sadness, the scene of frivolity and sin, jhaulism, formalism, hypocrisy, and idleness below.

Noble buildings! and noble institutions! given freely to the people, by those who loved the people, and the Saviour who died for them. They gave us what they had, those mediæval founders—whatever narrowness of mind or superstition defiled their gift was not their fault, but the fault of their age. The best they knew they imparted freely, and God will reward them for it. To monopolise those institutions for the rich, as is done now, is to violate both the spirit and the letter of the foundations, to restrict their studies to the limits of Middle-Age Romanism,¹ their conditions of admission to those fixed at the Reformation, is but a shade less wrongful. The letter is kept—the spirit is thrown away. You refuse to admit any who are not members of the Church of England,—say, rather, any who will not sign the dogmas of the Church of England, whether they believe a word of them or not. Useless formalism! which lets through the reckless, the profligate, the ignorant, the hypocritical, and only excludes the honest and the conscientious, and the mass of the intellectual working-men.

And whose fault is it that you refuse to admit members of the Church of England? Whose fault is it, I ask? Your predecessors neglected the lower orders, till they have ceased to reverence either you or your doctrines,—you confess that, among yourselves, freely enough. You throw the blame of the present widespread dislike to the Church of England on her sins during “the godless eighteenth century.” But so. Why are those sins to be visited on us? Why are we to be shut out from the universities, which were founded for us, because you have let us grow up, by millions, heathens and infidels, as you call us? Take away your snuffbox! It is not merely because we are bad Churchmen that you exclude us, also you would be crowding your colleges, now, with the talented poor of the agricultural districts who, as you say, remain faithful to the Church of their fathers. But are there six labourers’ sons educating in the universities at this moment? No! The real reason for our exclusion, Churchmen or not, is because we are poor—because we cannot pay your exorbitant fees, often, as in the case of bachelors of arts, exacted for tuition which is never given, and residence

¹This, like the rest of Mr Locke’s Cambridge reminiscences, may appear to many exaggerated and unfair. But he seems to be speaking of both universities, and at a time when they had not even commenced the process of reformation. We fear, however, that in spite of many noble exceptions, his picture of Cambridge represents, if not the whole truth, still the impression which she leaves on the minds of too many strangers, and, alas! students also.—Ed.

which is not permitted—because we could not support the extravagance which you not only permit, but encourage, because, by your own unblushing confession, it insures the university “the support of the aristocracy.”

“But, on religious points, at least, you must abide by the statutes of the university.”

Strange argument, truly, to be urged literally by English Protestants in possession of Roman Catholic bequests! If that be true in the letter, as well as in the spirit, you should have given place long ago to the Dominicans and the Franciscans. In the spirit it is true, and the Reformers acted on it when they rightly converted the universities to the uses of the new faith. They carried out the spirit of the founders’ statutes by making the universities as good as they could be, and letting them share in the new light of the Elizabethan age. But was the sum of knowledge, human and divine, perfected at the Reformation? Who gave the Reformers, or you, who call yourselves their representatives, a right to say to the mind of man, and to the teaching of God’s Spirit, “Hitherto, and no farther!” Society and mankind, the children of the Supreme, will not stop growing for your dogmas—much less for your vested interests, and the righteous law of unimpeded development and renovation, applied in the sixteenth century, must be re-applied in the nineteenth, while the spirits of the founders, now purged from the superstitions and ignorances of their age, shall smile from heaven, and say, “So would we have had it, if we had lived in the great nineteenth century, into which it has been your privilege to be born.”

But such thoughts soon passed away. The image which I had seen that afternoon upon the river-banks, had awakened imperiously the frantic longings of past years, and now it reassembled its ancient throne, and tyrannously drove forth every other object, to keep me alone with its own tantalising and torturing bounty. I did not think about her—No; I only stupidly and steadily stared at her with my whole soul and imagination, through that long sleepless night, and in spite of the fatigue of my journey, and the stiffness proceeding from my full and wetting, I lay tossing till the early sun poured into my bedroom window. Then I arose, dressed myself, and went out to wander up and down the streets, gazing at one splendid building after another, till I found the gates of King’s College open. I entered eagerly, through a porch which, to my untutored taste, seemed gorgeous enough to form the entrance to a fairy palace, and stood in the quadrangle, riveted to the spot by the magnificence of the huge chapel on the right.

If I had admired it the night before, I felt inclined to worship it this morning, as I saw the lofty buttresses and spires, fretted with

all their gorgeous carving, and "storied windows richly dight," sleeping in the glare of the newly risen sun, and throwing their long shadows due westward down the sloping lawns and across the river which dimpled and gleamed below, till it was lost among the towering masses of cypress clumps and rose-garlanded chestnuts in the rich gardens beyond.

"Was I delighted? Yes—and yet no. There is a painful feeling in seeing anything magnificent which one cannot understand. And perhaps it was a morbid sensitiveness, but the feeling was strong upon me that I was an intruder there—out of harmony with the scene and the system which had created it, that I might be an object of unpleasing curiosity, perhaps of scorn (for I had not forgotten the nobleman at the boat-race), and those monuments of learned luxury. Perhaps, on the other hand, it was only from the instinct which makes us seek for solitude under the pressure of intense emotions, when we have neither language to express them to ourselves, nor loved one in whose silent eyes we may read kindred feelings—a sympathy which wants no words. Whatever the cause was, when a party of men, in their caps and gowns, approached me down the dark avenue which led into the country, I was glad to shrink for concealment behind the weeping willow at the foot of the bridge, and slunk off unobserved to breakfast with my cousin.

We had just finished breakfast, my cousin was lighting his *meerschau*, when a tall figure passed the window, and the talker of the nobleman, whom I had seen at the boat-race, entered the room with a packet of papers in his hand.

"Here, *Loenle mi*," my pocket-book—or rather, to stretch a bad pun till it bursts my pocket-dictionary. I require the aid of your benevolently squandered talents for the collection of these proofs. I am, as usual, both idle and lazy this morning, so draw pen, and set to work for me."

"I am exceedingly sorry, my lord," answered George, in his most desquaint tone, "but I must work this morning with all my might. Last night, recollect, was given to triumph, *Bu clins*, and illness."

"Then find someone who will do them for me, my *Ulysses polinechane*, *pointrope*, *pamper*."

"I shall be most happy (with a half frown and a wince) to play *Pamper* to your lordship's *Pantagruel*, on board the new yacht."

"Oh, I am perfect in that character, I suppose? And is she, after all, like *Pantagruel's* ship, to be loaded with *hemp*? Well, we must try two or three milder cargoes first. But come, find me some staving genus—some *graculus caricus*—"

"Who will ascend to the heaven of your lordship's eloquence for the bidding?"

"Five shillings a sheet—there will be about two of them, I think, in the pamphlet."

"May I take the liberty of recommending my cousin here?"

"Your cousin?" And he turned to me, who had been examining with a sad and envious eye the contents of the book-shelves. Our eyes met, and first a faint blush, and then a smile of recognition, passed over his magnificent countenance.

"I thank I had. I am ashamed that I cannot say the pleasure of meeting him at the boat-race yesterday."

My cousin looked inquiringly and vexed at us both. The nobleman smiled.

"Oh, the shame was ours, not his."

"I cannot thank," I answered, "that you have any reasons to remember with shame your own kindness and courtesy. As for me," I went on bitterly, "I suppose a poor journeyman tailor, who ventures to look on at the sports of gentlemen, only deserves to be hidden over."

"Sir," he said, looking at me with a severe and searching glance, "your bitterness is pardonable—but not your sneer. You do not yourself think what you say, and you ought to know that I think it still less than yourself. If you intend your irony to be useful, you should keep it till you can use it courageously against the true offenders."

I looked up at him fiercely enough, but the playful smile which had returned to his face disarmed me.

"Your class," he went on, "hides yourselves and our class as much by wholesale denunciations of us, as we, that 'who should know better, do by wholesale denunciations of you. As you grow older, you will learn that there are exceptions to every rule."

"And yet the exception proves the rule."

"Most painfully, true, Sir. But that argument is two-edged. For next time, and I consider it the exception or the ink, when I am told that you, a journeyman tailor, are able to correct these proofs for me?"

"Next to the rule, I think, than you yet fancy."

"You speak out boldly and well, but how can you judge what I may please to fancy? At all events, I will make trial of you. There are the proofs. Bring them to me by four o'clock this afternoon, and if they are well done, I will pay you more than I should to the average hack writer, for you will deserve more."

I took the proofs. He turned to go, and by a side back at George beckoned him out of the room. I heard a whispering in the passage, and I do not deny that my heart beat high with new hopes, as I caught unawares the words, —

"Such a touch of—such an eye!—such a contour of feature as that!—*Loenle mi*—that boy ought not to be mending trousers!"

My cousin returned, half-laughing, half-angry.

"Alton, you fool, why did you let out that you were a snip?"

"I am not ashamed of my trade."

"I am, then. However, you've done with it now, and if you can't come the gentleman, you may as well come the rising gonnor. The self-educated dodger pays well just now, and after all, you've hooked his lordship—thank me for that. But you'll never hold him, you independent dog, if you pull so hard on him." He went on, putting his hands in to his coat tail pockets, and sticking himself in front of the fire, like the Delphic Pythoness upon the sacred tripod, in hopes, I suppose, of some oracular allusion. "You will never hold him, I say, if you pull so hard on him. You might to 'My lord' him for months yet, at least. You know, my good fellow, you must take every possible care to pick up what good breeding you can, if I take the trouble to put you in the way of good society, and tell you where my private bird-nests are, like the green schoolboy some poet or other talks of."

"He is no lord of mine," I answered, "in any sense of the word, and therefore I shall not call him so."

"Upon my honour! here is a young gentleman who intends to rise in the world, and then commences by trying to walk through the first post he meets. 'Noodle' can't you do like me, and get out of the carts the way they come by? If you intend to go ahead, you must just dodge in and out, like a dog at a fair. 'She stoops to conquer' is my motto, and a precious good one too."

"I have no wish to conquer Lord Lyneale, and so I shall not stoop to him."

"I have, then, and to very good purpose, too. I am his whetstone, for polishing up that classical wit of his on, till he carries it into Parliament to astonish the country squires. He fancies himself a second Goethe, I haven't forgot his hitting at me, before a large supper party, with a certain epigram of that old turkey cock's about the whale having his unmentionable pursuit—and the great man likewise. While indeed! I bide my time, Alton, my boy—I bide my time, and then let your grand mistlecat look out! If he does not find the supposed whale unmentionable a good stout holding hispoon, with a tough line to it, and a long one, it's a pity, Alton, my boy!"

And he burst into a coarse laugh, tossed himself down on the sofa, and reclined his meerschaum.

"He seemed to me," I answered, "to have a peculiar condescension and liberality of mind towards those below him in rank."

"Oh! he had, had he? Now, I'll just put you up to a dodge. He intends to come the Mirabeau—fancies his mantle has fallen on him—prays before the fellow's bust, I believe, if one knew the truth, for a double portion of his spirit, and therefore it is a part of his game to ingratiate himself with all posy-boy-dom, while at heart he is as proud, exclusive an aristocrat, as ever wore

nobleman's hat. At all events, you may get something out of him, if you ply your cards well—or, rather, help me to play mine, for I consider him as my property, and you only as my aide-de-camp."

"I shall play no one's cards," I answered, sulkily. "I am doing work fairly, and shall be fairly paid for it, and keep my own independence."

"Independence! hey day! Have you forgotten that, after all you are my guest, to call it by the mildest term?"

"Do you upbraid me with that?" I said, starting up. "Do you expect me to live on your charity, on condition of doing your dirty work? You do not know me, sir. I leave your roof this instant!"

"You do not?" answered he, laughing loudly, as he sprang over the sofa, and set his back against the door. "Come, come, you Will o' the-Wisp, as full of flights, and fancies, and vagaries as a sick old maid! Can't you see which side your bread is buttered? Sit down, I say! Don't you know that I'm as good natured a fellow as ever lived, although I do parade a little old Blas morality now and then, just for fun's sake? Do you think I should be so open with it, if I meant anything very dishonest? Here—sit down, and don't go into King Charles's room, or Queen Elizabeth's, either, which you seem inclined to do."

"I know you have been very generous to me," said I, penitently, "but a kindness becomes none when you are upbraided with it."

"So say the copybooks. I deny it. At all events, I'll say no more, and you shall sit down there, and write as still as a mouse, till two, while I tuckles this never to be enough-by-unhappy-third-years-men-execrated Griffin's Optics."

At four that afternoon, I knocked, proofs in hand, at the door of Lord Lyneale's rooms in the Kings Parade. The door was opened by a little elderly groom, grey-coated, grey gaitered, grey hained, grey-visaged. He had the look of a respectable old family retainer, and his exquisitely neat groom's dress gave him a sort of interest in my eyes. Class costumes, robes though they are of feudalism, carry a charm with them. They are symbolic, definite, they bestow a personality on the wearer, which satisfies the mind, by enabling it instantly to classify him, to connect him with a thousand stories and associations, and to my young mind, the wiry, shrewd, honest, grim old serving-man seemed the incarnation of all the wonders of Newmarket, and the hunting kennel, and the steeplechase, of which I had read, with alternate admiration and contempt, in the newspapers.

From between his legs peeped out a mass of shaggy grizzled hair, containing a Skye-terrier's eyes, and a long snout, which, by its twisting and unthrusting, seemed investigat-

whether my trousers come within the biting degree of shabbiness.

"And what do you want here, young man?"

"I was bidden by Lord Lynedale to come here at four with these papers."

"Oh, yes, very likely! that's an old story, and to be paid money, I guess."

"And to be paid money."

"Not a doubt on't. Then you must wait a little longer, like the rest of your blood suckers. Go back, and tell your master, that he needn't send you sort here any more, with his post obits and post mortems, and the like devilry. The old culls good to last these three months more, the Lord be praised. Therefore, come, on—you go back to your master, and take him my compliments, and *****"

"I have no master," quoth I, puzzled, but half laughing, for I liked the old fellow's non honest visage.

"No master, eh?" then darned if you shall come in. Comes on your own account, eh? Got a little bit of paper for his lordship in that bundle?"

"I told you already that I had," said I, prevailingly.

"Very good, but you didn't tell me whether they come from the bayleaves or not."

"Nonsense. Take the papers in yourself, as you like."

"Oh, you young wight! and! Do you take me for Judas Iscariot? And what do you expect—to set a man on scriveng a writ on a man's own master? Wait a bit, till I gets the hom'ship, that's all, and I'll show you what's what."

If I could not understand him, the dog did, for he ran instantly at my legs, seized a huge piece of my best trousers, and was returning for a second, if I had not, literally, in my perplexity, thrust the clean proofs into his mouth which he worried and slobbered, as if they had been the grandfather of all white mice. At this moment, the inner door opened, and Lord Lynedale appeared. There was an explanation, and a laugh, in which I could not but join, in spite of the torn trousers, at the expense of the groom. The old man retired, mungling his growls with those of the tinner, and evidently quite disappointed at my not being a dun—an honest, dence barn door fowl, and not *sera nature*, and fan game for his sporting propensities.

Lord Lynedale took me into the inner room, and bade me sit down while he examined the proofs. I looked round the low wainscotted apartment, with its narrow millioned windows, in extreme curiosity. What a real nobleman's abode could be like, was naturally worth examining, to one who had, all his life, heard of the aristocracy as of some mythic Titans—whether friends or gods, being yet a doubtful point—altogether overshadowed on "cloudy Olympus," invisible to mortal ken. The shelves were gay with

Moroccan, Russian leather, and gilding not much used, as I thought, till my eye caught one of the gorgeously bound volumes lying on the table in a loose cover of polished leather—a refinement of which poor I should never have dreamt. The walls were covered with prints, which soon turned my eyes from everything else, to range delighted over Landseers, Turners, Robert's Eastern sketches, the ancient Italian masters, and I recognised, with a sort of friendly affection, an old print of my favourite St Sebastian, in the Dulwich Gallery. It brought back to my mind a thousand dreams, and a thousand ones. Would those dreams be ever realised? Might this new acquaintance possibly open some pathway towards their fulfilment? some visit towards the attainment of a station where they would, at least, be less chimerical?—And at that thought, my heart beat loud with hope. The room was clocked up with chains and tables, of all sorts of strange shapes and problematical uses. The floor was strewed with skins of ben, deer, and seal. In a corner lay hunting whips and fishing rods, foils, boxing gloves, and gun cases, while over the chimney piece, an array of rich Turkish pipes, all amber and enamel, contrasted curiously with quaint old swords and daggers—bronze classic vases, upon Gothic oak brackets, and fantastic scraps of continental carving. On the centre table, too, reigned the same rich profusion, or, if you will, confusion. "MISS 'No'ra in Egypt," "Goethe's Walderwandschatten," "Marius's Hand books," and "Plato's Republic." What was there not there? And I chuckled inwardly, to see how 'Bell's Life in London' and the 'Eclectic' had, between them, set down 'McCulloch on Trigonometry' and were sitting, arm in arm, triumphantly astride of him. Everything in the room, even to the flagrant flowers in a German glass, spoke of a travelled and cultivated luxury—inifold tastes and powers of self enjoyment and self improvement, which Heaven forgive me if I envied, as I looked upon them. If I, now, had had one twentieth part of those books, prim's, that experience of life, not to men in that physical strength and beauty, which stood towering there before the fire so simple so utterly unconscious of the innate nobleness and grace which shone out from every motion of those stately limbs and features—all the delicacy which blood can give, combined, as no one does sometimes see, with the broad strength of the proletarian—so different from poor me!—and so different too, as I recollected with perhaps a savage pleasure, from the miserable, stunted specimen of over-bred unhealth which had ridden over me the day before! A strange question that of birth! and one in which the philosopher, in spite of himself, must come to democratic conclusions. For, after all, the physical and intellectual superiority of the high-born is only preserved, as it was

in the old Norman times, by the continual practical abnegation of the very caste he on which they built themselves—by continual innovation of their race, by interminging with the ranks below them. The blood of Otho flowed in the veins of Norman William, true—and so did the tanner's of Falaise!

At last he looked up, and spoke courteously,—

"I'm afraid I have kept you long, but now, here is for your corrections, which are capital. I have really to thank you for a lesson in writing English." And he put a sovereign into my hand.

"I am very sorry," said "but I have no change."

"Never mind that. Your work is well worth the money."

"But," I said, "you agreed with me for five shillings a sheet, and—I do not wish to be rude, but I cannot accept your kindness. No working men make a rule of abiding by our wages, and taking nothing which looks like—"

"Well, well—and a very good rule it is, I suppose, then, I must find out some way for you to earn more. Good afternoon." And he motioned me out the room, followed me downstairs, and turned off towards the College Gardens.

I wandered up and down, feeling my grieved eyes, till I found myself again upon the bridge where I had stood that morning, gazing with admiration and astonishment at a scene which I have often expected to see painted or described, and which, nevertheless, in spite of its unique magnificence, seems strangely overlooked by those who cater for the public taste with pen and pencil. The vista of bridge, one after another, spanning the stream, the long line of great monastic palaces, all unlike, and yet all in harmony, sloping down to the stream, with their trim lawns and ivied walls, their towers and buttresses, and opposite them, the range of rich gardens and noble timber-trees, dimly seen through which, at the end of the gorgeous river avenue, towered the lofty buildings of St John's. The whole scene, under the glow of a rich May afternoon, seemed to me a fragment out of the "Arabian Nights" or Spenser's "Faery Queen." I leaned upon the parapet, and gazed, and gazed, so absorbed in wonder and enjoyment, that I was quite unconscious, for some time, that Lord Lynedale was standing by my side, engaged in the same enjoyment. He was not alone. Hanging on his arm was a lady, whose face, it seemed to me, I ought to know. It certainly was one not to be easily forgotten. She was beautiful, but with the face and figure rather of a Juno than a Venus—dark, imperious, restless—the lips almost too fully set, the brow almost too massive and projecting—a queen, rather to be feared than loved—but a queen still, as truly royal as the man into whose face she was looking up with eager admiration and

delight, as he pointed out to her eloquently the several beauties of the landscape. Her dress was as plain as that of any Quaker, but the grace of its arrangement, of every line and fold, was enough, without the help of the heavy gold bracelet on her wrist, to proclaim her a fine lady, by which term I wish to express the result of that perfect education in taste and manner, down to every gesture, which Heaven forbid that I, professing to be a poet, should undervalue. It is beautiful, and therefore I welcome it, in the name of the Author of all beauty. I value it so highly, that I would fain see it extend, not merely from Belgravia to the tradesman's villa, but thence, as I believe it one day will, to the labourer's hovel, and the needlewoman's garret.

Half in bashfulness, half in the pride which shrinks from anything like intrusion, I was moving away, but the nobleman, recognising me with a smile and a nod, made some observation on the beauty of the scene before us. Before I could answer, however, I saw that his companion's eyes were fixed intently on my face.

"Is this," she said to Lord Lynedale, "the young person of whom you were speaking to me just now?" I fancy that I recalled him, though, I dare say he has forgotten me.

If I had forgotten the face, that voice, so peculiarly rich, deep, and marked in its pronunciation of every syllable, recalled her instantly to my mind. It was the dark lady of the Dulwich Gallery.

"I met you, I think," I said, "at the picture gallery at Dulwich, and you were kind enough, and—and some persons who were with you, to talk to me about a picture there."

"Yes, Guido's St Sebastian. You seemed fond of reading, then. I am glad to see you at college."

I explained that I was not at college. That led to fresh gentle questions on her part till I had given her all the leading points of my history. There was nothing in it of which I ought to have been ashamed.

She seemed to become more and more interested in my story, and her companion also.

"And have you tried to write?" I recalled my uncle advising you to try a poem on St Sebastian. It was spoken, perhaps, in jest, but it will not, I hope, have been labour lost, if you have taken it in earnest."

"Yes—I have written on that and on other subjects, during the last few years."

"Then you must let us see them, if you have them with you. I think my uncle, Arthur, might like to look over them, and if they were fit for publication, he might be able to do something towards it."

"At all events," said Lord Lynedale, "a self-educated author is always interesting. Bring any of your poems, that you have with you, to the Eagle this afternoon, and leave them there for Dean Winmstay, and to-morrow morning, if you have nothing better

to do, call there between ten and eleven o'clock."

He wrote me down the dean's address, and maddening a civil good-morning, turned away with his queenly companion, while I stood gazing after him, wondering whether all noblemen and high born ladies were like them in person and in spirit—a question which, in spite of many noble exceptions, some of them well known and appreciated by the working men, I am afraid must be answered in the negative.

I took my MS. to the Eagle, and wandered out once more, instinctively, among those same magnificent trees at the back of the colleges, to enjoy the pleasing torment of expectation. "My much!" was he the same old man whom I had seen at the gallery, and if so, was Lillian with him? Delicious hope! And yet, what if she was with him—what to me! But yet I sat silent, dreaming, all the evening, and hurried early to bed—not to sleep, but to lie and dream on and on, and rise almost before light, eat no breakfast, and pace up and down, waiting impatiently for the hour at which I was to find out whether my dream was true.

And it was true! The first object I saw, when I entered the room, was Lillian, looking more beautiful than ever. The child of sixteen had blossomed into the woman of twenty. The ivory and vermilion of the complexion had blended down together into still richer hues. The dark hazel eyes shone with a more liquid lustre. The figure had become more rounded, without losing a line of that fairy lightness, with which her light morning dress, with its delicate French scintillations of colour, gay, and yet not gaudy, seemed to harmonise. The little plump jewelled hands—the transparent chestnut hair, banded round the beautiful oval margin—the tiny feet, which, as Smocking has it,—

6 "The little feet; (these)
Take little notice of the road and —"

I could have ridden down, fool that I was! and worshipped what? I could not tell then, for I cannot tell even now.

The dean smiled recognition, bade me sit down, and disposed my queries, meditatively, on his knee. I obeyed him, trembling, cowering—my eyes devouring my idol—forgetting why I had come, seeing nothing but her—listening for nothing but the opening of those lips. I believe the dean was some sentences deep in his oration, before I became conscious thereof.

"—And I think I may tell you, at once, that I have been very much surprised and gratified with them. They evince, on the whole, a far greater acquaintance with the English classic models, and with the laws of rhyme and melody, than could have been expected from a young man of your class—*made virtute puer*. Have you read any Latin?"

"A little." And I went on staring at Lillian, who looked up, furtively, from her work, every now and then, to steal a glance at me, and set my poor heart thumping still more fiercely against my side.

"Very good, you will have the less trouble, then, in the preparation for college. You will find out for yourself, of course, the immense disadvantages of self education. The fact is, my dear lord" (turning to Lord Lyncdale), "it is only useful as an indication of a capability of being educated by others. One never opens a book written by working-men, without shuddering at a hundred faults of style. However, there are some very tolerable attempts among these—especially the imitations of Milton's 'Comus'."

Poor, I had by no means intended them as imitations, but such, no doubt, they were.

"I am sorry to see that Shelley has had so much influence on your writing. He is a guide as irregular in taste, as unorthodox in doctrine, though there are some pretty things in him now and then. And you have caught his melody tolerably here, now—"

"Oh, that is such a sweet thing!" said Lillian. "Do you know, I read it over and over last night, and took it upstairs with me. How very fond of beautiful things you must be, Mr. Locke, to be able to describe so passionately the longing after them!"

That voice once more! It intoxicated me, so that I hardly knew what I stammered out—something about working men having very few opportunities of indulging the taste for—I forget what. I believe I was on the point of running off into some absurd compliment, but I caught the dark lady's warning eye on me.

"Ah, yes! I forgot. I dare say it must be a very stupid life. So little opportunity, as he says. What a pity he is a tailor's papa! Such an unimaginative employment! How delightful it would be to send him to college, and make him a dogymn!"

Fool that I was! I fancied—what did I not fancy? Never seeing how that very "he" bespoke the indifference—the gulf between us. I was not a man—an equal, but a thing—a subject, who was to be talked over, and examined, and made into something like themselves, of their supreme and undeserved benevolence.

"Gently, gently, fair lady! We must not be—be talking as some people would kindly wish to be. If this young man really has a proper desire to rise into a higher station, and I find him a fit object to be assisted in that praiseworthy ambition, why, I think he ought to go to some training-college, St. Marks, I should say, on the whole, might, by its strong Church principles, give the best antidote to any little remaining taint of sans chlotheism. You understand me, my lord? And, then, if he distinguished himself there, it would be time to think of getting him a bishopric."

"Poor Pegasus in harness!" half smiled, half-sighed, the dark lady.

"Just the sort of youth," whispered Lord Lynedole, loud enough for me to hear, "to take out with us to the Mediterranean, as secret *ny*—*s'il y avait là de la morale*, of course—"

Yes, and of course, too, the tailor's boy was not expected to understand French. But the most absurd thing was, how everybody, except perhaps the dark lady, seemed to take for granted that I felt myself exceedingly honoured, and must consider it, as a matter of course, the greatest possible stretch of kindness thus to talk me over, and settle everything for me, as if I was not a living soul, but a plant in a pot. Perhaps they were not unsupported by experience. I suppose too many of us would have thought it so, there are blunkeys in all ranks, and to spare. Perhaps the true absurdity was the way in which I sat, demented, incalculable, staring at Lillian, and only caring for any word which seemed to augur a chance of seeing her again, instead of saying, as I felt, that I had no wish whatever to rise above my station, no intention whatever of being sent to training schools or colleges, or anywhere else at the expense of other people. And therefore it was that I submitted blindly, when the dean, who looked as kind, and was really, I believe, as kind as ever was human being, turned to me with a solemn, authoritative voice—

"Well, my young friend, I must say that I am, on the whole, very much pleased with your performance. It indicates, my dear lord, the assertion, for which I have been so often ridiculed, that there are many real men, capable of higher things, scattered up and down among the masses. Attend to me, sir!" (a hint which I suspect I very much wanted). "Now, recollect, if it should be in your power to assist your prospects in life, you must give up, once and for all, the latter tone against the higher classes, which I am sorry to see in your MSS. As you know more of the world, you will find that the poor are not by any means so ill used as they are taught, in these days, to believe. The rich have their sorrows too—no one knows it better than I" (and he played pensively with his gold pencil case).

"And good and evil are pretty equally distributed among all ranks, by a just and merciful God." I advise you most earnestly, as you value your future success in life, to give up reading those unimprinted authors whose aim is to excite the evil passions of the multitude, and to shut your eyes sometimes to the extravagant calumnies of demagogues, who make tools of enthusiastic and imaginative minds, for their own selfish aggrandisement. Avoid politics, the workman has no more to do with them than the clergyman. We are told, on divine authority, to fear God and the king, and oblige not with those who are given to change. Rather

put before yourself the example of such a man as the excellent Dr. Brown, one of the richest and most respected men of the university, with whom I hope to have the pleasure of dining this evening—and yet that man actually, for several years of his life, worked at a carpenter's bench!"

I too had something to say about all that. I too knew something about demagogues and working-men—but the sight of Lillian made me a coward, and I only sat silent as the thought flashed across me, half-indignant, half-painful, by its contrast, of another who once worked at a carpenter's bench, and fulfilled his mission—not by an old age of wealth, respectability, and port wine, but on the cross of Calvary. After all, the worthy old gentleman gave me no time to answer.

"Next I think of showing these MSS. to my publisher, to get his opinion as to whether they are worth printing just now. Not that I wish you to build much on the chance. It is not necessary that you should be a poet. I should prefer mathematics for you, as a methodic discipline of the intellect. Most active minds write poetry, at a certain age—I wrote a good deal, I recollect, myself. But that is no reason for publishing. This haste to rush into print is one of the bad signs of the times—a symptom of the unhealthy activity which was first called out by the French Revolution. In the Elizabethan age, every decently educated gentleman was able, as a matter of course, to write a sonnet to his mistress's eyebrow, or an epigram on his enemy, and yet he never dreamt of printing them. One of the few rational things I have met with, Eleanor, in the works of your very objectionable pet, Mr. Carlyle though indeed his style is too intolerable to have allowed me to read much—is the remark that 'speech is silver'—'silver'—he calls it poetically—'while silence is golden'."

At this point of the sermon, Lillian fled from the room, to my extreme disgust. But still the old man pressed.

"I think, therefore, that you had better stay with your cousin for the next week. I hear from Lord Lynedole, that he is a very studious moral, rising young man, and I only hope that you will follow his good example. At the end of the week I shall return home, and then I shall be glad to see more of you at my house at D * * *, about * * * miles from this place. Good morning."

I went in rapture at the last announcement, and yet my conscience smote me. I had not stood up for the working men. I had heard them calumniated, and held my tongue. But I was to see Lillian. I had let the dean fancy I was willing to become a pensioner on his bounty—that I was a member of the Church of England, and willing to go to a (rich training school—but I was to see Lillian. I had lowered myself in my own eyes—but I had seen Lillian. Perhaps I exaggerated my own offences, however

that may be, love soon silenced conscience, and I almost danced into my cousin's room on my return.

That week passed rapidly and happily. I was half-amused with the change in my cousin's demeanour. I had evidently risen immensely in his eyes, and I could not help applying, in my heart, to him, Mr. Carlyle's dictum about the valter-sackers—how they never honour the unaccredited hero, having no eye to find him out still properly accredited, and countersigned, and accredited with full uniform and diploma by that great god, Public Opinion. I saw through the motive of his new-helged respect for me—and yet I encouraged it, for it flattered my vanity. The world must forgive me. It was something for the poor tailor to find himself somewhat appreciated at last, even outwardly. And besides, this said respect took which was very tempting to me now. Through the week before, it was just the one which I should have repelled with scorn. Things became very curious to find me money, to order me clothes at his own tailor's, and set me up in various little toilet refinements, that I might make a respectable appearance at the dinner. I knew that he considered rather the honour of the family, than my good, but I did not know that his aim was also to bring me into his power, and I refused more and more weakly at each fresh offer, and at last on credit, in an evil hour, to sell my own independence, for the sake of indulging my love dream, and appearing to be what I was not.

I saw a good deal more of the young university men that week. I cannot say that my recollections of them were pleasant. A few of them were very lagged Tractarians, some of whom seemed to fancy that a *difficile* admission for crinoides and Gothic architecture was a form of religion, which, by its extreme perfection, made the virtues of chastity and sobriety quite unnecessary, and the rest, of a more ascetic and moral turn, seemed as narrow, bitter, disappointed, and unearnest young men as I had ever met, dealing in second-hand party statements gathered, as I could discover, entirely from periodicals of their own party—talking pride in reading nothing but what was made for them, indulging in the most violent nicknames and railing, and escaping from anything like severe argument by a sneer or an expression of the trivial humorist so "painful" a notion. I had good opportunities of seeing what they were really like; for my cousin seemed to take delight in tormenting them—making them contradict themselves, getting them into dilemmas, and putting them into passions,—while the whole time he professed to be of their party, as indeed he was. But his consciousness of power, and his natural craft, seemed to make him consider his own party as his private preserve for sporting over, and when he was tired

with the amusement, he used to try to call me in, and sit me by the cars with his guests, which he had no great trouble in doing. And then, when he saw me at all confused, or borne down by statements from authors, of whose very names I had never heard, or by expressions of horror and surprise which made me suspect that I had unconsciously committed myself to an absurdity, he used to come "hulking into the midst of the press," like some knight at a tournament, or Socrates when he saved Alcibiades at Delium, and, by a dexterous repartee, turn the tide of battle, and get me off safe, taking care, by the bye, to hint to me the obligation which he considered himself to have conferred upon me.

But the great majority of the young men whom I met were even of a lower stamp. I was utterly shocked and disappointed at the contempt and misbelief with which they seemed to regard everything beyond mere animal enjoyment, and here and there the selfish advantage of a bad degree. They seemed, if one could judge from appearance, to despise and disbelieve everything generous, enthusiastic, enlarged. Thoughtfulness was a "hoax,"—earnestness, "romantic." Above all, they seemed to despise the university itself. The "Dons" were "idle, fat old humbugs," "lispel," "humbug too," tutors, "humblings" too, who pined into the trade men's hands, and changed men high fees for lectures not worth attending, so that any man who wanted to get on, was forced to have a private tutor, besides his college one. The university studies were "a humbug, no use to man in after life. The masters of arts were "humbugs" too, for "they know all the evils, and clamoured for reform till they became Dons themselves, and then, as soon as they found the old system gave, they settled down on their heels, and grew fat on port wine, like those before them." They seemed to consider themselves in an atmosphere of smog—living in a lie out of which he-element the whole was very right in making the most, for the gaining of fame or money. And the tone which they took about everything—the conservatism, hollowiness, Oh! Bliss selfishness—was just what might have been expected. Whether they were right or wrong in their complaints, I, of course, have no means of accurately knowing. But it did seem strange to me, as it has to others, to find in the mouths of almost all the gownsmen, those very same charges against the universities which, when working men dare to make them, excite outcries of "educumny," "olition," "vulgar radication," "attacks on our time-honoured institutions," etc. etc.

CHAPTER XIV

A CATHEDRAL TOWN

At length the wished-for day had arrived and, with my cousin I was whirling along full of hope and desire, towards the cathedral town of D * - (through a flat fen country, which, though I had often heard it described as ugly, struck my imagination much. The vast height and width of the sky arch, as seen from those flats as from an ocean—the grey haze shrouding the horizon of our narrow land-view, and closing us in, till we seemed to be floating through infinite space, on a little platform of earth, the rich poplar fringed fairs, with their heads of dappled oxen—the luxuriant crops of oats and beans—the tender green of the tall rape, a plant till then unknown to me—the long, straight, silver dykes, with their gaily carpets of strange floating water-plants, and their black banks, studded with the remains of buried forests—the innumerable draining-mills, with their creaking sails and groaning wheels—the endless rows of pollard willow through which the breeze moaned and sung, as through the strings of some vast Arabian harp, the little island knolls in that vast sea of fen, each with its long village street, and delicately taper spire, all this seemed to me to contain an element of new and peculiar beauty.

"Why?" exclaims the reading public, if perchance it ever sees this tale of mine, in its usual patient longing after anything like personal gossip, or scandalous anecdote—"why, there is no cathedral town which begins with a D." Through the fen, too! He must mean either Ely, Lincoln, or Peterborough, that's certain." Then, at one of those places, they find there is a dean—not of the name of Winnstay, true—but his name begins with a W, and he has a pretty daughter—no, a niece, well, that's very near it,—it must be him. No, at another place—there is not a dean, true—but a canon, or an archdeacon—something of that kind, and he has a pretty daughter, really, and his name begins—not with W, but with Y, well, that's the last letter of Winnstay, if it is not the first—that must be the poor man! What a shame to have exposed his family secrets in that way!" And then a whole circle of myths grow up round the man's story. It is officially ascertained that I am the man who broke into his house last year, after having made love to his housemaid, and stole his writing desk and plate—else, why should a burglar steal family letters, if he had not some interest in them? And before the matter dies away, some worthy old gentleman, who has not spoken to a working man since he left his living, thirty years ago, and hates a Radical as he does the Pope, receives two or three anonymous

letters, condoling with him on the cruel betrayal of his confidence—base ingratitude for undeserved condensation, etc. etc., and, perhaps, with an enclosure of good advice for his lovely daughter.

But, wherever D * * * is, we arrived there; and with a beating heart, I—and I now suspect my cousin also—walked up the sunny slopes, where the old convent had stood, now covered with walled gardens and noble timber trees, and crowned by the richly fitted towers of the cathedral, which we had seen, for the last twenty miles, growing gradually larger and more distinct across the level flat. "Ely?" "No, Lincoln!" "Oh! but really, it's just as much like Peterborough!" Never mind, my dear reader; the essence of the fact, as I think, lies not quite so much in the name of the place, as in what was done there—to which I, with all the little respect which I can muster, entreat your attention.

It is not from false shame at my necessary ignorance, but from a fear lest I should bore my readers with what seems to them trivial, that I refrain from dwelling on many a thing which struck me as curious in this my first visit to the house of an English gentleman. I must say, however, though I suppose that it will be numbered, at least, among trite remarks, if not among trivial ones, that the all around me certainly struck me, as it has others, as not very much in keeping with the office of one who professed to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. But I saved over that feeling, being desirous to see everything in the brightest light, with the recollection that the dean had a private fortune of his own, though it did seem at moments, that if a man has solemnly sworn to devote himself, body and soul, to the cause of the spiritual welfare of the nation, that vow might be not unreasonably construed to include his money, as well as his talents, time, and health—unless, perhaps, money is considered by spiritual persons as so worthless a thing, that it is not fit to be given to God—a notion which might seem to explain how a really pious and universally respected archbishop, living within a quarter of a mile of one of the worst *infernos* of destitution, disease, filth, and profligacy—can yet find it in his heart to save £120,000, out of Church revenues, and leave it to his family, though it will not explain how Irish bishops can reconcile it to their consciences to leave behind them, one and all, large fortunes—for I suppose from fifty to a hundred thousand pounds is something—saved from fees and tithes, taken from the pockets of the Roman Catholic population, whom they have been put there to convert to Protestantism for the last three hundred years—with what success, all the world knows. Of course, it is a most impudent, and almost a blasphemous thing, for a working man to dare to mention such subjects. Is it not "speaking evil of dignities?" Strange,

by the bye, that merely to mention facts, without note or comment, should be always called "speaking evil." Does not that argue ill for the facts themselves? Working men think so, but what matter what "the swinish multitude" think?

When I speak of wealth, I do not mean that the dean's household would have been considered by his own class at all too luxurious. He would have been said, I suppose, to live in a "quiet, comfortable, gentleman like way"—"everything very plain and very good." It included a butler—a quiet, good natured old man—who ushered us into our bedrooms, a footman, who opened the door—a sort of animal for which I have an extreme aversion—young, silly, conceited, over-fed, florid—who looked just the man to sell his soul for a living, twice as much food as he needed, and the opportunity of unlimited flattery with the maids, and a coachman, very like other coachmen, whom I saw taking a pair of handsome carriage horses out to exercise, as we opened the gate.

The old man, silently and as a matter of course, unpacked for me my little portmanteau (lent me by my cousin), and placed my things neatly in various drawers went down, brought up a jug of hot water, put it on the washing-table—told me that dinner was at six—that the half hour bell rung at half past five—and that, if I wanted anything, the footman would answer the bell (bells seeming a prominent idea in his theory of the universe) and so left me, wondering at the strange fact that free men, with free wills, do sell themselves, by the hundred thousand, to perform menial offices for other men, not for love, but for money, becoming, to denote them strictly, bell answering animals, and are honest, happy, contented, in such a life. A man servant, a soldier, and a Jesuit, are to me the three great wonders of humanity—three forms of moral suicide, for which I never had the slightest gleam of sympathy, or even comprehension.

At last we went down to dinner, after my personal abashments had been carefully superintended by my cousin, who gave me, over and above, various warnings and exhortations as to my behaviour, which, of course, to its due effect, in making me as nervous, constrained, and affected, as possible. When I appeared in the drawing-room, I was kindly welcomed by the dean, the two ladies, and Lord Lynedale.

But as I stood fidgeting and blushing, sticking my arms, and legs, and head, into all sorts of quaint positions—trying one attitude, and thinking it looked awkward, and so exchanging it for another, more awkward still—my eye fell suddenly on a slip of paper, which had conveyed itself, I never knew how, upon the pages of the Illustrated Book of Ballads, which I was turning over—

"Be natural, and you will be gentleman like. If you wish others to forget you, think, do not forget it yourself. If you wish others to remember you with pleasure, forget yourself, and be just what God has made you."

I could not help fancying that the lesson, whether intentionally or not, was meant for me, and a pressing impulse made me take up the slip, fold it together, and put it in my bosom. Perhaps it was Lillian's handwriting? I looked round at the ladies, but their faces were each buried behind a book.

We went in to dinner, and, to my delight, I sat next to my goddess, while opposite me was my cousin. Luckily, I had got some directions from him as to what to say and do, when my wonders, the servants, thrust eatables and drinkables over my shoulders.

Lillian and my cousin chatted away about church architecture, and the restorations which were going on at the cathedral, while I, for the first half of dinner, feasted my eyes with the sight of a beauty, in which I seemed to discover every moment some new excellence. Every time I looked up at her my eyes dazzled, my face blushed, my heart sank, and soft thrills ran through every nerve. And yet, Heaven knows, my emotions were as pure as those of an infant. It was beauty, longed for, and found at last, which I adored as a thing not to be possessed, but worshipped. The desire, even tho' thought, of calling her my own, never crossed my mind. I felt that I could gladly die, if by death I could purchase the permission to watch her. I understood, then, and forever after, the pure devotion of the old knights and troubadours of chivalry. I seemed to myself to be their brother—one of the holy guild of poet-lovers. I was a new Petrarch, basking in the light rays of a new Lillian. I gazed, and gazed, and found new life in gazing, and was content.

But my simple bliss was perfected, when she suddenly turned to me, and began asking me questions on the very points on which I was best able to answer. She talked about poetry, Tennyson and Wordsworth; asked me if I understood Browning's *Sordello*, and then comforted me, after my stammering confession that I did not, by telling me she was delighted to hear that, for she did not understand it either, and it was so pleasant to have a companion in ignorance. Then she asked if I was much struck with the buildings in Cambridge?—had they inspired me with any verses yet?—I was bound to write something about them—and so on, making the most commonplace remarks look brilliant, from the ease and liveliness with which they were spoken, and the tact with which they were made pleasant to the listener. While I wondered at myself, for enjoying from her lips the flippant, sparkling talk, which had hitherto made young women to me objects of unspeakable dread, to be escaped by crossing the street, hiding

behind doors, and rushing blindly into back-yards and cow-holes.

The ladies left the room, and I, with Lillian's face glowing bright in my imagination, as the crimson silk remains on the retina of the closed eye, after looking intently at the sun, sat listening to a pleasant discussion between the dean and the nobleman, about some country in the East, which they had both visited, and greedily devouring all the new facts which they incidentally brought forth out of the treasures of their highly cultivated minds.

I was agreeably surprised (don't laugh, reader) to find that I was allowed to drink water, and that the other men drank not more than a glass or two of wine, after the ladies had retired. I had, somehow, got both lords and deans associated in my mind with infinite swillings of port wine, and bacchanalian orgies, and sat down, at first, in much fear and trembling, lest I should be compelled to join, under penalties of salt and water, but I had made up my mind, stoutly, to learn anything rather than get drunk, and so I had all the merit of a temperance martyr, without any of its disagreeables.

"Well," said I to myself, smiling in spirit, "what would my Charist friends say if they saw me here?" Not even Crosshwaite himself could find a flaw in the appreciation of merit for its own sake, the courtesy and condensation—ah! but he would complain of it, simply for being condensation." But, after all, what else could it be? Were not these men more experienced, more learned, older than myself? They were my superiors, it was in vain for me to attempt to hide it from myself. But the wonder was, that they themselves were the ones to appear utterly unenvious of it. They treated me as a equal, they welcomed me—the young vicar and the learned dean—on the broad ground of a common humanity, as I believe hundreds more of their class would do, if we did not ourselves take a pride in estimating them from us, telling them that fraternisation between our classes is impossible, and then cursing them for not fraternising with us. But of that, more hereafter.

At all events, now my bliss was perfect. No! I was wrong—a higher enjoyment than all awaited me, when, going into the drawing-room, I found Lillian singing at the piano. I had no idea that music was capable of expressing and conveying emotions so intense and ennobling. My experience was confined to strict music and to the howling at the chapel. And as yet, Mr. Hullah had not risen into a power more enviable than that of kings, and given to every workman a free entrance into the magic world of harmony and melody, where he may prove his brotherhood with Mozart and Weber, Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Great unconscious demagogue!—leader of the people, and labourer in the cause of divine equality!—thy reward is with thy Father of the people!

The luscious softness of the Italian airs overcame me with a delicious oblivion. Every note, every interval, each shade of expression spoke to me—I knew not what and yet they spoke to my heart of delights. A spirit out of the infinite heaven seemed calling to my spirit, which longed to answer and was dumb—and could only vent itself in tears, which welled unconsciously forth, and eased my heart from the painful tension of excitement.

* * *

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers,
 Oershadowing it with soft and thrilling wings,
 The blood and life within those snowy fingers
 Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings
 My brain is wild, my breath comes quick,
 The blood is lifting in my frame
 And thronging shudders, fast and thick
 Fall on my overflowing eyes
 My heart is quivering like a fluted,
 As morning dew that in the sunbeam dries,
 I am dissolved in those celestial strains.

The dark lady, Miss Stannton, as I ought to call her, saw my emotion, and, as I thought unkindly, checked the cause of it at once.

"Pray do not give us any more of those die-away Italian airs, Lillian. Sing some thing manful, German or English, or anything you like, except those sentimental wailings."

Lillian stopped, took another book, and commenced, after a short prelude, one of my own songs. Surprise and pleasure overpowered me more utterly than the soft southern melodies had done. I was on the point of springing up and leaving the room, when my impulses were checked by our host, who turned round, and stopped short in an oration on the geology of Upper Egypt.

"What's that about brotherhood and freedom, Lillian?" We don't want anything of that kind here."

"It's only a popular London song, papa," answered she, with an arch smile.

"Oh! likely to become so," added Miss Stannton, in her marked dogmatic tone.

"I'm very sorry for London, then." And he returned to the deacons.

CHAPTER XV

THE MAN OF SCIENCE.

AFTER breakfast the next morning, Lillian retired, saying laughingly, that she must go and see after her clothing club and her dear old woman at the almshouse, which, of course, made me look on her as more an angel than ever. And while George was left with Lord Lynedale, I was summoned to a private conference with the dean, in his study.

I found him in a room lined with cabinets of curiosities, and hung all over with strange bones, bones, and slabs of fossils. But I was not allowed much time to look about me, for he commenced at once on the subject

of my studies, by asking me whether I was willing to prepare myself for the university by entering on the study of mathematics.

I felt so intense a repugnance to them, that at the risk of offending him—perhaps, for aught I knew, fatally—I dared to demur. He smiled—

"I am convinced, young man, that even if you intended to follow poetry as a profession—and a very poor one you will find it—yet you will never attain to any excellence therein, without the strictest mental discipline than any to which you have been accustomed. That is why I abominate our modern poets. They talk about the glory of the poetic vocation, as if they intended to be kings and world makers, and all the while they indulge themselves in the most loose and desultory habits of thought. Sir, if they really believed their own grandiloquent assumptions, they would find that the responsibility of their mental training was greater, not less, than anyone else's. Like the Quakers, they fancy that they honour inspiration by supposing it to be only extraordinary and proxysmic. The true poet, like the rational Christian, believing that inspiration is continual and orderly, that it reveals harmonious laws, not merely excites sudden emotions—You understand me?"

I did, tolerably, and subsequent conversations with him fixed the thoughts sufficiently in my mind, to make me pretty sure that I am giving a faithful verbal transcript of them.

"You must study some science. Have you read any logic?"

I mentioned Watts' "Logic," and Locke "On the Use of the Understanding"—two books well known to reading artisans.

"Ah," he said, "such books are very well, but they are merely popular. 'Aristotle,' 'Ritter on Induction,' and Kant's 'Prolegomena' and 'Logic'—when you had read them some seven or eight times over, you might consider yourself as knowing some what about the matter."

"I have read a little about induction in Whately."

"Ah, very good book, but popular. Did you find that your method of thought received any benefit from it?"

"The truth is—I do not know whether I can quite express myself clearly—but logic, like mathematics, seems to tell me too little about things. It does not enlarge my knowledge of man or nature, and those are what I thirst for. And you must remember—I hope I am not wrong in saying it—that the case of a man of your class, who has the power of travelling, of reading what he will, and seeing what he will, is very different from that of an artisan, whose chances of observation are so sadly limited. You must forgive us, if we are unwilling to spend our time over books which tell us nothing about the great universe outside the shop windows."

He smiled compassionately. "Very true, my boy. There are two branches of study, then, before you, and by either of them a competent subsistence is possible, with good interest. Philology is one. But in for you could arrive at those depths in it which connect with etymology, history, and geography, you would require a lifetime of study. There remains yet another. I see you stealing glances at those natural curiosities. In the study of them, you would find, as I believe more and more daily, a mental discipline superior even to that which language or mathematics give. If I had been blest with a son—but that is neither here nor there—it was my intention to have educated him almost entirely as a naturalist. I think I should like to try the experiment on a young man like yourself."

Sandy Mackay's definition of legislation for the masses, "First experimentum in corpore vihi," rose up in my thoughts, and, half unconsciously, pressed my lips. The good old man only smiled.

"That is not my reason, Mr. Locke. I should choose, by preference, a man of your class for experiments, not because the material is coarser, or less precious in the scale of creation, but because I have a notion, for which, like many others, I have been very much laughed at, that you are less sophisticated, more simple and fresh from Nature's laboratory, than the young persons of the upper classes who begin from the nursery to be more or less trimmed up, and painted over by the artificial state of society—a very excellent spite, mind, Mr. Locke. Civilization is, next to Christianity of course, the highest blessing, but not so good a state for trying anthropological experiments on."

I assured him of my gratitude to be the subject of such an experiment, and was encouraged by his smile to tell him something about my intense love for natural objects, the mysterious pleasure which I had taken, from my boyhood, in trying to classify them, and my visits to the British Museum, for the purpose of getting at some general knowledge of the natural groups.

"Excellent," he said, "young man, the very best sign I have yet seen in you. And what have you read on these subjects?" I mentioned several books—Bingley, Bewick, "Humboldt's Travels," "The Voyage of the Beagle," various scattered articles in the Penny and Saturday Magazines, &c. &c.

"Ah!" he said, "popular—you will find, if you will allow me to give you my experience—"

I assured him that I was only too much honoured and I truly felt so. I knew myself to be in the presence of my rightful superior—my master on that very point of education which I idolised. Every sentence which he spoke gave me fresh light on some matter or other, and I felt a worship for him, totally irrespective of any vulgar and slavish respect for his rank or wealth. The

working man has no want for real reverence. Mr. Carlyle's homage a "gentleman" has not injured his influence with the people. On the contrary, it is the artisan's intense longing to find his real lords and guides which makes him despise and execrate his sham ones. Whereof let society take note.

"Then," continued he, "your plan is to take up some one section of the subject and thoroughly exhaust that. Universal laws manifest themselves only by particular instances. They say, man is the microcosm, Mr. Locke, but the man of science finds every worm and beetle a microcosm in its way. It exemplifies, directly or indirectly, every physical law in the universe, though it may not be two lines long. It is not only a part, but a mirror, of the great whole. It has a definite relation to the whole world, and the whole world has a relation to it. Really, by the bye, I cannot give you a better instance of what I mean, than in my little diary on the Goryon Trifurcifer, a small reptile which I found, some years ago, inhabiting the mud of the salt lakes of Balkhan, which fills up a long-desired link between the Chelonians and the Porosini branchiata Batrachians, and, as I think, though Professor Brown differs from me, connects both with the Ichthyosaurs (Cetacea).—Professor Brown is an exceedingly talented man, but a little too cautious in accepting anyone's theories but his own. There it is," he said, as he drew out of a drawer a little pamphlet of some thirty pages—"an old man's railing. I consider that book the outcome of thirteen years' labour."

"It must be very deep," I replied, "to have been worth such long continued study."

"Oh! science is her own reward. There is hardly a great physical law which I have not brought to bear on the subject of that one small animal, and above all—what is in itself worth a life's labour. I have, I believe, discovered two entirely new laws of my own, though one of them, by the bye, has been broached by Professor Brown since, in his lectures. He might have mentioned my name in connection with the subject, for I certainly imputed my ideas to him, two years at least before the delivery of those lectures of his. Professor Brown is a very great man, certainly, and a very good man, but not quite so original as is generally supposed. Still, a scientific man must expect his little disappointments and injustices. If you were behind the scenes in the scientific world, I can assure you, you would find as much party spirit, and unfairness, and jealousy, and emulation there, as anywhere else. Human nature, human nature, everywhere!"

I said nothing, but thought the more, and took the book, promising to study it carefully.

"There is Cuvier's 'Animal Kingdom,' and a dictionary of scientific terms to help you; and mind, it must be got up thoroughly,

for I purpose to set you an examination or two in it, a few days hence. Then I shall find out whether you know what is worth all the information in the world."

"What is that, sir?"

"The art of getting information—*artem ascendit*, Mr. Locke, wherewith the world is badly provided just now, as it is over-stocked with the *artem legends*—the knack of running the eye over books, and fanning that it understands them, because it can talk about them. You cannot ply that trick with my Goryon Trifurcifer, I assure you, he is as dry and tough as his name. But, believe me, he is worth mastering, not because he is mine, but simply because he is tough."

I promised all diligence.

"Very good. And be sure, if you intend to be a poet for these days (and I really think you have some faculty for it), you must become a scientific man. Science has made vast strides, and introduced entirely new modes of looking at nature, and poets must live up to the age. I never read a word of Goethe's verse, but I am convinced that he must be the great poet of the day, just because he is the only one who has taken the trouble to go into the details of practical science. And, in the meantime, I will give you a lesson myself. I see you are longing to know the contents of these cabinets. You shall assist me by writing out the mummies of this lot of shells, just come from Australia, which I am now going to arrange."

I set to work at once, under his directions, and passed that morning, and the two or three following, delightfully. But I question whether the good dean would have well satisfied, had he known how all his scientific teaching confirmed my democratic opinions. The mere fact, that I could understand those things which they were set before me, as well as anyone else, was to me a simple demonstration of the equality in worth, and therefore in privilege, of all classes. It may be answered, that I had no right to argue from myself to the mob, and that other working gentlemen have no right to demand universal enfranchisement for the whole class, just because they, the exceptions, are fit for it. But surely it is hard to call such an error, if it be one, "the insolent assumption of democratic conceit," etc. etc. Does it not look more like the humility of men who are unwilling to assert for themselves peculiar excellence, peculiar privileges, who, like the apostles of old, want no glory, save that which they cannot share with the outcast and the slave? Let society, among other matters, take note of that.

CHAPTER XVI

CULTIVATED WOMEN.

I WAS thus brought in contact, for the first time in my life, with two exquisite specimens of cultivated womanhood, and they, naturally, as the reader may well suppose, almost entirely engrossed my thoughts and interest.

Lillian, for so I must call her, became daily more and more agreeable, and tried, as I fancied, to draw me out, and show me off to the best advantage, whether from the desire of pleasing herself, or pleasing me, I know not, and do not wish to know—but the consequences to my boyish vanity were such as are more easy to imagine than pleasant to describe. Miss Stanton, on the other hand, because, I thought, more and more unpleasant, not that she ever, for a moment, outstepped the bounds of the most perfect courtesy, but her manner, which was soft to no one except to Lord Langdale, was, when she spoke to me, especially dictatorial and abrupt. She seemed to make a point of carping at chance words of mine, and of setting me down suddenly, by breaking in with some severe, pithy observation, on conversations to which she had been listening unobserved. She seemed, too, to view with dislike anything like cordiality between me and Lillian—a dislike, which I was actually at moments vain enough (such a creature is man!) to attribute to jealousy!!! till I began to suspect and hate her, as a proud, haughty, and exclusive aristocrat. And my suspicions and hatred received their confirmation, when, one morning, after an evening even more charming than usual, Lillian came down, reserved, peevish, all but sulky, and showed that that bright heaven of sunny features had been in it for a cloud, and that unglory one. But I, poor fool, only pitied her, made up my mind that someone had ill-used her, and looked on her as a martyr—perhaps to that harsh cousin of hers.

That day was taken up with writing out answers to the deans' puzzling questions on his pamphlet, in which I believe, I acquitted myself tolerably, and he seemed far more satisfied with my commentary than I was with his text. He seemed to ignore utterly anything like religion, or even the very notion of God, in my claims of argument. Nature was spoken of as the willer and producer of all the marvels which he describes, and every word in the book, to my astonishment, might have been written, just as easily, by an Atheist, as by a dignitary of the Church of England.

I could not help, that evening hunting this defect, as delicately as I could, to my good host, and was somewhat surprised to find that he did not consider it a defect at all.

"I am in nowise anxious to weaken the antithesis between natural and revealed religion. Science may help the former, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the latter. She stands on her own ground, has her own laws, and is her own reward. Christianity is a matter of faith and of the teaching of the Church. It must not go out of its way for science, and science must not go out of her way for it, and where they seem to differ, it is our duty to believe that they are reconcilable by fuller knowledge, but not to clip truth in order to make it match with doctrine."

"Mr Carlyle," said Miss Stanton, in her abrupt way, "can see that the God of Nature is the God of man."

"Nobody denies that, my dear."

"Except in every word and action, else why do they not write about Nature as if it was the expression of a living, loving spirit, not merely a dead machine?"

"It may be very easy, my dear, for a Deist like Mr Carlyle to see his God in Nature, but if he would accept the truths of Christianity, he would find that there were deeper mysteries in them than trees and animals can explain."

"Pardon me, sir," I said, "but I think that a very large portion of thoughtful working men agree with you, though, in their case, that opinion has only increased their difficulties about Christianity. They complain, that they cannot identify the God of the Bible with the God of the world around them, and one of their great complaints against Christianity is, that it demands assent to mysteries which are independent of, and even contradictory to, the laws of Nature."

The old man was silent.

"Mr Carlyle is no Deist," said Miss Stanton, "and I am sure, that unless the truths of Christianity contrive soon to get themselves justified by the laws of science, the higher orders will believe in them as little as Mr Locke informs us that the working-class do."

"You prophesy confidently, my darling."

"Oh, Eleanor is in one of her prophetic moods to night," said Lillian, slyly. "She has been harping on me I know not what misery and misfortune, just because I choose to amuse myself in my own way."

And she gave another sly, pointing look at Eleanor, and then called me to look over some engravings chatting over them so charmingly!—and stealing every now and then, a pretty, sunny look at her cousin, which seemed to say, "I shall do what I like in spite of your predictions."

This confirmed my suspicions, that Eleanor had been trying to separate us, and the suspicion received a further confirmation, indirect, and perhaps very natural from the lecture which I got from my cousin after I went upstairs.

He had been flattering me very much lately

about "the impression" I was making on the family, not tormenting me by compliments on the clever way in which I "played my cards," and when I denied indignantly any such intention, putting me on the back, and laughing me down in a knowing way, as much as to say that he was not to be taken in by my professions of simplicity. He seemed to judge everyone by himself, and to have no notion of any middle characters, between the mere greenhorn and the deliberate schemer. But to night, after commencing with the usual compliments, he went on:

"Now, first let me give you one hint, and be thankful for it. Mind your game with that Eleanor—Miss Staunton. She is a regular tyrant, I happen to know, a strong-minded woman, with a vengeance. She manages everyone here, and unless you are in her good books, don't expect to keep your footing in this house, my boy. So just mind and pay her a little more attention, and Miss Lillian a little less. After all, it is worth the trouble. She is uncommonly well read, and says confounded clever things too, when she wakes up out of the sulks, and you may pick up a wrinkle or two from her, worth pocketing. You mind what she says to you. You know she is going to be married to Lord Lyndale."

I nodded assent.

"Well, then, if you want to hook him, you must secure her first."

"I want to hook no one, George, I have told you that a thousand times."

"Oh no! certainly not—ly, no means! Why should you?" said the artful dodger. And he swung, laughing, out of the room, leaving in my mind a strange suspicion, of which I was ashamed, though I could not shake it off, that he had remarked Eleanor's wish to cool my admiration for Lillian, and was willing, for some purpose of his own, to further that wish. The truth is, I had very little respect for him, or trust in him, and I was learning to look, habitually, for some selfish motive in all he said or did. Perhaps, if I had acted more boldly upon what I did see, I should not have been here now.

CHAPTER XVII

SPERMOS IN STONES

THE next afternoon was the last but one of my stay at D***. We were to dine late, after sunset, and, before dinner, we went into the cathedral. The choir had just finished practising. Certain exceedingly ill-looking men, whose faces bespoke principally sensuality and self-conceit, and whose function was that of praising God, on the sole qualification of good bass and tenor voices, were coming chattering through the choir gates and behind them, a group of

small boys were suddenly transforming themselves from angels into sinners, by tearing off their white surplices, and pinching and poking each other noisily as they passed us, with as little reverence as Voltaire himself could have desired.

I had often been in the cathedral before—indeed, we attended the service daily, and I had been appalled, rather than astonished, by what I saw and heard—the unintelligible service—the uproarous gabble of the choristers and readers—the scanty congregation—the meagre portion of the vast building which seemed to be turned to any use—but never more than that evening, did I feel the desolateness, the dolorful utility, of that vast desert nave, with its aisles and transepts—built for some purpose or other now extinct. The whole place seemed to crush and sadden me, and I could not re-echo Lillian's remark—

"How those pillars, rising storey above storey, and those lines of pointed arches, all lead the eye heavenward! It is a beautiful rhetoric, that about-pointed architecture being symbolic of 'instantaneity'."

"I ought to be very much ashamed of my stupidity," I answered, "but I cannot feel that, though I believe I ought to do so. That vast ground roof, with its enormous weight of hanging stone, seems to crush one to bat out the free sky above. Those pointed windows, too, how gloriously the western sun is streaming through them! but their rich lines only dim and deface his light. I can feel what you say, when I look at the cathedral on the outside, there, indeed, every line sweeps the eye upward—carries it from one pinnacle to another, each with less and less standing ground, till at the summit the building gradually vanishes in a point, and leaves the spirit to wing its way unsupported and alone into the ether. Perhaps," I added, half bitterly, "these cathedrals may be true symbols of the superstition which created them—on the outside, offering to enfranchise the soul and raise it up to heaven, but when the dupes had entered, giving them only a dark prison, and a crushing bondage, which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear."

"You may sneer at them, if you will, Mr. Locke," said Eleanor, in her severe, abrupt way. "The working-classes would have been badly off without them. They were, in their day, the only democratic institution in the world, and the only socialist one, too. The only chance a poor man had of rising by his worth, was by coming to the monastery. And bitterly the working-classes felt the want of them, when they fell. Your own Cobbett can tell you that."

"Ah!" said Lillian, "how different it must have been four hundred years ago!—how solemn and picturesque those old monks must have looked, gliding about the aisles! and how magnificent the choir must have been, before all the glass and carving, and

that beautiful shrine of St * * *, blazing with gold and jewels, were all plundered and defiled by those horrid Puritans!"

"Say, Reformers! squires," answered Eleanor, "for it was they who did the thing, only it was found convenient, at the Restoration, to lay on the people of the seventeenth century the iniquities which the country gentlemen committed in the sixteenth."

"Surely," I added, emboldened by her words, "if the monasteries were what their admirers say, some method of restoring the good of the old system, without its evil, ought to be found, and would be found, if it were not—" I paused, recollecting whose guest I was.

"If it were not, I suppose," said Eleanor, "for those lazy, overfed, bigoted hypocrites, the clergy. That, I presume is the description of them to which you have been most accustomed. Now, let me ask you one question. Do you mean to condemn, just now, the Church as it was, or the Church as it ought to be? Radicals have a habit of confusing those three questions, as they have of confusing other things when it suits them."

"Really," I said, "for me, blood was rising—" I do think that, with the confessed enormous wealth of the clergy, the cathedral establishments especially, they might do more for the people."

"Listen to me a little, Mr Locke. The lady now always takes a pride in speaking evil of the clergy, never seeing that if they are bad, the lady has made them so. Why, what do you impute to them? Their worldliness, their being like the world, like the lady would them—like you, in short? Improve yourselves, and by so doing, if there is this sad tendency in the clergy to imitate you, you will mend them, if you do not find that, after all, it is they who will have to mend you. 'As with the people, so with the priest,' is the existing law. When, fifty years ago, all classes were drunkards, from the aristocrat to the peasant, the clergy were drunken also, but not half as bad as the lady. Now the lady are eaten up with covetousness and ambition, and the clergy are covetous and ambitious, but not half as bad as the lady. The lady, and you working-men especially, are the slaves of frothy, insincere, official rant, as Mr Carlyle would call it, in Parliament, on the hustings, at every debating society and Chartist meeting, and therefore the clergyman's sermons are apt to be just what people like elsewhere, and what, therefore, they suppose people will like there."

"If, then," I answered, "in spite of your opinions, you confess the clergy to be so bad, why are you so angry with men of our opinions, if we do plot sometimes a little against the Church?"

"I do not think you know what my opinions are, Mr Locke. Did you not hear

me just now praising the monasteries, because they were socialist and democratic? But why is the badness of the clergy any reason for pulling down the Church? That is another of the confused rationalities into which you all allow yourselves to fall. What do you mean by crying shame on a man for being a bad clergyman, if a good clergyman is not a good thing? If the very idea of a clergyman was abominable, as your Church destroyers ought to say, you ought to praise a man for being a bad one, and not acting out this same abominable idea of priesthood. Your very outcry against the sins of the clergy shows that, even in your minds, a diminution lies somewhere that a clergyman's vocation is, in itself, a divine, a holy, a beneficent one."

"I never looked at it in that light, certainly," said I, somewhat staggered.

"Very likely not. One word more, for I may not have another opportunity of speaking to you as I would on these matters. You working-men complain of the clergy for being bigoted and obscurantist, and hating the cause of the people. Does not nine-tenths of the blame of that lie at your door? I took up, the other day, *the Standard*, one of your favourite liberty-preaching newspapers, and I saw books advertised in it, whose names no modest woman should ever behold. Doctrines and practices advocated in it, from which all the honesty, the decency, the common human feeling which is left in the English mind, ought to revolt, and does revolt. You cannot deny it. Your class has told the world that the cause of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the cause which the working masses claim as theirs, identifies itself with blasphemy and indecency, with the tyrannous persecutions of traitors, thieves, with robbery, assassination, vitriol bottles, and midnight incendiarism. And then you censure the clergy for taking you at your word! Whatsoever they do, you attack them. If they believe you, and stand up for common morality, and for the truths which they know are all important to poor as well as rich, you call them bigots and persecutors, while, if they neglect, in any way, the very Christianity for believing which you insult them, you turn round and call them hypocrites. Mark my words, Mr Locke,—till you gain the respect and confidence of the clergy, you will never rise. The day will come when you will find that the clergy are the only class who can help you. Ah, you may shake your head. I warn you of it. They were the only bulwark of the poor against the medieval tyranny of Rank; you will find them the only bulwark against the modern tyranny of Mammon."

I was on the point of entreating her to explain herself further, but at that critical moment Lillian interposed.

"Now, stay your prophetic glances into the future, boys come Lyneditch and papa!" And in a moment, Eleanor's whole manner

and countenance altered—the potent, wild, earnest, the harsh, dictatorial tone vanished, and she turned to meet her lover, with a look of tender, satisfied devotion, which transfigured her whole face. It was most strange, the power he had over her. His presence, even at a distance, seemed to fill her whole being with rich quiet life. She watched him with folded hands, like a mystic worshipper, waiting for the aditans of the spirit, and, suspicious and angry as I felt towards her, I could not help being drawn to her by this revelation of depths of strong healthy feeling, of which her usual manner gave so little sign.

This conversation thoroughly puzzled me, it showed me that there might be two sides to the question of the people's cause, as well as to that of others. It shook a little my faith in the infallibility of my own class, to hear such severe animadversions on them, from a person who professed herself as much a disciple of Carlyle as any working man, and who evidently had no lack, either of intellect to comprehend, or boldness to speak out, his doctrines, who could praise the old monasteries for being democratic and socialist, and spoke far more severely of the clergy than I could have done—because she did not deal merely in true words of abuse, but showed a real analytic insight into the causes of their shortcoming.

That same evening, the conversation happened to turn on dress, of which Miss Staunton spoke scornfully and disparagingly, as mere useless vanity and frippery—an empty substitute for real beauty of person as well as the higher beauty of mind. And I, emboldened by the courtesy with which I was always called on to take my share in everything that was said or done, ventured to object, humbly enough, to her notions.

"But is not beauty," I said, "in itself a good and blessed thing, softening, cheering, rejoicing the eyes of all who behold?" (and my eyes, as I spoke, involuntarily rested on Lillian's face—who saw it, and blushed.) "Surely nothing which helps beauty is to be despised. And, without the chains of dress, beauty, even that of expression, does not really do itself justice. How many lovely and lovable faces there are, for instance, among the working classes, which, if they had but the advantages which ladies possess, might create delight, respect, chivalrous worship, in the beholder. But are now never appreciated, because they have not the same fair means of displaying themselves which even the savage girl of the South Sea Islands possesses!"

Lillian said it was so very true—she had really never thought of it before—and, somehow, I gained courage to go on.

"Beauty, dress is a sort of sacrament, if I may use the word—a sure sign of the wearer's character; according as anyone is orderly, or modest, or tasteful, or joyous, or

brilliant"—and I glanced again at Lillian—"those excellencies, or the want of them, are sure to show themselves, in the colours they choose, and the cut of their garments. In the workroom, I and a friend of mine used often to amuse ourselves over the clothes we were making, by speculating from them on the sort of people the wearers were to be, and I fancy we were not often wrong."

My cousin looked daggers at me, and for a moment I fancied I had committed a dreadful mistake in mentioning my tailor life. So I had in his eyes, but not in those of the really well-bred persons round me.

"Oh, how very amusing it must have been!" I think I shall turn milliner, Eleanor, for the fun of divining everyone's little failings from their caps and gown!"

"Go on, Mr. Locke," said the dean, who had seemed buried in the "Transactions of the Royal Society." "The fact is novel, and I am more obliged to anyone who gives me that, than if he gave me a bank note. The money gets spent and done with; but I cannot spend the fact, it remains for life as permanent capital, returning interest and compound interest *ad infinitum*." By the bye, tell me about those same workshops. I have heard more about them than I like to believe true."

And I did tell him all about them, and spoke, my blood rising as I went on, long and earnestly, perhaps eloquently. Now and then I got abashed, and tried to stop, and then the dean informed me that I was speaking well and sensibly, while Lillian entreated me to go on. She had never conceived such things possible—it was as interesting as a novel, etc. etc., and Miss Staunton sat with compressed lips and frowning brow, apparently thinking of nothing but her book, till I felt quite angry at her apathy—for such it seemed to me to be.

CHAPTER XVIII

AND now the last day of our stay at D * * * had arrived, and I had as yet heard nothing of the prospects of my book. I thought, indeed, the company in which I had found myself had driven literary ambition, for the time being, out of my head, and bewitched me to float down the stream of daily circumstance, satisfied to snatch the enjoyment of each present moment. That morning, however, after I had fulfilled my daily task of arranging and naming objects of natural history, the dean settled himself back in his arm-chair, and bidding me sit down, evidently meditated a business conversation.

He had heard from his publisher, and read his letter to me. "The poems were on the

whole much liked. The most satisfactory method of publishing for all parties would be by procuring so many subscribers, each agreeing to take so many copies. In consultation of the dean's known literary judgment and great influence, the publisher would, as a private favour, not object to take the risk of any further expenses."

So far everything sounded charming. The method was not a very independent one, but it was the only one, and I should actually have the delight of having published a volume. But, alas! "he thought that the sale of the book might be greatly facilitated, if certain passages of a strong political tendency were omitted. He did not wish personally to object to them as statements of facts, or to the pictorial vigour with which they were expressed, but he thought that they were somewhat too strong for the present state of the public taste, and though he should be the last to allow any private considerations to influence his weak patronage of rising talent, yet, considering his present connection, he should hardly wish to take on himself the responsibility of publishing such passages, unless with great modifications."

"You see," said the good old man, "the opinion of respectable practical men, who know the world, exactly coincides with mine. I did not like to tell you that I could not help in the publication of your MSS. in their present state, but I am sure, from the modesty and gentleness which I have remarked in you, your readiness to listen to reason, and your pleasing freedom from all violence or consciousness in expressing your opinions, that you will not object to so exceedingly reasonable a request, which, after all, is only for your good. Ah 'young man,' he went on, in a more feeling tone than I had yet heard from him, "if you were once embroiled in the political world, of which you know so little, you would soon be crying like David, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest.' Do you fancy that you can alter a fallen world? What it is, it always has been, and will be to the end. Every age has its political and social noxums, my dear young man, and fancies them infallible, and the next generation arises to cure them as failures in practice, and superfluous in theory, and try some new nostrum of its own."

I sighed.

"Ah! you may sigh. But we have each of us to be disenchanted of our dream. There was a time once when I talked republicanism as loudly as any youth ever did when I had an excuse for it, too; for when I was a boy, I saw the French Revolution, and it was no wonder if young, enthusiastic brains were excited by all sorts of wild hopes—"perfectibility of the species," "rights of man," "universal liberty, equality, and brotherhood"—My dear sir, there is nothing now under the sun; all that, is stale and

trite to a septuagenarian, who has seen where it all ends. I speak to you freely, because I am deeply interested in you. I feel that this is the important question of your life, and that you have talents, the possession of which is a heavy responsibility. Eschew politics, once and for all, as I have done. I might have been, I may tell you, a bishop at this moment, if I had condescended to meddle again in those party questions of which my youthful experience sickened me. But I know that I should only weaken my own influence, as that most noble and excellent man, Dr. Arnold did, by interfering in politics. The poet, like the clergyman and the philosopher, has nothing to do with politics. Let them choose the bitter part, and it shall not be taken from them. The world may rave," he continued, waving eloquent as he approached his favourite subject—"the world may rave, but in the study there is quiet. The world may change, Mr. Locke, and will, but 'the earth abideth forever.' Solomon had seen somewhat of politics, and social improvement, and so on, and behold, then, as now, 'all was vanity and vexation of spirit.' That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? 'In thing which hath been, it is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun.' One generation passeth away, and another cometh, but the earth abideth forever.' No wonder that the wisest of men took refuge from such experience, as I have tried to do, in talking of old herbs, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that groweth on the wall."

"Ah! Mr. Locke," he went on, in a soft, melancholy, half abstracted tone—"ah! Mr. Locke, I have felt deeply, and you will feel some day, the truth of Jarno's saying in 'Wilhelm Meister,' when he was wandering alone in the Alps, with his geological hammer, 'These rocks, at least, tell me no lies, as men do.' Ay, there is no lie in Nature, no discord in the revelations of science, in the laws of the universe. Infinite, pure, unfallen, earth-supporting Titans, fresh as on the morning of creation, those great laws endure, you only true demerits, too—for nothing is too great or too small for them to take note of. No trust great, or speck of dust, but they feel it, guide it, and preserve it—Hail and snow, wind and vapour, fulfilling their Maker's word, and like him, too, hiding themselves from the wise and prudent, and revealing themselves unto babes. Yes, Mr. Locke, it is the childlike, simple, patient, reverent heart, which science at once demands and cultivates. To pre- judge or haste, to self conceit or nihilism, she proudly shuts her treasures - to open them to men of humble heart, whom this world thinks simple dreamers - let Newton, and Owens, and Faraday. Why should you

not become such a man as they? You have the talents—you have the love for Nature, you seem to have the gentle and patient spirit, which, indeed, will grow up more and more in you, if you become a real student of science. Or, if you must be a poet, why not sing of Nature, and leave those to sing political squabbles, who have no eye for the beauty of her repose? How few great poets have been politicians?

I gently suggested Milton.

"Ay," he became a great poet only when he had deserted politics, but now they had deserted him. In blindness and poverty, in the utter failure of all his national theories, he wrote the works which have made him immortal. Was Shakespeare a politician? or any one of the great poets who have arisen during the last thirty years? Have they not all seemed to consider it a sacred duty to keep themselves, as far as they could, out of party strife?"

I quoted Southey, Shelley, and Burns, as instances to the contrary, but his induction was completed already, to his own satisfaction.

"Poor dear Southey was a great versemaker, rather than a great poet; and I always consider his party prejudices and party writing narrowed and hardened a mind which ought to have been flowing forth freely and lovingly towards all forms of life. And as for Shelley and Burns, their politics dictated to them at once the worst portions of their poetry and of their practice. Shelley, what little I have read of him, only seems himself when he forgets Radicalism for Nature, and you would not set Burns's life or death, either, as a model for imitation in any class. Now, do you know, I must ask you to leave me a little. I am somewhat fatigued with this long discussion" (in which, certainly, I had borne no great share), "and I am sure, that after all I have said, you will see the propriety of acceding to the publisher's advice. Go and think over it, and let me have your answer by post to-morrow."

I did go and think over it too long for my good. If I had acted on the first impulse I should have refused, and been safe. Those passages were the very pith and marrow of the poems. They were the very words which I felt it my duty, my glory, to utter. I, who had been a working-man, who had experienced all then sorrows and temptations—I, seemed called by every circumstance of my life to preach their cause, to expose their wrongs, I, to quash my convictions, to stultify my look, for the sake of popularity, money, patronage! And yet—all that involved seeing more of Lillian. They were only too powerful inducements in themselves, alas! but I believe I could have resisted them tolerably, if they had not been backed by love. And so a struggle arose, which the rich reader may think a very fantastic one, though the poor man will

understand it, and surely pardon it also—being that he himself is Man. Would I not, just once in a way, serve God and Mammon at once?—or rather, not Mammon, but Venus—a worship which looked to me, and really was, in my case, purer than all the Modesty in Popedom. After all, the fall might not be so great as it seemed—perhaps I was not infallible on these same points (it is wonderful how humble and self-deny-ing one becomes when one is afraid of doing one's duty). Perhaps the dean might be right. He had been republican himself once, certainly. The facts, indeed, which I had stated, there could be no doubt of, but I might have viewed them through a prejudiced and angry medium—I might have been not quite logical in my deductions from them—I might, in short, between "perhapses" and "mights," I fell—a very deep, cold, damnable fall, and consented to emendulate my poems, and become a flunkey and a dastard.

I mentioned my consent that evening to the party, the dean purred content thereat. Eleanor, to my astonishment, just said, sternly and abruptly,

"Weak!" and then turned away, while Lillian began

"Oh! what a pity! And really they were some of the prettiest verses of all! But of course my father must know best, you are quite right to be guided by him, and do whatever is proper and prudent. After all, papa, I have got the naughtiest of them all, you know, safe. Eleanor set it to music, and wrote it out in her book, and I thought it so charming that I copied it."

What Lillian said about herself, I drank in as greedily as usual, what she said about Eleanor fell on a heedless ear, and vanished, not to reappear in my recollection till—But I must not anticipate.

So it was all settled pleasantly, and I sat up that evening, writing a bit of verse for Lillian, about the Old Cathedral, and "Hewen aspiring towers," and "Angles of cloistered shade," and all that sort of thing, which I did not believe, or care for, but I thought it would please her, and so it did, and I got golden smiles and compliments for my first, though not my last, immature poem. I was going fast downhill, in my hurry to rise. However, as I said, it was all pleasant enough. I was to return to town, and there await the dean's orders, and, most luckily, I had received that morning from Sandy Mackaye a characteristic letter.

"Gowk, Tolmachins, hearken! Item 1. Ye'r fou wi' the Cheean cap, aneath the shade o' shawl hats and storple-houses.

"Item 2. I, euf-Mentor that I am, wearing out a gude pair o' Scots brogues, that my sister's husband's third cousin sent me a towmond gane fra Aberdeen, running ower the town to a journals, respectable and ither, anent the sellin' o' your 'Autobio-

graphly of an Engine-Bailer in the Vauxhall road, the whilk I ha' disposit' at the last, to O'Flynn's *Weekly Watchdog*, and gin ye ha' any mair sic trash in your head, ye may gae your meal whiles out o' the same kist, unless, as I said misdonit, ye're praying already, like Eli's bauns, 'to be put into one o' the priest's offices, that ye may eat a piece o' bread.'

"Ye'll be coming the morrow? I'm lane without ye, though I look for ye surely to come ben wi' a gawd shoulder knot, and a red nose."

This letter, though it hit me hard, and made me, I confess, a little angry at the moment with my trust friend, still offered me a means of subsistence, and enabled me to decline sily the pecuniary aid which I dreaded the dean's offering me. And yet I felt disappointed and ill at ease. My conscience would not let me enjoy the success I felt I had attained. But next morning I saw Talman, and I forgot looks, people's cause, conscience, and everything.

I went home by coach—a luxury on which my cousin insisted—as he did on lending me the fare, so that in all I owed him somewhat more than eleven pounds. But I was too happy to care for a fresh debt, and home I went, considering my fortune made.

My heart fell, as I stepped into the dingy little old shop. Was it the meanness of the place, after the comfort and elegance of my late abode? Was it disappointment at not finding Mackaye at home? Or was it that black-edged letter which lay waiting for me on the table? I was afraid to open it, I knew not why. I turned it over and over several times, trying to guess whose the handwriting on the cover might be; the postmark was two days old, and at last I broke the seal.

"SIR,—This is to inform you, that your mother, Mrs. Locke, died this morning, a sensible woman, not without assurance of her election, and that her funeral is fixed for Wednesday, the 29th instant."

"The humble servant of the Lord's people,
"J. WIGGINTON."

CHAPTER XIX.

SHORT AND SAD.

I SHALL pass over the agonies of the next few days. There is self-exaltation enough and to spare in my story, without dilating on them. They are too sacred to publish, and too painful, alas! even to recall. I write my story, too, as a working-man. Of those emotions which are common to humanity, I shall say but little—except when it is necessary to prove that the working-man has feelings like the rest of his kind. But those

feelings may, in this case, be supplied by the reader's own imagination. Let him represent them to himself as bitter, as remorseful as he will, he will not equal the reality. True, she had cast me off, but had I not rejoiced in that rejection which should have been my shame? True, I had fed on the hope of some day winning reconciliation, by winning fame, but before the fame had arrived, the reconciliation had become impossible. I had shrunk from going back to her, as I ought to have done, in blind humility, and, therefore, I was not allowed to go back to her in the pride of success. Heaven knows, I had not forgotten her. Night and day I had thought of her with prayers and blessings, but I had made no mention of my own love to her—my forgiveness of her, as I dared to call it. I had projected my concert with the notion that I was a martyr in the cause of genius and enlightenment. How hollow, windy, heartless, all that looked now. There! I will say no more. Heaven preserve any who read these pages from such days and nights as I dragged on till that funeral, and for weeks after it was over, when I had sat once more in the little old chapel, with all the memories of my child hood crowding up, and tantalising me with the vision of their simple peace—never, never to return! I heard my mother's dying prayers, her doubts, her agonies, for my reprobate soul, disordered for the public good by my old enemy, Mr. Wigginton, who dragged in, among his fulsome eulogies of my mother's "signs of grace, in poems that there were 'halves span long in hell.' I saw my sister Susan, now a tall, handsome woman, but become all rigid, somn, with coarse grim lips, and that crushed, self-conscious, reserved, almost dishonest look about the eyes, common to fineries of every creed. I heard her cold farewell, as she put into my hands certain notes and dainties of my mother's, which she had bequeathed to me on her deathbed. I heard myself proclaimed inheritor of some small matters of furniture, which had belonged to her, told Susan, carelessly, to keep them for herself, and went forth, fancying that the curse of Cain was on my brow.

I took home the diary, but several days elapsed before I had courage to open it. Let the words I read there be as secret as the misery which dictated them. I had broken my mother's heart? no! I had not! The internal superstition which taught her to fancy that Heaven's love was narrower than her own—that God could hate His creature, not for its sins, but for the very nature which He had given it—that, that had killed her! And I remarked, too, with a gleam of hope, that in several places where sunshine seemed ready to break through the black cloud of fanatic gloom—where she seemed inclined not merely to melt towards me (for there was, in every page, an under-current of love, deeper than death, and stronger

than the grave), but also to dare to trust that on my behalf—behold lines carefully erased, page after page torn out, evidently long after the MSS were written. I believe, to this day, that either my poor sister or her father confessor was the perpetrator of that act. The *frans pia* is not yet extinct, and it is as inconvenient now as it was in popish times, to tell the whole truth about saints, when they dare to say or do things which will not quite fit into the formulae of their sect.

But what was to become of Susan? Though my uncle continued to her the allowance which he had made to my mother, yet I was her natural protector—and she was my only tie on earth. Was I to lose her, too? Might we not, after all, be happy together, in some little hole in Chelsea, like Elia and his Bridget? That question was solved for me. She declined my offers, saying, that she could not live with anyone whose religious opinions differed from her own, and that she had already engaged a room at the house of a Christian friend, and was shortly to be united to that dear man of God, Mr Wigginton, who was to be removed to the work of the Lord in Manchester.

I knew the scoundrel, but it would have been impossible for me to undecieve her. Perhaps he was only a scoundrel: perhaps he would not ill treat her. And yet—my own little Susan! my playfellow! my only tie on earth!—to lose her—and not only her, but her respect, her love!—And my spirit, deep enough already, sank deeper still into sadness, and I felt myself alone on earth, and clung to Mackaye as to a father—and a father indeed that old man was to me!

CHAPTER XX.

PEGASUS IN HARNESS.

BUT, in sorrow or in joy, I had to earn my bread, and so, too, had Crossthwaite, poor fellow! How he contrived to feed himself and his little Katie for the next few years, is more than I can tell, at all events, he worked hard enough. He scribbled, agitated, ran from London to Manchester, and Manchester to Bradford, spouting, lecturing—sowing the First wind, I am afraid, and little more. Whose fault was it? What could such a man do, with that fevered tongue, and heart, and brain of his, in such a station as his, such a time as this? Society had helped to make him an agitator. Society has had, more or less, to take the consequences of her own handiwork. For Crossthwaite did not speak without heartiness. He could make the voice, shrewd, satirical nature flash out into fire—not always celestial, nor always, either, infernal. So he agitated, and lived—how, I know not. That he did do so is evident from the fact that he and

Katie are at this moment playing chess in the cabin, before my eyes, and making love, all the while, as if they had not been married a week. Ah, well!

I, however, had to do more than get my bread. I had to pay off those fearful eleven pounds odd, which, now that all the excitement of my stay at D*** had been so sadly quenched, lay like lead upon my memory. My list of subscribers killed slowly, and I had no power of increasing it, by any canvassings of my own. My uncle, indeed, had promised to take two copies, and my cousin one, not wishing, of course, to be so uncomfortable as to run any risk, before they had seen whether my poems would succeed. But, with those exceptions, the dean had it all his own way, and he could not be expected to forgo his own literary labours for my sake, so, through all that glaring summer, and sad foggy autumn, and mopping winter, I had to get my bread as I best could by my pen. Mackaye grumbled at my writing so much, and so fast, and sneered about the *furor scribendi*. But it was hardly fair upon me. "My mouth craved it of me," as Solomon says. I had really no other means of livelihood. Even if I could have got employment as a tailor, in the honourable trade, I loathed the business utterly—perhaps, alas! to confess the truth, I was beginning to despise it. I could bear to think of myself as a poor genius, in connection with my now wealthy and high-bred patrons, for there was precedent for the thing. Pinnless bards and squires of low degree, low-born artists, ennobled by their pictures—there was something grand in the notion of mind triumphant over the inequalities of rank, and associating with the great and wealthy, as their spiritual equal, on the mere footing of its own innate nobility, no matter to what den it might return, to convert it into a temple of the Muses, by the glorious creations of its fancy, etc etc. But to go back daily from the drawing room and the publishers to the goose and the shop board, was too much for my weakness, even if it had been physically possible, as, thank Heaven, it was not.

So I became a hack writer, and sorrowfully, but deliberately, "put my Pegasus into heavy harness," as my betters had done before me. It was miserable work, there is no denying it—only not worse than tailoring. To try and serve God and Mammon too, to make miserable compromises daily, between the two great incompatibilities, what was time, and what would pay, to speak my mind, in fear and trembling, by hints, and halves, and quarters, to be daily hauling poor truth just up to the top of her well, and then, frightened at my own success, let her plump down again to the bottom, to sit there, trying to teach others, while my mind was in a whirl of doubt, to feed others' intellects, while my own wore bungeeing, to grind on in the Philistine's

null, or occasionally make sport for them, like some weary hearted clown grinning in a pantomime, in a "light attack," as blind as Samson, but not, alas! as strong, for indeed my Delilah of the West End had clipped my locks, and there seemed little chance of their growing again. That face and that drawing-room lifted before me from morning till eve, and enervated and distracted my already over-wearied brain.

I had no time, besides, to concentrate my thoughts sufficiently for poetry, no time to wait for inspiration. From the moment I had swallowed my breakfast, I had to sit scribbling off my thoughts anyhow in prose, and soon my own scanty stock was exhausted, and I was forced to beg, borrow, and steal notions and facts, wherever I could get them. Oh! the misery of having to read, not what I longed to know, but what I thought would pay! to skip page after page of interesting matter, just to pick out a single thought or sentence which could be stitched into my patchwork! and then the still greater misery of seeing the article which I had sent to press a tolerably healthy and lusty bantling, appear in print next week, after suffering the inquisition-tortures of the editorial censorship, all maimed, and squinting, and one-sided, with the colour rubbed off its poor cheeks, and generally a villainous lung dog look of ferocity, so different from its birth smile that I often did not know my own child again!—and then, when I dared to remonstrate, however feebly, to be told, by way of comfort, that the public taste must be consulted! It gave me a hopeful notion of the said taste, certainly, and often and often I groined in spirit over the temper of my own class, which not only submitted to, but demanded, such one-sided bigotry, patience, and ferocity, from those who set up as its guides and teachers.

Mr. O'Flynn, editor of the *Beekly Bee-whoop*, whose white slave I now found myself, was, I am afraid, a pretty faithful specimen of that class, as it existed before the bitter lesson of the 10th of April brought the Chartist working men and the Chartist press to their senses. Thereon sprang up a new race of papers, whose moral tone, whatever may be thought of their political or doctrinal opinions, was certainly not inferior to that of the *Wing* and *Tory press*. The *Commonwealth*, the *Standard of Freedom*, the *Plain Speaker*, were reprobates, if to be a Chartist is to be a reprobate! but none except the most one-sided bigots could deny them the praise of a stern morality and a lofty earnestness, a hatred of evil and a craving after good, which would often put to shame many a paper among the oracles of Belgrave and Exeter Hall. But those were the days of liberty and O'Flynn. Not that the man was an unredeemed scoundrel. He was no more profligate, either in his literary or his private morals,

than many a man who earns his hundreds, sometimes his thousands, a year, by proplisying smooth things to Minnion, crying in daily leaders, "Peace! peace!" when there is no peace, and daubing the rotten walls of careless luxury and self-anti-hed covetousness with the untempered mortar of party statistics and garbled foreign news—till "the storm shall fall, and the breaking thereof cometh suddenly in an instant." Let those of the respectable press who are without sin cast the first stone at the most respectable. Many of the latter class, who have been branded as traitors and villains, were single minded, earnest, valiant men, and, as for even O'Flynn, and those worse than him, what was really the matter with them was, that they were too honest. They spoke out too much of their whole minds. Bewildered, like I am, amid the social storm, they had determined, like him, to become "unsophisticated," "to owe the world no silk, the cat no perfume" seeing, indeed, that if they had, they could not have paid for them, so they tore off, of their own will, the peacock's feathers of gentility, the sheep's clothing of moderation, even the fig leaves of decent reticence, and became just what they really were—just what hundreds more would become, who now sit in the high places of the earth, if it paid them as well to be unrespectable as it does to be respectable, if the selfishness and covetousness, bigotry and ferocity, which are in them, and more or less in every man, had happened to enlist them against existing evils, instead of for them. O'Flynn would have been gladly as respectable as they, but, in the first place, he must have starved, and, in the second place, he must have lied, for he believed in his own Radicalism with his whole soul. There was a noble sincerity, a frantic courage in the man. He always spoke the truth when it suited him, and very often when it did not. He did see, which is more than all do, that oppression is oppression, and humbug, humbug. He had faced the gallows before now, without flinching. He had spouted rebellion in the Birmingham Belling, and elsewhere, and taken the consequences like a man, while his colleagues left them dupes to the tender mercies of broadswords and bayonets, and decamped in the disguise of sailors, old women, and dissenting preachers. He had sat three months in Lancaster Castle, the Bastille of England, one day perhaps to fall like that Parisian one, for a libel which he never wrote, because he would not betray his cowardly contributor. He had twice pleaded his own cause without help of attorney, and showed himself as practised in every law quibble and practical cheat as if he had been a regularly ordained priest of the blue-bag, and each time, when hunted at last into a corner, had turned valiantly to bay, with wild, witty Irish eloquence, "worthily," as the press say of poor misguided Mitchell,

"of a better cause." Altogether, a much-enduring Ulysses, unscrupulous, tough hided, ready to do and suffer anything fair or foul, for what he honestly believed—if a confused, virulent positiveness be worthy of the name "belief"—to be the true and righteous cause.

Those who class all mankind compendiously and comfortably under the two exhaustive species of saints and villains, may consider such a description garbled and impossible. I have seen few men, but never yet met I among those few either perfect saint or perfect villain. I draw such as I have found them inconsistent, piecemeal, better than their own actions, worse than their own opinions, and I put O Flynn among the rest. Not that there were no questionable spots in the sun of his fair fame. It was whispered that he had in all times done dirty work for Dublin Castle bureaucrats—nay, that he had even, in a very hard season, written court poetry for the *Morning Post*, but all these little peccadillos he carefully veiled in that kindly mist which hung over his youthful years. He had been a medical student, and got plucked, his fees declared, in his examination. He had set up a savings bank, which broke. He had come over from Ireland, to agitate for "repulse" and "out," and, like a wise man as he was, had never gone back again. He had set up three or four papers in his time, and entered into partnership with every leading democrat in turn, but his papers failed, and he quarrelled with his partners, being addicted to profane swearing and personalities. And now at last, after Ulysses wanderings, he had found rest in the office of the *Weekly Worker*, if rest it could be called, that perennial hurricane of plotting, ruling, sneering, and dishonesty, in which he lived, never writing a line, on principle, till he had worked himself up into a passion.

I will dwell no more on so distasteful a subject. Such leaders, let us hope, belong only to the past—to the youthful self-will and licentiousness of democracy; and as for reviling O'Flynn, or any other of his class, no man has less right than myself. I fear, to cast stones at such as they. I felt as low as almost any, beneath the besetting sins of my class, and shall I take merit to myself, because God has shown me, a little earlier perhaps than to them, somewhat more of the true duties and destinies of The Many? Oh, that they could see the depths of my affection to them! Oh, that they could see the shame and self-abasement with which, in rebuking their sins, I confess my own! If they are apt to be flippant and bitter, so was I. If they list to destroy, without knowing what to build up instead, so did I. If they make an almighty idol of that Electoral Reform, which ought to be, and can be, only a preliminary means, and expect final deliverance from "their twenty thousandth part of a taler in the national pulaver," so

did I. Unhealthy and noisome as was the literary atmosphere in which I now found myself, it was one to my taste. The very contrast between the peaceful, intellectual luxury which I had just witnessed, and the misery of my class and myself, quickened my delight in it. In littleness, in sheer envy, I threw my whole soul into it, and spoke evil, and rejoiced in evil. It was so easy to find fault! It pampered my own self-conceit, my own discontent, while it saved me the trouble of inventing remedies. Yes, it was indeed easy to find fault. "The world was all before me, where to choose." In such a disorganised, anomalous, grumbling, party-embittered element as this English society, and its twin propensities and luxury, I had but to look straight before me to see my prey.

And thus I became daily more and more cynical, fierce, reckless. My mouth was filled with cursing and too often justly. And all the while, like tens of thousands of my class, I had no man to touch me. Sheep scattered on the hills, we were, that had no shepherd. What wonder if our bones lay bleaching among rocks and figurines, and wolves devour the heritage of God?

MacKay had nothing positive, after all, to advise or propound. His wisdom was one of apophthegms and maxims, utterly impractical, too often merely negative, as was his creed, which, though he refused to be classed with any set, was really a somewhat undeveloped Unitarianism—or rather Islamism. He could say, with the old Muslim, "God is great who hath resisted his will." And he believed what he said, and lived moral and pure, reverent and self-denying, by that belief, as the best Muslim did. But that was not enough.

"Not enough? Merely negative?"

No—that was positive enough, and mighty, but I repeat it, it was not enough. He felt it so himself, for he grew daily more and more cynical, more and more hopeless about the prospects of his class and of all humanity. Why not? Poor suffering wretches! what is it to them to know that "God is great" unless you can prove to them that God is also merciful? Did He indeed care for men at all? was what I longed to know, was all this misery and misrule around us His will—His stern and necessary law—His lazy connivance? And were we to free ourselves from it by any frantic means that came to hand? or had He ever interfered Himself? Was there a chance, a hope, of His interfering now, in our own time, to take the matter into His own hand, and come out of His place to judge the earth in righteousness? That was what we wanted to know, and poor MacKay could give no comfort there. "God was great—the wicked would be turned into hell." Ay—the few wiful,

triumphed wicked; but the millions of suffering, starving wicked, the victims of society and circumstance—what hope for them? "God was great." And for the clergy, our professed and salaried teachers, all I can say is—and there are tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of workmen who can re-echo my words—with the exception of the dean and my cousin, and one who shall be mentioned hereafter, a clergyman never spoke to me in my life.

Why should he? Was I not a Chartist and an Infidel? The truth is, the clergy are afraid of us. To read the *Dispatch* is to be excommunicated. Young men's classes? None to them, however few they are—however, hampered by the restrictions of religious bigotry and political cowardice. But the working men, whether rightly or wrongly, do not trust them; they do not trust the clergy who set them on foot; they do not expect to be taught at their hands the things they long to know—to be taught the whole truth in them about history, politics, science, the Bible. They suspect them to be mere tubes to the whole mere substitutes for education, slowly and late adopted, in order to stop the mouths of the importunate. They may misjudge the clergy, but whose fault is it if they do? (Clergymen of England!)—look at the history of your Establishment for the last fifty years, and say, what wonder is it if the artisan mistrust you? Every spiritual reform, since the time of John Wesley, has had to establish itself in the teeth of insult, calumny, and persecution. Every celebrated reform comes not from within, but from without your body. Mr. Housman, struggling against every kind of temporising and trickery, has to do the work which bishops, by virtue of their seat in the House of Lords, might to have been doing years ago. Everywhere we see the clergy, with a few per cented exceptions (like Dr. Arnold), proclaiming themselves the advocates of Poyson, the dogged opponents of our political liberty, living either by the accursed system of pew rents, or else by one which depends on the high price of corn, chosen exclusively from the classes who crash or down, prohibiting all free discussion on religious points, commanding us to swallow down, with faith as passive and implicit as that of a Papist, the very creeds from which their own bad example, and their scandalous neglect, have, in the last three generations, deprived us—never mixing with the thoughtful working-men, except in the prison, the hospital, or in extreme old age, betraying, in every tract, in every sermon, an ignorance of the doubts, the feelings, the very language of the masses, which would be ludicrous, were it not accused before God and man. And then will you show us a few tardy improvements here and there, and ask us, indignantly, why we distrust you? Oh! gentlemen, if you cannot see for yourselves the causes of our distrust, it is

past our power to show you. We must leave it to God.

But to return to my own story. I had, as I said before, to live by my pen, and in that painful, confused, unaimed way, I contrived to scramble on the long winter through, writing regularly for the *Weekly Worker*, and sometimes getting an occasional scrap into some other cheap periodical, often on the very verge of starvation, and glad of a handful of meal from Sandy's widow's barrel. If I had had more than my share of feasting in the summer, I made the balance even, during those frosty months, by many a bitter fast.

And here let me ask you, gentle reader, who are just now considering me a gentle, virulent, and noisy, did you ever, for one day in your whole life, literally, involuntarily, and in spite of all your endeavours, longings, and hungerings, *not get enough to eat*? If you ever have, it must have taught you several things.

But all this while, it must not be supposed that I had forgotten my promise to good Farmer Porter, to look for his missing son. And, indeed, Crossthwaite and I were already engaged in a similar search for a friend of his—the young tailor, who, as I told Porter, had been lost for several months. He was the brother of Crossthwaite's wife, a passionate, kind hearted Irishman, Mike Kelly by name, reckless and scatter brained enough to get himself into every possible scrape, and weak enough of will never to get himself out of one. For these two, Crossthwaite and I had searched from one sweater's den to another, and scoured in vain. And though the present interest and exertion kept us both from brooding over our own difficulties, yet in the long run, it tended only to embitter and infuriate our minds. The frightful scenes of hopeless misery which we witnessed—the ever widening pit of pauperism and slavery, gaping for fresh victims day by day, as they dropped out of the fast lessening "honourable trade," into the ever increasing miseries of sweating, piece-work, and starvation prices, the horrible certainty that the same process which was dooming our trade, was slowly, but surely, eating up every other also; the knowledge that there was no remedy, no salvation for us in man, that political economists had declared such to be the law and constitution of society, and that our rulers had believed that message, and were determined to act upon it,—if all these things did not go far towards maddening us, we must have been made of sterner stuff than anyone who reads this book.

At last, about the middle of January, just as we had given up the search as hopeless, and poor Katie's eyes were getting red and swelled with daily weeping, a fresh spin was given to our exertions, by the sudden ap-

pearance of no less a person than the farmer himself. What ensued upon his coming, must be kept for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SKINLESS MAN.

I WAS greedily devouring Lane's "Arabian Nights," which had made their first appearance in the shop that day.

Mackaye sat in his usual place, smoking a clean pipe, and assisting his meditations by certain mysterious chironomic signs, while opposite to him was Farmer Porter—a stone or two thinner than when I had seen him last, but one stone is not much unseel out of seventeen. His forehead looked smaller, and his jaws larger than ever, and his red face was sad, and furrowed with care.

Evidently, too, he was ill at ease about other matters besides his son. He was looking out of the corners of his eyes, first at the skinless crest on the chimney-piece, then at the crucified hook hanging over his head, as if he considered them not altogether safe companions, and rather expected something "uncanny" to lay hold of him from behind—a process which involved the most horrible contortions of visage, as he carefully abstained from stirring a muscle of his neck or body, but sat bolt upright, his elbows pinned to his sides, and his knees as close together as his stomach would permit, like a huge complacent Egyptian Memnon—the most ludicrous contrast to the little old man opposite, twisted up together in his Joseph's coat, like some wizard magician in the stories which I was reading. A cautious pair of "polos" the two made, the misanthet whorl, by no means a "*punctum indifferens*," but a true connecting spiritual idea, stood on the table—in the whisky bottle.

Farmer Porter was evidently bog with some great thought, and had all a true poet's bashfulness about publishing the fruit of his creative genius. He looked round again at the skinless man, the caricatures, the books, and, as his eye wandered from pile to pile, and shelf to shelf, his face brightened, and he seemed to gain courage.

Solemnly he put his hat on his knees, and began solemnly brushing it with his cuff. Then he saw me watching him, and stopped. Then he put his pipe solemnly on the hob, and cleared his throat for action, while I buried my face in the book.

"Them's a sight o' larned books, Muster Mackaye."

"Humph!"

"Yow man, he's got a deal o' scholarship among they, noo!"

"Humph!"

"Doo-yow think, noo, yow could find of my boy out of un, by any ways o' conjuring like?"

"By whitt?"

"Conjuring—to stick a perpendicular, noo, or say the Lord's Prayer backwards?"

"Wadna ye prefer a meenacle or twa?" asked Sandy, after a long pull at the whisky tottly.

"Or a few efreets?" added I.

"Whatsoever ye like, gentlemen. You're best judges, to be sure," answered Farmer Porter, in an awed and helpless voice.

"Awed—I'm no that disinclined to be here in the occult sciences. I dinna haud thegither wi' Salvarte. There was man in them than Maga naturalis, I'm thinking. Mesmerism and magic-hunters, being and opium, wunna explain all facts, Alton, laddie. Dootless they were an unc' barbaric an' empiric method o' expressing the gran' trith o' man's mastery ower matter. But the interpretation o' the spiritual an' physical worlds is a gran' trith too, an' siblin the Deity might ha' allowed witchcraft, just to teach that to poor barbarous folk signs and wonders, laddie, to mak' them believe in somewhat mair than the hearts that perish an' so ghosts an' warlocks might be a necessary element o' the divino education in dark and canal times. But I've no read o' a case in which necromancy, nor geomancy, nor askinomaney, nor ony ither mancy, was applied to sic a purpose as this. Unc' gude they were, maybe, for the discovery o' stolen spines—but no that o' stolen tailors."

Farmer Porter had listened to this language, with mouth and ears gradually expanding between awe and the desire to comprehend, but at the last sentence his countenance fell.

"So I'm thinking, Mister Porter, that the best witch in siccan a case is aye that ye may find at the police office."

"Aye?"

"Thae detective police are gran' necromancers an' cunning in their way, an' I just took the liberty, a week ago, to ha' a crack wi' aye o' 'em. And noo, gin ye're inclined, we'll leave the whisky awhile, an' gang up to that cave o' Trophawinus, en'd by the vulgar Bow Street, an' speir for tidings o' the twa lost sheep."

So to Bow Street we went, and found our man, to whom the farmer bowed with obsequiousness most unlike his usual haughty independence. He evidently half suspected him to have dealings with the world of spirits, but whether he had such or not, they had been utterly unsuccessful, and we walked back again, with the farmer between us half-blubbering—

"I tell ye, there's nothing like gangin' to a wise nooman. Bless ye, I mnd one up to Guy Hall, when I was a barn, that twa Irish reapers coon down, and murdered her for the money—and if you lost aught she'd vend it, so sure as the church—and a mighty hand to cure burns; and they twa villains coon back, after harvest, seventy

mile to do it—and when my vather's cows was shrew-struck, she made um be draed under a humble as grewed together at the both ends, she a praying like mad all the time; and they never got nothing but fourteen shillings and a crooked sixpence, for why, the devil earned off all the rest of her money and I seen um both a hanging in chains by Wisbeach river, with my own eyes. So when the Irish reapers comes into the vein, our chaps always says, 'Yow goo to Guy Hall, there's 'Yor brithren a wastin' for yow,' and that do make um joost mad loike, it do. I tell yo there's nowt like a wise 'ooman, for vindin' out the likes o' this."

At this hopeful stage of the argument I left them to go to the Magazine office. As I passed through Covent Garden, a pretty young woman stopped me under a gas-lamp. I was pushing on, when I saw that it was Jenny Downes's Irish wife, and saw, too, that she did not recognise me. A sudden instinct made me stop and hear what she had to say.

"Shure, then, and yer a tailor, my young man?"

"Yes," I said, nettled a little that my late boathed profession still betrayed itself in my gut.

"From the country?"

I nodded, though I dare not speak a white lie to that effect. I fancied that, somehow, through her I might hear of poor Kelly and his friend Porter.

"Ye'll be wanting work, then?"

"I have no work."

"Och, then, it's I can show ye the flower o' work, I can. Bedad, there's a shop I know of where ye'll earn—bedad, if ye're the ninth part of a man, let alone a handy young fellow like the looks of you—och, ye'll earn thirty shillings the week, to the very least—thirteen beautiful lodgings,—och, then, just come and see 'em—as chaps as mother's milk! Come along, then—och, it's the beauty ye are—just the late figure for a tailor."

The fancy still possessed me, and I went with her through one dingy back street after another. She seemed to be purposely taking an indirect road, to mislead me as to my whereabouts, but after a half hour's walking, I know, as well as she, that we were in one of the most miserable slop working nests of the East End.

She stopped at a house door, and hurried me in, up to the first floor, and into a dirty, slatternly parlour, smelling infamously of gin, where the first object I beheld was Jimmy Downes, sitting before the fire, three parts drunk, with a couple of dirty, squalling children on the hearth-rug, whom he was kicking and cuffing alternately.

"Och, then, ye villain, biting the poor darlents whenever I lave ye a minute!" and pouring out a volley of Irish curses, she caught up the urchins, one under each arm,

and kissed and hugged them till they were nearly choked.

"Och, ye plague o' my life—as drunk as a baste, an' I brought home this darlint of a young gentleman to help ye in the business."

Downes got up, and steadying himself by the table, leered at me with luck-lustre eyes, and attempted a little ceremonious politeness. How this was to end I did not see; but I was determined to carry it through, on the chance of success, infinitely small as that might be.

"An' I've told him thirty shillings a week's the least he'll earn, and charges for board and lodging only seven shillings."

"Thirty!—she hes, she's always a lying, don't you mind her. Five and forty is the very lowest figure. Ask my respectable and most piouslest partner, Shmuel Solomon. Why, blow me—it's Locke!"

"Yes, it is Locke, and surely you're my old friend, Jimmy Downes?" Shake hands. What an unexpected pleasure to meet you again!"

"Very unexpected pleasure. Tip us your daddie! It-lighted—d-lighted, as I was a saying, to be of the least use to yer. Take a canker? Summat heavy, then? No? 'Tis a drap o' kindness yet, for and langsyne."

"You forget I was always a teetotaler."

"Ay," with a look of unfeigned pity. "An' you're a going to land us a haul? Oh, ah! perhaps you'd like to begin? Here's a most beautiful uniform, now, for a man in her Majesty's Guards, we don't mention names, turn't him as like. Perhaps you'd like best to work here to night, for company—'for and langsyne, my boys,' and I'll introduce yer to the gents upstairs to-morrow."

"No," I said, "I'll go up at once, if you've no objection."

"Och, then, but the sheets isn't aired—no—faux, and I'm thinking the gentleman as is a going isn't gone yet."

But I insisted on going up at once, and, grumbling, she followed me. I stopped on the landing of the second floor, and asked which way, and seeing her in no hurry to answer, opened a door, inside which I heard the hum of many voices, saying in as sprightly a tone as I could muster, that I supposed that was the workroom.

As I had expected, a fetid, choking den, with just room enough in it for the seven or eight sallow, starved beings, who, countless, shoeless, and ragged, sat stitching, each on his trundle-bed. I glanced round; the man whom I sought was not there.

My heart fell, why it had ever risen to such a pitch of hope I cannot tell, and half-cursing myself for a fool, in thus wildly thrusting my head into a squabble, I turned back and shut the door, saying,—

"A very pleasant room, ma'am, but a leetle too crowded."

Before she could answer, the opposite door

opened; and a face appeared—unwashed, unshaven, shrunken to a skeleton. I did not recognise it at first.

"Blessed Virgin! but that wasn't your voice, Locke?"

"And who are you?"

"Ten and ages! and he don't know Mike Kelly?"

My first impulse was to catch him up in my arms, and run downstairs with him. I controlled myself, however, not knowing how far he might be in his tyrant's power. But his voluble Irish heart burst out at once—

"Oh! blessed saints, take me out o' this!—take me out, for the love of Jesus!—take me out o' this hell, or I'll go mad mitnely! Och! will nobody have pity on poor souls in purgatory here in prison like neg'n slaves? We're stuv'd to the bone, we are, and kalt mitnely with cowl'd."

And as he clutched my arm, with his long, skinny, trembling fingers, I saw that his hands and feet were all chapped and bleeding. Neither shoe nor stocking did he possess, his only garments were a ragged shirt and trousers, and—and, in horrible mockery of his own misery, a grand new flowered satin vest, which to-morrow was to figure in some gorgeous shop window!

"Och! Mother of Heaven!" he went on, wildly, "when will I get out to the fresh air? For five months I haven't seen the blessed light of sun, nor spoken to the priest, nor ate a bit o' mate, burning bread and butter. Blime, it's all the blessed Sabbaths and sun'days I've been working like a heathen Jew, and never seen the inside of the chapel to comfort my sins, and me poor soul's lost mitnely—and they've pawn'd the reveler! this fifteen weeks, and not a boy of us yet set foot in the street since!"

"Vot a this row?" roared at this juncture Downes's voice from below.

"Och, thin," shrieked the woman, "here's that thief o' the warrld, Macky Kelly, slandering us afore the blessed Heaven, and he owing £2 14s 3d for his board an' lodgin'! let alone pawn-tickets, and gom' to run away, the black 'e steeled on a th' f'ar gent!" "A! the mivellin' ch'ist o' a' the 'eaves!" "Mince!" "Blime!" and a host of ejaculations, which (the English ones at least) had not the slightest reference to the matter in hand.

"I'll come to him!" said Downes, with an oath, and rushed stumbling up the stairs, while the poor wretch weakened in again, and slumped the door to. Downes battered at it, but was met with a volley of curses from the men inside, while, profliting by the Babel, I blew out the light, ran downstairs, and got safe into the street.

In two hours afterwards, Mackaye, Porter,

¹ A coat, we understand, which is kept by the coatless wretches in these wretched dungeons, to be used by each of them in turn when they want to go out—
Euton

Crossthwaite and I were at the door, accompanied by a policeman, and a search warrant. Porter had insisted on accompanying us. He had made up his mind that his son was at Downes's, and all his presentations of the smallness of his chance were fruitless. He worked himself up into a state of complete frenzy, and floundered a huge stick in a way which shocked the policeman's orderly and legal notions.

"That may do very well down in your country, sir, but you aren't a gom' to use that there weapon here, you know, not by no hact o' Parliament as I knows on!"

"Ow, it's joust a way I ha' wi' me!" And the stick was quiet for fifty yards or so, and then recommenced smashing magnificently skulls.

"You'll do somebody a mischief, sir, with that! You'd much better lend it me!"

Porter tucked it under his arm for fifty yards more, and we on, till we reached Downes's house.

The policeman knocked, and the door was opened, cautiously, by an old Jew, of a most un-"Caucasian" cast of features, however "high nosed," as Mr. Wisnitch has it.

The policeman asked to see Michael Kelly.

"Michaelsh?" I don't know such name sh—

But before the puley could go further, the farmer burst past policeman and Jew, and rushed into the passage, roaring, in a voice which made the very windows rattle.

"Billy Poolter! Billy Poolter! when be yow? when be yow?"

We all followed him upstairs, in time to see him charging valiantly, with his stick for a bayonet, the small person of a Jew boy, who stood at the head of the stairs in a scientific attitude. The young rascal planted a dozen blows in the huge carcass—he might as well have thumped the innocents in the Regent's Park, the old man ran right over him, without stopping, and dashed up the stairs, at the head of which "oh, joy!" appeared a long, shrunken, red-haired hunch, the tears on its dirty cheeks glittering in the candle glare. In no instant, father and son were in each other's arms.

"Oh, my barn! my barn! my barn! my barn!" and then the old Hercules held him off at arm's length, and looked at him with a wistful face, and hugged him again with "My barn! my barn!" He had nothing else to say. Was it not enough? And poor Kelly danced frantically around them hurrahing, his own sorrows forgotten in his friend's deliverance.

The Jew boy shook himself, turned, and darted downstairs past us, the policeman quietly put out his foot, tripped him headlong, and jumping down after him, extracted from his grasp a heavy pocket-book.

"Ah! my dear mother's dying gift! Oh dear! oh dear! give it back to a poor orphansh!"

"Didn't I see you take it out o' the old un's pocket—you young villain?" answered

the maintenance of order, as he shoved the book into his bosom, and stood with one foot on his writhing victim, a complete nineteenth century St Michael.

"Let me hold him," I said, "while you go upstairs."

"You hold a Jew boy? you hold a mad cat?" answered the policeman, contemptuously—and with justice—for at that moment Downes appeared on the first floor landing, cursing and blaspheming.

"He's my 'pintuck' he's my servant! I've got a bond, with his own hand to it, to serve me for three years. I'll have the law of you—I will!"

Then the meaning of the big stick came out. The old man leapt down the stairs, and seized Downes. "You're the tyrant as has locked my larn up here!" and a thrashing commenced, which it made my bones ache only to look at. Downes had no chance, the old man felled him on his face in a couple of blows, and taking both hands to his stick, hewed away at him as if he had been a log.

"I want to hit a's head! I want to hit a's head!"—whack, whack. "Let me be!"—whack, whack. "It does me gude, it does me gude!"—puff, puff, puff—whack. "I've been a bottling of it up for three years, come Whitsuntide!"—whack, whack, whack. While Muckye and Crossthwaite stood coolly looking on, and the wife shut herself up in the side room, and screamed murder.

The unhappy policeman stood at his wits' end, between the prisoner below, and the breach of the peace above, bellowing in vain, in the Queen's name, to us, and to the gaming takers on the landing. At last, as Downes's life seemed in danger, he wavered, the Jew boy seized the moment, jumped up, upsetting the constable, dashed like an eel between Crossthwaite and Muckye, gave me a back-handed blow in passing, which I felt for a week after, and vanished through the street door, which he locked after him.

"Very well!" said the functionary, rising solemnly, and pulling out a note book—"See under left eye, nose a little twisted to the right, bad chilblains on the hands. You'll keep till next time, young man. Now, you bit gentleman up there, have you done a qualifying of yourself for Newgate?"

The old man had run upstairs again, and was hugging his son, but when the policeman lifted Downes, he jusbled back to his victim, and begged, like a great schoolboy, for leave to "bet him joust won hit moor."

"Let me bet un! I'll pay un!—I'll pay all as my son owes un! Mercy me! whic's my pooss?" and so on raged the Babel, till we got the two poor fellows safe out of the house—we had to break open the door to do it, thanks to that map of Israel.

"For God's sake, take us too!" almost screamed five or six other voices.

"They're all in debt—every onesh, they

sha'n't go till they paysh, if there's law in England," whined the old Jew, who had reappeared.

"I'll pay for 'em—I'll pay every farden, if so be as they treated my boy well. Here, you, Mr. Jacke, there's the ten pounds as I promised you. Why, what is my pooss?"

The policeman solemnly handed it to him. He took it, turned it over, looked at the policeman half-frightened, and pointed with his fat thumb at Muckye.

"Well, he said as you was a conjurer—and since he was right."

He paid me the money. I had no mind to keep it in such company, so I got the poor fellows' pawn tickets, and Crossthwaite and I took then things out for them. When we returned, we found them in a group in the passage, holding the door open, in then fear lest we should be locked up, or entrapped in some way. Their spirits seemed utterly broken. Some three or four went off to lodge where they could, the majority went upstairs again to work. That, even that dungeon, was then only home their only hope, as it is of thousands of "fice" Englishmen at this moment.

We returned, and found the old man with his new lordly prodigal sitting on his knee, as if he had been a baby. Sandy told me afterwards, that he had scarcely kept him from crying the young man all the way home, he was convinced that the poor fellow was dying of starvation. I think really he was not far wrong. In the corner sat Kelly, crunched tog then like a chiboon, blubbering, humping, invoking the saints, cursing the swaters, and blessing the present company. We were afraid, for several days, that his wits were seriously affected.

And, in his old arm chair, pipe in mouth, sat good Sandy Muckye, wiping his eyes with the many coloured sleeve, and moralising to himself, *solito voce*.

"The auld Romans made slaves o' their debtors, sac did the Anglo-Saxons, for a' good Major Cartwright has writ to the contrary. But I didna ken the same Christian practice was part o' the British constitution. Aweel, nawel, between Riot Acts, Government by Commissioners, and other little extravagants and codicils o' Mammon's making, it's no that easy to ken, the day, what is the British constitution, and what isn't. Tak' a diappee, Billy Porter, lad!"

"Never again so long as I live. I've learnt a lesson and a half ament that, these last few months."

"Aweel, moderation's best, but abstinence better than naething. Nao man eall deprive me o' my liberty, but I'll tempt nae man to ge up his." And he actually put the whisky bottle by into the cupboard.

The old man and his son went home next day, promising me, if I would but come to see them, "twa hundred acres o' the best partridge shooting, and wild ducks as plenty

as sparrows, and to live in clover till I bust, if I liked." And so, as Bunyan has it, they went on their way, and I saw them no more.

CHAPTER XXII

AN EMERSONIAN SERMON.

CERTAINLY, if John Crossthwaite held the victim-of-circumstance doctrine in theory, he did not allow Mike Kelly to plead it in practice, as an extenuation of his misdeeds. Very different from his Owenite "it's nobody's fault" tirades in the debating society, or his admiration for the teacher of whom my readers shall have a glimpse shortly, was his lecture that evening to the poor Irishman on "It's all your own fault." Unhappy Kelly! he sat there like a beaten car, looking first at one of us, and then at the other, for mercy, and hiding none. As soon as Crossthwaite's tongue was tired, Mackaye's began, on the sins of drunkenness, lustiness, imprudence, over-trustfulness, etc. etc., and, above all, on the cardinal offence of not having signed the protest years before, and spurned the dishonourable trade, as we had done. Even his most potent excuse that "a boy must live somehow," Crossthwaite treated as contemptuously as if he had been a very Leonidas, while Mackaye chimed in with—

"An' ye a Papist! ye talk o' praying to saints an' martyrs, that died in torment because they wad na do what they should na do? What ha' ye to do wi' martyrs?—a miserable wretch that sells his soul for a mess o' pottage—four slices per diem o' thin bread and butter? Et propter vestram vendi perdere causas! Dinn't tell me o' yer hardships—ye've had your deserts—your rights were just equivalent to your might, an' so ye got them."

"Fair, then, Mither Mackaye, dailint, an' whin did I deserve to pawn me own goose an' board, an' sit looking at the spiders for the want o' them?"

"Pawn his ain geese? Pawn hissel? pawn his needle—gin it had been worth the pawning, they'd ha' ta'en it. And yet there's a command in Deuteronomy, Ye shall na tak' the millstone in pledge, for it's a man's life, nor yet keep his raiment owre night, but gie it the poor body back, that he may sleep in his ain claes, in' bless ye. Oh—but pawnbrokers dinn't care for blessings—na marketable value in them whatsoever."

"And the shopkeeper," said I, "in the 'Arabian Nights,' refuses to take the fisherman's net in pledge, because he gets his living thereby."

"Ech! but, laddie, they were poor legal Jews, under carnal ordinances, an' danna even tak' an honest five per cent interest for their money. An' the baker o' Bagdad, why, he was a benighted heathen, ye ken, an'

deceiv'd by that fause prophet, Mahomet, to his eternal damnation, or he wad never ha' gone aboot to fancy a fisherman was his bither."

"Fair, an' ain't we all brothers?" asked Kelly.

"Ay, an' no," said Sandy, with an expression which would have been a smile, but for its depth of bitter earnestness, "brethren in Christ, my laddie."

"An' ain't that all over the same?"

"Ask the preachers (in they meant brothers, they'd say brothers, be sure, but because they don't mean brothers at a', they say brethren—ye'll mind, brethren—to some antiquate, an' professional, an' perfunctory like, for fear it should be owre real, an' practical, an' startling, an' a' that, and then just hunt it down wi' a 'in Christ' but fit o' owre wide applications, and a' that. But

"For a that, an' a that,
It's comin' yet for a that,
Whin man an' man, the world awa,
Shall brothers be, for a that—"

An' na brethren only mair at a'!"

"An' didn't the bless'd Jesus die for all?"

"What? for heretics, Macky?"

"Bedad, thin, an' I forgot that intirely!"

"Of course you did! It's shure, laddie," said he, turning to me, "that that name suld be everywhere, frae the thunders o' Exeter Ha' to this poor feckless Paddy, the watchword o' exclusiveness. I'm thinking ye'll no find the workmen believe it, till somehow can lin' the plan o' making it the sign o' universal comprehension. Gin I had na seen in my youth that a brother in Christ meant less a thousandfold than a brother out o' him, I naught ha' believ'd the noo—we'll no say what I've an' owre great organ o' univ'ersalness, an' o' veneration too, I'm afraid."

"Ah," said Crossthwaite, "you should come and hear Mr. Windmish to night, about the all embracing benevolence of the Deity, and the abomination of hunting it by all those narrow creeds and dogmas."

"An' wha's Master Windmish, then?"

"Oh, he's an American, he was a Calvinist preacher originally, I believe, but, as he told us last Sunday evening, he soon cast away the worn-out vestments of an obsolete faith, which were fast becoming only crippling fetters."

"An' ran oot safflows on the public, eh? I'm afraid there's mony a man else that throws awa' the gude auld plaid o' Sects, Partisanism, an' is unco fain to cover his nakedness wi' only cast popinjays' feathers he can forgather wi'. Awel! awel!—a poor priestless age it is, the noo. We'll e'en gang hear him the night Alton, laddie; ye ha' na daikened the kirk door this mony a day—nor I neither, man by token."

It was too true. I had utterly given up the whole problem of religion as insoluble.

I believed in poetry, science, and democracy—and they were enough for me then, enough, at least, to leave a mighty hung in my heart knew not for what. And for Mackaye, though brought up, as he told me, a rigid Scotch Presbyterian, he had gradually ceased to attend the church of his fathers.

"It was no the kirk o' his fathers—the anbl God trusting knk that Clivets diagoont in by lains and yinnish. It was a' gine dead an' d'iz, a piece of Anbl Bitley hurntation an' soul sayng bodges. What did he want wi' proofs o' the being o' God, an' o' the doctine o' origin o' sin? He could see enough o' them ayont the shop door, ony tide. They made pnt Rabble Burns an' anything-an' an, wi' their blethers, an' he was nae gann the same gte."

And, besides, he absolutely refused to enter any place of worship where there were pews. "He wad na follow after a multitude to do evil, he wad na gang before his Maker wi' a lee in his right hand. Nae wonder folks were so afraid o' the names o' equality an' birthrhood, when they'd kicked them out o' the kirk a' God. Pious folks may ca' me a snuff' unbl Athert. They want gang to a humless -tigs play—an' richt they— for fear o' countenancing the sin that's done there, an' I want gang to the kirk, for fear o' countenancing the sin that's done there, be putting down my humles on that stool o' athrist, a haspit pew!"

I was therefore, altogether surprised at the promptitude with which he agreed to go and hear Crossstewart's new found prophet. His reasons for so doing may be, I think, gathered from the conversation towards the end of this chapter.

Well, we went, and I, for my part, was charmed with Mr. Windrush's eloquence. His style, which was altogether Emersonian, quite astonished me by its alternate bursts of what I considered brilliant declamation, and of forcible epigrammatic antithesis. I do not deny that I was a little startled by some of his doctrines, and suspected that he had not seen much either of St. Giles's cellar or tailor's workshops either, when he talked of sin as "only a lower form of good. Nothing," he informed me, "was produced in nature without pain and disturbance, and what we had been taught to call sin, was, in fact, nothing but the birth throes attendant on the progress of the species.—As for the devil, Novalis, indeed, had gone so far as to suspect him to be a necessary illusion. Novalis was a mystic, and tainted by the old creeds. The illusion was not necessary—it was disappearing before the fast approaching meadman light of philosophic religion. Like the myths of Christianity, it had grown up in an age of superstition, when men, blind to the wondrous order of the universe, believed that supernatural beings, like the Homeric gods, actually interfered in the affairs of mortals. Science had revealed the

inevailability of the laws of nature—was man alone to be exempt from them? No. The time would come, when it would be as obsolete an absurdity to talk of the temptation of a fiend, as it was now to talk of the weir wolf, or the angel of the thunder cloud. The metaphor might remain, doubtless, as a metaphor, in the domain of poetry, whose office was to realise, in objective symbols, the subjective ideas of the human intellect; but philosophy, and the pure sentiment of religion, which founded all things, even God Himself, in the recesses of its own enthusiastic heart, must abjure such a notion."

"What?" he asked again, "shall all nature be a harmonious whole, reflecting, in every drop of dew which gins the footstep of the morning, the minute love and wisdom of its Maker, and man alone be excluded from his part in that concordant choir? Yet such is the doctrine of the advocates of free-will, and of sin—its phantom birth. Men disobey his Maker! disarrange and break the golden wheels and springs of the minute machine! The thought were blasphemy!—impossibility! All things fulfil their destiny, and so does man, in a higher or lower sphere of being. Shall I punish the robber? Shall I curse the profligate? As soon destroy the toad, because my pitiful taste in my judge him ugly, or doom to hell, for his carnivorous appetite, the musciconge of my native lirk! Toad is not horrible to toad, or thief to thief. Philanthropists or statesmen may envision him with more general circumstances, and so enable his propensities to work more directly for the good of society, but to punish him—to punish nature for daring to be nature!—Never! I may thank the Upper Destinies that they have not made me as other men are—that they have endowed me with nobler instincts, a more delicate conformation than the thief; but I have my part to play, and he has his. Why should we wish to be other than the All-wise has made us?"

"Fine doctrine, that," grumbled Sandy. "gum ye've first made up your mind wi' the Plausica, that ye are no like other men."

"Shall I pray, then? For what? I will coax none, flatter none—not even the Supreme! I will not be absurd enough to wish to change that order, by which sin and stars, saints and sinners, alike fulfil their destinies. There is one comfort, my friends, coax and flatter as we will, he will not hear us."

"Plausant, for pur deqvils like us!" quoth Mackaye.

"What then remains? Thanks, thanks—not of words, but of actions. Worship is a life, not a ceremony. He who would honour the Supreme, let him cheerfully accumb to the destiny which the Supreme has allotted, and, like the shell or the flower—" ("Or the pickpocket," added Mackaye, almost sulkily),—"become the happy puppet

of the universe's impulse. He who would honour Christ, let him become a Christ himself. The oracle of Mopsnestia—born, alas! before his time—a prophet for whom as yet no audience stood ready in the amphitheatre of souls—"Christ!" he was wont to say, "I can become Christ myself, if I will." Become thou Christ, my brother. He is an idea—the idea of utter submission—abnegation of his own fancied will before the supreme necessities. Fulfil that idea, and thou art he. Deny thyself, and then only wilt thou be a reality, for thou hast no self. If thou hadst a self, thou wouldst but be in denying it—and wouldst Thine Being thank thee for denying what He had given thee? But thou hast none! God is circumstance, and thou His creature! Be content! Fear not, strive not, change not, repent not! Thou art nothing! Be nothing, and thou becomeest a part of all things!"

And so Mr. Windrush ended his discourse, which Crossthwaite had been all the while lazily taking down in shorthand, for the edification of the readers of a certain periodical, and also for those of this my safe.

I plead guilty to having been entirely carried away by what I heard. There was so much which was true, so much more which seemed true, so much which it would have been convenient to believe true, and all put so eloquently and originally, as I then considered, that, in short, I was in raptures, and so was poor dear Crossthwaite, and as we walked home, we chimed Mr. Windrush's promises into each of Mackaye's ears. The old man, however, paced on, silent and meditative. At last—

"A hinder sets us so in the land o' Greet Britain, an' a hinder o' so single preachers, each man a sect of his an' an' this the last fashion! Last indeed! The moon of Calvinism's far gone in the fourth quarter, when it's come to the like o' that. Truly, the soul-saving busin' is a thegither fair to a low ebb, as Master Tummit says somewhere!"

"Well, but," asked Crossthwaite, "was not that man, at least, splendid?"

"An' how much o' that gran' objectives an' subjectives did ye comprehend, then, Johnnie, my man?"

"Quite enough for me," answered John, in a somewhat rattled tone.

"An' so did I."

"But you ought to hear him often. You can't judge of his system from one sermon, in this way."

"Soonest! and what's that like?"

"Why, he has a plan for uniting all sects and parties, on the one broad fundamental ground of the unity of God as revealed by science."

"Vorra like uniting o' men by just puttin' all their claes, and telling 'em, 'There, ye're a' brothers now, on the one broad fundamental principle o' want o' brocks'!"

"Of course," went on Crossthwaite, with

out taking notice of this interruption, "he allows full liberty of conscience. All he wishes for is the emancipation of intellect. He will allow everyone, he says, to realise that idea to himself, by the representations which suit him best."

"An' so he has no objection to a wro playing at Papistry, gin a man finds it good to tinkle up his soul?"

"Ay, he did speak of that—what did he call it? Oh! 'one of the ways in which the Christian idea naturally embodied itself in imaginative minds! but the higher intellects, of course, would want fewer helps of that kind. They would see—'ay, that was it—the pure white light of truth, without requiring those coloured refracting media.'"

"That wad deprim' muckle on whether the light o' truth chose or not—I'm thinking. But, Johnnie, lal—guide us and save us!—whaur got ye a' these gran' outlandish words the night?"

"Haven't I been taking down every one of those lectures for the press?"

"The press gang to the father o't—and you too, for lending your han' in the matter—for a man accused aristocrat I never heard, sin' I first ate haggis. Oh, ye gowk—ye gowk! Dinna ye see what be the upshot o' siccan doctrine? That every pinn fellow as has no grit brains in his head will be left to his superstition, an' his ignorance, to fulfil the lusts o' his flesh, while the few that are geniuses, or fan'y themselves sae, are to ha' the monopoly o' this private still o' philosophy these carbonium, illuminati, vehmgericht, samothracian mysteries o' bottled moonshine. An' when that comes to pass, I'll just gang back to my schule and my catechism, and begin again wi' 'who was born o' the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate.' Hech! lads, there's no subjectives and objectives there, na heggadly, wnauly abstractions, but jooost a plain fact that God can't down to look for pinn bodie, instead o' leaving pinn bodie to gang looking for Him. An' here's a pretty place to be left looking for Him in between gin-shops and gutters! A pretty Gospel for the publicans an' harlots, to tell 'em that if their barns are camy enough, they may possibly some day be allowed to believe that there is one God, and not twa! And then, by way of practical application—'Hech! my dear, starving, simple brothers, ye muna be sae owre conscientious, and gang fashin' your selves aicht being brithers an' deevils, for the guid God's made ye sae, and He's verri well content to see ye sae, gin ye be content or na.'"

"Then, do you believe in the old doctrines of Christianity?" I asked.

"Dinna speen what I believe in. I canna tell ye. I've been seventy years trying to believe in God, and to meet another man that believed in Him. So I'm just like the Quaker o' the town o' Railcross, that met by himself every First-day in his ain hoose."

"Well, but," I asked again, "is not complete freedom of thought a glorious aim—to emancipate man's noblest part—the intellect—from the trammels of custom and ignorance?"

"Intellect—intellect!" rejoined he, according to his fashion, catching one up at a word, and playing on that in order to an answer, not what one said, but what one's words led to. "I'm sick o' all the talk anent intellect I hear now. An' what's the use o' intellect?" "Aristocracy o' intellect," they say. "Cause n' mistakes—intellectual ones, as wickies ones o' birth, or rank, or money." "What?" will I say a man my superior, because he's cleverer than myself? will I bow down to a bit o' brains, my mar than to a stick in a stone? Let a man prove himself better than me, my ladde—honest'er, humbler, kinder, wi' more sense o' the duty an' the weakness o' man—and that man I acknowledge—that man I know my leader, though he war as stupid as Eppe Digdash, that couldna count five on her fingers, and yet kept her drunken father by her an' hands labour, for twenty three years."

We could not agree to all this, but we made a rule of never contradicting the old sage in one of his excited moods, for fear of bringing on a week's silent fit—a state which generally ended in his sending him self into a bishous nighanholly, but I made up my mind to be henceforth a frequent auditor of Mr. Windrush's oratory.

"An' s' it devil's dead!" said Sandy, half to him self, "he sat crooning and smoking that n' fit over the fire." "Gone at last, pun fa' ow"—an' he saw little appreciated, to a' every gowk lying his arms on Nickie's back. "Pun Nickie"—verra like that much misunderstood politeecian, Mr. John Cule, as Charles Buller ca'd him in the House o' Commons—an' he to be dead it last! The world'll seem quite nice without his audacious prings on the streets. Aweel, aweel—nibins he's but slummin'."

* When April's first Spring came on squares,
And showers began to fall,
John Warkyeer got up a gale,
And sore surprised them a'

At any rate, I'd no bury him till he began to smell a wee strong, like. It's a grow-some thing is premature interment, Alton, ladde!"

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FREEDOM OF

BUT all this while, my slavery to Mr. O'Flynn's party spirit and conscience was becoming daily more and more intolerable. Explosion was inevitable, and an explosion came.

Mr. O'Flynn found out that I had been staying at Cambridge, and at a cathedral city too, and it was quite a godsend to him to find anyone who knew a word about the institutions at which he had been railing weekly for years. So nothing would serve him, but my writing a set of articles on the universities, as a prelude to one on the Cathedral Establishments. In vain I pleaded the shortness of my stay there, and the smallness of my information.

"Och, were not abuses notorious?" And couldn't I get them up out of my Radical paper, and just put in a little of my own observations, and dashin' personal cut or two, to spice the mug up, and give it an' al look? and if I did not choose to write that—why," with an enormous oath, "I should write nothing." So for I was growing weaker and weaker, and indeed my hack writing was breaking down my moral sense, as it does that of most men. I complied, and burning with vexation, feeling myself almost guilty of a breach of trust toward those from whom I had received nothing but kindness, I scribbled off my first number and sent it to the editor—to see it appear next week, three parts rewritten, and every fact of my own furnishing twisted and misapplied, till the whole thing was as vulgar and commonplace a piece of rant as ever disgraced the people's cause. And all this, in spite of a solemn promise, confirmed by a volley of oaths, that I "should say what I liked, and speak my whole mind, as one who had seen things with his own eyes had a right to do."

Enraged, I set off to the editor, and not only my pride, but what literary conscience I had left, was stirred to the bottom by seeing myself made, whether I would or not, a blackguard and a slanderer.

As it was ordained, Mr. O'Flynn was gone out for an hour or two, and unable to settle down to any work till I had fought my battle with him fairly out, I wandered onward towards the West-End, staring into print-shop windows, and meditating on many things.

As it was ordained, also, I turned up Regent Street, and into Langham Place, when, at the door of All Souls Church, behold a crowd, and a long string of carriages moving, and all the pomp and glory of a grand wedding.

I joined the crowd from mere idleness, and somehow found myself in the first rank, just as the bride was stepping out of the carriage—it was Miss Stumpton, and the old gentleman who handed her out was no other than the dean. They were, of course, far too deeply engaged to recognise insignificant little me, so that I could stare as thoroughly to my heart's content as any of the lurcher boys and nursery maids around me.

She was closely veiled—but not too closely to prevent my seeing her magnificent flaxen nostril curling with pride, resolve, and,

tender passion. Her glorious black-brown hair—the true “purple locks” which Homer so often talks of—rolled down beneath her veil in great heavy ringlets, and with her tall and rounded figure, and step as firm and queenly as if she were going to a throne, she seemed to me the very ideal of those magnificent Eastern Zuheydahs and Nominahs, whom I used to dream of after reading the ‘Arabian Nights’.

As they entered the doorway, almost touching me, she looked round, as if for someone. The dean whispered something in his gentle, stately way, and she answered by one of those looks so intense, and yet so bright, so full of multitable depths of meaning and emotion, that, in spite of all my antipathy, I felt an admiration akin to awe thrill through me, and gazed after her so intently, that Lillian—Lillian herself—was at my side, and almost passed me before I was aware of it.

Yes, there she was, the foremost among a levy of fair girls, “herself the fairest far,” all April smiles and tears, golden curls, snowy rosebuds, and hovering clouds of lace—a fairy queen, but yet—but yet—how shallow that hazel eye, how empty of meaning those delicate features, compared with the strength and intellectual richness of the face which had preceded her!

It was too true—I had never remarked it before, but now it flashed across me like lightning—and like lightning vanished; for Lillian’s eye caught mine, and there was the faintest spink of a smile of recognition, and pleasant surprise, and a nod. I blushed scarlet with delight, some servant girl or other, who stood next to me, had seen it too—quick-eyed that woman are—and was looking enviously at me. I turned, I know not why, in my delicious shame, and plunged through the crowd to hide I knew not what.

I walked on—poor fool!—in an ecstasy, the whole world was transfigured in my eyes, and virtue and wisdom beamed from every face I passed. The omnibus horses were racers, and the drivers—were they not my brothers of the people? The very policemen looked sprightly and philanthropic. I shook hands earnestly with the crossing-sweeper of the Regent Circus, gave him my last twopenny, and rushed on, like a young David, to exterminate that Philistine, O’Flynn.

Ah well! I was a great fool, as others too have been; but yet, that little chance meeting did really raise me. It made me sensible that I was made for better things than low abuse of the higher classes. It gave me courage to speak out, and act without fear of consequences, once at least in that confused facing-both-ways period of my life. O woman! woman! only true missionary of civilisation and brotherhood, and gentle, forgiving charity; it is in thy power, and perhaps in thine only, to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives! One real lady, who should dare

to stoop, what might she not do with us—with our sisters? If—

There are hundreds, answers the reader, who do stoop. Elizabeth Fry was a lady, well-born, rich, educated, and she has many scholars.

True, my dear readers, true—and may God bless her and her scholars. Do you think the working-men forget them? But look at St Giles’s, or Spitalfields, or Shadwell, and say, is not the harvest plentiful, and the labourers, alas! few? No one asserts that nothing is done, the question is, is enough done? Does the supply of mercy meet the demand of misery? Walk into the next court and see!

I found Mr. O’Flynn in his sam-tan, busy with paste and scissors, in the act of putting in a string of advertisements—indecent French novels, Athlete tracts, quick notices, and shopkeepers’ pulls, and commencing with as much dignity as I could muster.

“What on earth, do you mean, sir, by rewriting my article?”

“What?”—(in the other place)—“do you mean by giving me the trouble of rewriting it?” No head’s splitting now with sitting up, cutting out, and putting in ‘Poker o’ Moses’ but yet given it an entirely aristocratic tendency. What did ye mean? (and three or four maths rattled off) “by talking about the pious intentions of the ornamental fountains, and the democratic tendencies of monastic establishments?”

“I wrote it because I thought it.”

“Is that any reason ye should write it?” And there was another bit, too—it made my hair stand on end when I saw it, to think how near I was sent the copy to press without looking at it. I was thinking about a French Socialist, and Church Property.

“Oh! you mean, I suppose, the story of the French Socialist, who told me that Church property was just the only property in England which he would spare, because it was the only one which had definite duties attached to it, that the real devoters of the people were not the bishops, who, however rich, were, at least, bound to work in return for their riches, but the Linnells and millionaires, who refused to confess the duties of property, while they raved about its rights.”

“Balad, that’s it, and pretty doctrine, too!”

“But it’s true. It’s an entirely new, and a very striking notion, and I consider it my duty to mention it.”

“Thus! What the devil does that matter? There’s a time to speak the truth, and a time not, isn’t there?” It’ll make a grand hit, now, in a leader upon the Irish Church question, to back the priests against the landlords. But if I’d let that in as it stood, bedad, I’d have lost three parts of my subscribers the next week. Every soul of the Independents, let alone the Chartists,

would have bid me good morning. Now do, like a good boy, give us something more the right thing next time. Draw it strong. A good drunken supper-party and a police row; if ye haven't seen one, get it up out of Peter Priggin's—or Laver might do, if the other weren't convenient. That's Dublin to be sure, but one university's just like another. And give us a sedition or two, and a brace of Dons carried home drunk from Barnwell by the Proctors."

"Really I never saw anything of the kind, and as for profligacy amongst the Dons, I don't believe it exists. I'll call them idle, and bigoted, and careless of the morals of the young men, because I know that they are, but as for anything more, I believe them to be no sorer, respectable a set of Pharooses as the world ever saw."

Mr. O'Flynn was waxing warm, and the lady soon began fast to show itself.

"I don't care a curse, sir! My subscribers won't stand it, and they shan't! I am a man of business, sir, and a man of the world, sir, and, faith, that's more than you are, and I know what will sell the paper, and by J—s I'll let no upstart gadpate dictate to me!"

"Then I'll tell you what, sir," quoth I, waxing warm in my turn, "I don't know which are the greater rogues, you or your subscribers. You a patriot! You are a humbug. Look at those advertisements, and deny it if you can. Crying out for education, and helping to delug the public mind with allusions to 'Catholic,' and Eugene Sue—swearing by Jesus, and pulling Athetism and blasphemy yelling at a quack Government, quack law, quack medicine, and then dirtying your fingers with half-crowns for advertising Holloway's Ointment, and Pina's Life Pills—shaking about slavery of labour to capital, and meeting Moses & Son's doggerel—putting about searching investigations and the march of knowledge, and concealing every fact which cannot be made to pander to the passions of your dupes—extolling the freedom of the press, and showing yourself in your own obnoxious and a censor of the press. You a patriot! You the people's friend! You meddling everything in your power to blunder the people's cause in the eyes of their enemies. You are simply humbug, a hypocrite, and a scoundrel, and so I bid you good-morning."

Mr. O'Flynn had stood, during this harangue, speechless with passion, those loose lips of his breathing like a pair of earthworms. It was only when I stopped that he regained his breath, and with a volley of incoherent oaths, caught up his chair and hurled it at my head. Luckily, I had seen enough of his temper already, to keep my hand on the lock of the door for the last five minutes. I darted out of the room quicker than I ever did out of one before or since. The chair took off at on the luckless door; and as I threw a flying glance behind me, I saw one leg sticking through the middle

panel, in a way that augured ill for my skull, had it been in the way of Mr. O'Flynn's fury.

I ran home to Mickave in a state of intense self-glorification, and told him the whole story. He chuckled, he smiled, he hugged me to his bosom.

"I care me o' ye," but I kenned ye were o' the true Norse blub after a'!

'Twas an a thak,
A man oan for a thak.

Oh, but I have expected it this month or more! Oh, but I prophesied it, Johnnie!"

"Then why, in Heaven's name, did you not induce me to sack a scoundrel?"

"I sent ye to school, lad. I sent ye to school. Ye wad na be ruled by me. Ye took me for a pun-dotted auld misanthrope; na' I thought to gie ye the ment ye lasted after, na' fill ye wi' the fruit o' your own desires. And now that ye've gone down into the fire o' temptation, na' comforted by your reward stammin' ready. Specimen pain, valences!—who can dost them? I had na' miracles I might ea' them, to see how they cam' just when I was gann doff wi' despair!"

And then he told me that the editor of a popular journal, of the Howitt and Eliza Cook school, had called on me that morning, and promised me work enough, and pay enough, to meet all present difficulties.

I did indeed accept the generous commendation, if not as a reward for my act of straightforwardness, in which I saw no merit, at least, as proof that the upper powers had not altogether forgotten me. I found both the editor and his periodical, as I should have wished them, temperate and sunny, somewhat clipp-trap and sentimental, perhaps, and afraid of speaking out, as all parties are, but still willing to allow my fancy free range in light fictions, descriptions of foreign countries, scraps of showy rose-pink morality, and such like, which, though they had no more power against the raging mass of crime, misery, and discontent around, than a peacock's feather against a three-decker, still were all genial, graceful, kindly, humming, and soothed my discontented and impatient heart in the work of composition.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TOWNSMAN'S SERVON TO THE GOWNSMAN.

ONE morning in February, a few days after this explosion, I was on the point of starting to go to the doctor's house about that wretched list of subscribers, which seemed destined never to be filled up, when my cousin George burst in upon me. He was in the highest good spirits at having just taken a double

first class at Cambridge, and after my congratulations, sincere and hearty enough, were over, he offered to accompany me to that reverend gentleman's house.

He said, in an off-hand way, that he had no particular business there, but he thought it just as well to call on the dean and mention his success, so that the old fellow should not have heard it.

"For you see," he said, "I'm a sort of *profiteur*, both on my own account and on Lord Lyned's—Ellerton, he is now—you know he's just married to the dean's niece, Miss Stannton—and Ellerton's a capital fellow—promised me a living as soon as I'm in priest's orders. So my cue is now," he went on, as we walked down the Strand together, "to get ordained as fast as ever I can."

"But," I asked, "have you read much for ordination, or so much of what a clergyman's work should be?"

"Oh! as for that—you know it isn't one out of ten who's ever entered a school, or a college even, except to light his cigar, before he goes into the Church—and as for the examination, that's all humbug, any man may cram it all up in a month—and thanks to King's College, I knew all I wanted to know before I went to Cambridge. And I shall be three and twenty by Trinity Sunday, and then in I go, neck or nothing. Only the confounded line is, that this Bishop of London won't give me a title—won't let any man into his diocese, who has not been ordained two years, and so I shall be shoved down into some jolting little country curacy, without a chance of making play before the world, or getting myself known at all. Horrid line! isn't it?"

"I think," I said, "considering what London is just now, the bishop's regulation seems to be one of the best specimens of Episcopal wisdom that I've heard of for some time."

"Great bore for me, though, all this time, for I must make a move, I can tell you, if I intend to get on. A person must work like a horse nowadays to succeed at all, and Lyned's a desperately particular fellow, with all sorts of *outré* notions about people's duties and vocations and heaven knows what."

"Well," I said, "my dear cousin, and have you no high notions of a clergyman's vocation? because we—I mean the working men—have. It's just the high idea of what a clergyman should be, which makes them so furious at clergymen for being what they are."

"It's a queer way of showing them respect to the priesthood," he answered, "to do all they can to exterminate it."

"I dare say they are halloo, like other men, to confound the thing with its abuses, but if they didn't some dim notion that the thing might be in its good thing in itself, you may depend upon it they would not have

against those abuses so fiercely." (The reader may see that I had not forgotten my conversation with Miss Stannton.) "And," thought I to myself, "is it not you, and such as you, who do so incorporate the abuses into the system, that one really can not tell which is which, and longs to shove the whole thing such as rotten to the core, and make a trial of something new?"

"Well, but," I said, again returning to the charge, for the subject was altogether curious and interesting to me, "do you really believe the doctrines of the Prayer book, George?"

"Believe them?" he answered, in a tone of astonishment, "why not? I was brought up a Churchman, whatever my parents were. I was always intended for the ministry. I'll sign the Thirty-nine Articles now, against any man in the three kingdoms, and as for all the proofs out of Scripture and Church history, I've known them ever since I was sixteen—I'll get them all up again in a week as fresh as ever."

"But," I rejoined, astonished in my turn at my cousin's notion of what belief was, "have you any personal faith?" you know what I mean—I hope using cant words but inward experience of the truth of all these great ideas, which, true or false, you will have to preach and teach? Would you live by them, die for them, as a patriot would for his country, now?"

"My dear fellow, I don't know anything about all those Methodistical, mystical, Calvinistical, inward experiences, and all that. I'm a Churchman, remember, not a High Churchman, too, and the doctrine of the Church is, that children are regenerated in holy baptism, and there's not the least doubt, from the authority both of Scripture and the fathers, that that's the—"

"For heaven's sake," I said, "no polemical discussions! Whether you're right or wrong, that's not what I'm talking about. What I want to know is this: You are going to teach people about God and Jesus Christ. Do you delight in God? Do you love Jesus Christ? Never mind what I do, or think, or believe. What do you do, George?"

"Well, my dear fellow, if you take things in that way, you know, of course—" and he dropped his voice into that peculiar tone, by which all sects seem to think they show their reverence, while to me, as to most other working-men it never seemed anything but a symbol of the separation and discrepancy between their daily thoughts and their religious ones. "Of course, we don't any of us think of these things half enough, and I'm sure I wish I could be more earnest than I am, but I can only hope it will come in time. The Church holds that there's a grace given in ordination, and really—really, I do hope and wish to do my duty—indeed, one can't help doing it, one is so pushed on by the immense competition

for preferment, an idle parson hasn't a chance nowadays."

"But," I asked again, half-laughing, half-disgusted, "do you know what your duty is?"

"Bless you, my good fellow, a man can't go wrong there. Carry out the Church system, that's the thing—all laid down by rule and method. A man has but to work out that—and it's the only one for the lower classes, I'm convinced."

"Strange," I said, "that they have fought this last been so little at that opinion, that every attempt to enforce it, for the last three hundred years, has ended either in persecution or revolution."

"Ah! that was all those rascals' fault. They wouldn't give the Church a chance of showing her powers."

"What? not when she had it all her own way, during the whole eighteenth century?"

"Ah! but things are very different now. The clergy are awakened now to the real beauty of the Catholic machinery, and you have no notion how much is doing in church-building, and school, and societies of every sort and kind. It is quite incredible what is being done now for the lower orders by the Church."

"I believe," I said, "that the clergy are exceedingly improved, and I believe, too, that the men to whom they owe all their improvement, the Wesleys, and Whitfields, in short, the very men whom they drove one by one out of the Church, from persecution or disgust. And I do think it strange, that if so much is doing for the lower classes, the working men, who form the mass of the lower classes, are just those who scarcely feel the effects of it, while the churches seem to me filled with children, and rich and respectable, to the almost entire exclusion of the adult lower classes. A strange religion this!" I went on, "and to judge by its effects a very different one from that prevailed in India 1800 years ago, if we are to believe the Gospel story."

"What on earth do you mean?" Is not the Church of England the very purest form of Apostolic Christianity?"

"It may be—and so may the other sects. But, somehow, in India, it was the publicans and harlots who pressed into the kingdom of heaven; it was the common people who heard Christ gladly. Christianity, then, was a movement in the hearts of the lower order. But now, my dear fellow, you rich, who used to be told, in St. James's time, to weep and howl, have turned the tables upon us poor. It is *you* who are talking, all day long, of converting *us*. Look at my place of worship: you like, orthodox and heretical. Who fill the pews? the opulent and the reprobate? No—the Pharisees and the covetous, who used to deride Christ, fill His churches, and say still, 'This people, these masses, who know not the Gospel, are accursed.' And the universal feeling, as far

as I can judge, seems to be, not 'how hardly shall they who have,' but *how* hardly shall they who have *not*, 'riches, enter into the kingdom of heaven!'"

"Upon my word," said he, laughing, "I did not give you credit for so much eloquence. You seem to have studied the Bible to some purpose, too. I didn't think that so much Radicalism could be squeezed out of a few texts of Scripture. It's quite a new light to me. I'll just mark that card, and play it when I get a convenient opportunity. It may be a winning one in these democratic times."

And he did play it, as I heard hereafter, but at present he seemed to think, that the less that was said further on clerical subjects the better, and commenced quizzing the people whom we passed, humorously and justly enough, while I walked on in silence, and thought of Mr. Byc Ends, in the "Philgrim's Progress." And yet I believe the man was really in earnest. He was really desirous to do what was right, as far as he knew it, and all the more desirous, because he saw, in the present state of society, what was right would pry him. God shall judge him, not I. Who can unravel the confusion of selfishness and devotion that exists even in his own heart, much less in that of another?

The dean was not at home that day, having left town on business. George nodded familiarly to the footman who opened the door.

"You'll mind and send me word the moment your master comes home—mind, now."

The fellow promised obedience, and we walked away.

"You seem to be very intimate here," said I, "with all parties."

"Oh! footmen are useful animals—a half-sovereign now and then is not altogether thrown away upon them. But as for the higher powers, it is very easy to make oneself at home in the dean's study, but not so much so to get a footing in the drawing-room above. I suspect he keeps a precious sharp eye upon the fair Miss Talham."

"But," I asked, as a jealous pang shot through my heart, "how did you contrive to get this same footing at all? When I met you at Cambridge, you seemed already well acquainted with the people."

"How does a hound get a footing on a cold scent? By working and resting about and about, and drawing on it inch by inch, as I draw on them for you, my boy, and cold enough the scent was. You recollect that day at the Dulwich Gallery? I tried to see the arms on the carriage, but there were none, so that cock wouldn't fight."

"The arms—I should never have thought of such a plan."

"Don't say you wouldn't. Then I looked back to the doorkeeper, while you were st-

Sebastianising. He didn't know their names, or didn't choose to show me their ticket, on which it ought to have been, so I went to one of the fellows whom I knew, and got him to find out. There comes out the value of money—for money makes acquaintances. Well, I found who they were—Then I saw no chance of getting at them. But for the rest of that year, at Trinity, I beat every bush in the University, to find someone who knew them, and as fortune favours the brave, at last I hit off this Lord Lynedole, and he, of course, was the ace of trumps—a fine catch in himself, and a double catch, because he was going to marry the cousin. So I made a dead set at him, and to his work I had to set him, I can tell you, for 'he was three or four years older than I, and had travelled a good deal and seen life. But every man has his weak side, and I found his was a sort of a High Church Radicalism, and that suited me well enough, for I was always a denier of a Radical myself, so I stuck to him like a leech, and stood all his temper, and his pride, and those impractical, windy visions of his, that made a common-sense fellow like me sick to listen to, but I stood it, and here I am."

"And what an catch induced you to stoop to all this 'meritless I was on the point of saying. 'Surely you are in no want of money—your father could buy you a good living to-morrow."

"And he will, but not the one I want, and he could not buy me reputation, power, rank, do you see, Alton, my genius? And what's more, he couldn't buy me a certain little fit bit, a jewel, worth a Jew's eye and a half, Alton, that I set my heart on from the first moment I set my eye on it."

My heart beat fast and hard, but he ran on—

"Do you think I'd have eaten all this dirt, if it hadn't been in my way to her? But dirt! I'd drink blood, Alton—though I don't often deal in strong words—if it lay in that road. I never set my heart on the thing yet, that I didn't get it at last by fair means or foul—and I'll get her! I don't care for her money, though that's a pretty plum—upon my life, I don't. I worship her, limbs and eyes—I worship the very ground she treads on. She's a duck and a darling," said he, smacking his lips like an ogre over his prey, "and I'll have her before I've done, so help me—"

"Whom do you mean?" I stammered out.

"Lilham 'yon blind beetle!"

I dropped his arm—"Never as I live!"

He started back, and burst into a hoarse laugh.

"Hullo ' my eye and Bot y' Muttin! You don't mean to say that I have the honour of finding a rival in my talented cousin?"

I made no answer.

"Come, come, my dear fellow, this is too ridiculous. You and I are very good friends,

and we may help each other, if we choose, like kith and kin, 'in this here wale.' So if you're fool enough to quarrel with me, I warn you I'm not fool enough to return the compliment. Only" (lowering his voice), "just hear one little thing in mind—that I am, unfortunately, of a somewhat deteriorated humour, and if folks will get in my way, why, it's not my fault if I drive over them. You understand? Well, if you intend to be sulky, I don't care. So, good-morning, till you feel yourself better."

And he turned gaily down a side street, and disappeared, looking taller, handsomer, manlier than ever.

I returned home miserable, I now saw in my cousin, not merely a rival, but a tyrant, and I began to hit him with that bitterness which fear alone can inspire. The eleven pounds still remained unpaid. Between three and four pounds was the utmost which I had been able to hold up that autumn, by dint of scolding and stinging, there was no chance of profit from my book for months to come—if indeed it ever got published, which I hardly dare believe it would, and I knew him too well to doubt that neither pity nor delicacy would restrain him from using his power over me, if I dared even to seem an obstacle in his way.

I tried to write, but could not. I found it impossible to direct my thoughts, even to sit still, a vague spectre of terror and degeneration crushed me. Day after day I sat over the fire, and jumped up and went into the shop, to handle something which I did not want, and peep listlessly into a dozen books, one after the other, and then wander back again to the bedside, to sit moaning and moping, staring at that horrible incubus of debt—a devil which my great mad strength to the strong, but only partly overcomes the weak. And I was weak, as every poet is, more or less. There was in me, as I have somewhere read that there is in all poets, that feminine vein—a receptive as well as a creative faculty—which kept up in me a continual thirst after beauty, rest, enjoyment. And here was circumstance after circumstance goading me onward, as the gully did so, to continual wandering, never ceasing exertions, every hour calling on me to do, while I was only longing to be—to sit and observe, and fancy, and build freely at my own will. And then—as if this necessity of perpetual petty exertion was not in itself sufficient torment—to have that accursed debt—that knowledge that I was in a rival's power, rising up like a black wall before me, to cripple, and render hopeless, for aught I knew, the very exertions to which it compelled me! I hated the hustle—the crowds, the ceaseless roar of the street outside madly noised me. I longed in vain for peace—for one day's freedom—to be one hour a shepherd boy, and be looking up at the blue sky, without a thought beyond the rushes I was plucking! "Oh, that I had

wings as a dove!—then would I flee away, and be at rest!"

And then more than once, or twice either, the thoughts of sinners crossed me; and I turned it over, and looked at it, and dallied with it, as a last chance in reserve. And then the thought of Lillian came, and drove away the fiend. And then the thought of my cousin came, and paralysed me again, for it told me that one hope was impossible. And then some fresh instance of misery or oppression forced itself upon me, and made me feel the awful soreness of my calling, as a champion of the poor, and the wise cowardice of deserting them for any selfish love of rat. And then I recollected how I had betrayed my suffering brothers—how for the sake of vanity and patronage, I had consented to hide the truth about their rights—their wrongs. And so on, through weary weeks of morbid melancholy—"a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

At last, Mackaye, who, as I found afterwards, had been watching all along my altered mood, contrived to worm my secret out of me. He had decided, that whole autumn, having to tell him the truth, because I knew that his first impulse would be to pay the money instantly out of his own pocket, and my pride, as well as my sense of justice, revolted at that, and scaled my lips. But now this fresh discovery—the knowledge that it was not only in my cousin's power to crush me but also his interest to do so—had utterly unmanned me, and, after a little innocent and fruitless precaution, out came the truth, with tears or better shame.

The old man passed up his lips, and, without answering me, opened his table drawer, and commenced fumbling among accounts and papers.

"No! no! no! best, noblest of friends! I will not burden you with the fruits of my own vanity and extravagance. I will at once go to gaol, sooner than take your money. If you offer it me, I will leave the house, bag and baggage, this moment." And I rose to put my threat into execution.

"I have no present or any intention," answered he, deliberately, "seeing that there's na necessity for paying debts twice ower, when ye ha' the stamp receipt for them." And he put into my hands, to my astonishment and rapture, a receipt in full for the money, signed by my cousin.

Not daring to believe my own eyes, I turned it over and over, looked at it, looked at him—there was nothing but clear, smiling assurance in his beloved old face, as he twinkled, and winked, and chuckled, and pulled off his spectacles, and wiped them, and put them on upside down, and then relieved himself by rushing at his pipe, and cramming it fiercely with tobacco till he burst the bowl.

Yes, it was no dream! the money was

paid, and I was free! The sudden relief was as intolerable as the long burden had been, and, like a prisoner suddenly loosed from off the rack, my whole spirit seemed to collapse, and I sunk with my head upon the table, too faint even for gratitude.

But who was my benefactor? Mackaye vouchsafed no answer, but that I "suld ken better than he." But when he found that I was really utterly at a loss to whom to attribute the mercy, he assured me, by way of comfort, that he was just as ignorant as myself, and at last, piecemeal, in his cautious laconic and cautious Scotch method, informed me, that some six weeks back he had received an anonymous letter, "a' the gither o' a Bazaarian cast o' phrazis," containing a bank note for twenty pounds, and setting forth the writer's suspicions that I owed my cousin money, and then desired that Mr. Mackay, "o' whose uprightness in general they were pleased to confess themselves no thit ignorant," should write to him, ascertain the sum, and pay it without my knowledge, handing over the balance, if any, to me, when he thought fit—"Sae there's the remnant—unthit pounds, saxe shillings, an' pence etc., the pence being deducted for expenses o' twa letters, anent the same transaction."

"But what sort of handwriting was it?" asked I, almost disregarding the welcome coin.

"On, then—ablin's i' mine, ablin's a mind's. It was na chrogaphic o'phic himself—an he had na curiosity anent our sic passages o' aristocratic romance."

"But what was the postmark of the letter?"

"Why for suld I ha' opened? Gin the writers had been minded to be known, they'd ha' sign'd their names upon the document. An' gin they didna sae intend, wad it be courteous o' me to gang speering an' peering ower covers an' seals?"

"But where is the cover?"

"On, there," he went on, with the same provoking coolness, "white paper's o' gey use, in various operations o' the domestic economy. Sae I just tair it up—ablin's for pipe lights—I canna mind at this time."

"And why—" asked I, more vexed and disappointed than I liked to confess—"why did you not tell me before?"

"How wad I ken that you had need o' it? An' verily, I thought it no that bad a lesson for yo, to let the experiment a townsmen man on the precious balms that break the head—whereby I opine the Psalmist was minded to denote the delights o' spending borrowed siller."

There was nothing more to be extracted from him, so I was fain to set to work again (a pleasant compulsion truly) with a free heart, eight pounds in my pocket, and a brainful of conjectures. Was it the dean? Lord Lynedale? or was it—could it be—Lillian her-

self." That thought was so delicious, that I made up my mind, as I had free choice among half a dozen equally improbable fancies, to determine that the most pleasant should be the true one, and I hoarded the money, which I shrunk from spending as much as I should from selling her miniature or a lock of her beloved golden hair. They were a gift from her—a pledge—the first fruits of—I dared not confess to myself what.

Whereat the reader will smile, and say, not without reason, that I was fast fitting myself for Bellam, if indeed, I had not proved my fitness for it already, by paying the tailor's debts, instead of my own, with the ten pounds which Farmer Porter had given me. I am not sure that he would not be correct, but so I did, and so I suffered.

CHAPTER XXV

A TRUE SCOTSMAN

At last my list of subscribers was completed, and my poems actually in the press. Oh! the childish joy with which I fondled my first set of proofs! And how much finer the words looked in print than they ever did in manuscript!—One took in the idea of a whole page so charmingly at a glance, instead of having to feel one's way through line after line, and sentence after sentence—I here was only one drawback to my happiness—Mackye did not seem to sympathise with it. He had never grumbled at what I considered, and still do consider, my cardinal offence,—the omission of the strong political passages,—he seemed, on the contrary, in his inexplicable waywardness, to be rather pleased at it than otherwise. It was my publishing at all at which he growled.

"Eek," he said, "owre young to marry, is owre young to write, but it's the way o' these pair distractit times. Nae chick can find a grain o' corn, but oot he runs cawking wi' the shell on his head, to tell it to a' the warbl, as if there was never barley grown on the face o' the earth before. I wonder whether Isaiah begin to write before his beard was grown, or David either? He had mony a long year o' shepherding an' moss-trooping an' rugging an' riving i' the wilderness, ill warrant, afore he got thae gran' lyrics o' his oot o' him. Ye might tak' example too, gin ye were minded, by Moses, the man o' God, that was joust forty years at the learning o' the Egyptians, afore he tho' it gude to come forward into public life, an' then fun', to lug gran' sin-poise, I warrant, that he'd begun forty years too soon—an' then had forty years man', after that, o' marching an' law-giving, an' bearing the burdens o' the people, before he turned poet."

"Poet, na! I never saw Moses in that light before."

"Then ye'll just read the 90th Psalm—the prayer o' Moses, the man o' God—the grandest piece o' lyric, to my taste, that I ever heird o' on the face o' God's earth, na' see what a man can write that'll have the patience to wait a century or twa before he runs to the publisher's. I gie ye up fra' this moment, the letting out o' ink is like the letting out o' waters, or the catling o' opinion, or the getting up at public meetings when a man begins he canna stop. There's nae man enlaving last o' the flesh under the heaven than that same *furore scribendi*, as the Latins hae it."

But at last my poems were printed, and bound, and actually published, and I sat staring at a book of my own making, and wondering how it ever got into being! And what was more, the book "took," and sold, and was reviewed in people's journals, and in newspapers, and Mackaye himself re-acted into a grin, when his orack, the *Spectator*, the only honest paper, according to him, on the face of the earth, condescended, after asserting its imputability by two or three scorching sarcasms, to dismiss me, grimly laughing, with a paternal pat on the shoulder. Yes—I was a real live author at last, and signed myself, by special request, in the * * * * Magazine, as "the author of Songs of the Highways." At last it struck me and Mackaye too, who however he hated Huckleysdon, never overlooked an act of discomity, that it would be right for me to call upon the dean, and thank him formally for all the real kindness he had shown me. So I went to the handsome house off Harley Street, and was shown into his study, and saw my own book lying on the table, and was welcomed by the good old man, and congratulated on my success, and asked if I did not see my own wisdom in "yielding to more experienced opinions than my own, and submitting to a censorship which, however severe it might have appeared at first, was, as the event proved, benignant both in its intentions and effects?"

And then I was asked, even I, to breakfast there the next morning. And I went, and found no one there but some scientific gentlemen, to whom I was introduced as "the young man whose poems we were talking of last night." And Lilham sat at the head of the table, and poured out the coffee and tea. And between ecstasy at seeing her, and the intense relief of not finding my dreaded and now hated cousin there, I sat in a delirium of silent joy, staring glances at her beauty, and listening with all my ears to the conversation, which turned upon the now married couple.

I heard endless praises, to which I could not but assent in silence, of Lord Ellatim's perfections. His very personal appearance had been enough to captivate my fancy, and then they went on to talk of his magnificent philanthropic schemes, and his deep sense of the high duties of a landlord, and how,

finding himself, at his father's death, the possessor of two vast but neglected estates, he had sold one in order to be able to do justice to the other, instead of laying house to house, and field to field, like most of his compere, "till he stood alone in the land, and there was no place left," and how he had lowered his rents, even though it had forced him to put down the ancestral pack of hounds, and live in a corner of the old castle, and how he was draining, claying, breaking up old meadows, and building clonches, and endowing schools, and improving cottages, and how he was expelling the old ignorant bankrupt race of farmers, and advertising everywhere for men of capital, and science, and character, who would have courage to cultivate flax and silk, and try every species of experiment, and how he had one scientific farmer after another staying in his house as a friend, and how he had numbers of his books rebound in plain covers, that he might lend them to everyone on his estate who wished to read them, and how he had thrown open his picture gallery, not only to the inhabitants of the neighbouring town, but what (strange to say) seemed to strike the party as still more remarkable, to the labourers of his own village, and how he was at that moment busy transforming an old unoccupied manor house into a great associate farm, in which all the labourers were to live under one roof, with a common kitchen and dining hall, clerks, and superintendents, whom they were to choose, subject only to his approval, and all of them from the least to the greatest, leave their own interest in the farm, and be paid by percentage on the profits, and how he had one of the best political economists of the day staying with him, in order to work out fair labour shares of proportionate remuneration, applicable to such an agricultural establishment, and how, too, he was giving the spindle labour system a fair trial, by laying out small cottage farms, on rocky knolls and sides of glens, too steep to be cultivated by the plough, and was locating, on them, the most intelligent artisans whom he could draft from the manufacturing town hard by.

And at that notion, my heart grew giddy with the hope of seeing myself one day in one of those snug cottages, tilling the earth, under good sky, and perhaps—and then a whole cloud world of love, freedom, fame, snug, grateful country luxury streamed up across my brain, to end, not, like the man in the "Arabian Night," in my kicking over the tray of China, which formed the base point of my married period of hope, but in my finding the contents of my plate deposited in my lap, while I was gazing fixedly at Lillian.

I must say for myself, though, that such accidents happened seldom, whether it was bashfulness, or the tact which generally, I believe, accompanies a weak and nervous

body, and an active mind, or whether it was that I possessed enough relationship to the monkey tribe to make me a first-rate mimic. I used to get tolerably well through on these occasions, by acting on the golden rule of never doing anything which I had not seen someone else do first—a rule which never brought me into any greater scrape than swallowing something intolerably hot, sour, and nasty (which of I never discovered the name), because I had seen the dean do so a moment before.

But one thing struck me through the whole of this conversation—the way in which the new married Lady Elktion was spoken of, as aiding, encouraging, originating a helpmeet, if not an oracular guide, for her husband—in all the noble plans. She had already acquainted herself with every woman on the estate, she was the dispenser, not merely of alms, for those seemed a disagreeable necessity, from which Lord Elktion was anxious to escape as soon as possible, but of advice, comfort, and encouragement. She not only visited the sick, and taught in the schools, variations which, thank God, I have reason to believe are matters of course, not only in the families of clergymen, but those of most squires and noblemen, when they reside on their estates—but solicited, from the hints which I gathered, to be utterly devoted, body and soul, to the welfare of the dwellers on her husband's land.

"I had no notion," I dared at last to remark, humbly enough, "that Miss—Lady Elktion cared so much for the people."

"Really?" One feels inclined sometimes to wish that she cared for anything besides them," said Lillian, half to her father and half to me.

This gave a fresh shake to my estimate of that remarkable woman's character. But still, who could be prouder, more imperious, more abrupt in manner, harsh even to the very core—"I am not a person" (for I had learnt what that meant from the debating society as well as from the drawing room), and, above all, had she not tried to keep me from Lillian? But these cloudy thoughts melted rapidly away in that sunny atmosphere of success and happiness, and I went home as merry as a bird, and wrote all the morning more gracefully and sportively, as I fancied, than I had ever yet done.

But my bliss did not end here. In a week or so, behold one morning a note—written, indeed, by the dean—but directed to Lillian's own hand, inviting me to come there to tea, that I might see a few of the literary characters of the day.

I covered the envelope with kisses, and thrust it next my fluttering heart. I then proudly showed the note to Mackaye. He looked pleased, yet pensive, and then broke out with a fresh adoption of his favourite song,—

"—and sheweth hath and a that—
A man's a man for a that."

"The auld gentleman is a man and a gentleman, an' has made a vera comtious, an' wad cauderit move, gin ye ha' the senso to profit by it, an' no' turn it to yer ain destruction."

"Destruction?"

"Ay--that's the word, an' nothing less, laddie!"

And he went into the outer shop and returned with a volume of Bulwer's *'Last of the Maltraverses'*.

"Whit' are you a novel reader, Mr Mackaye?"

"How do ye ken what I may ha' thoct guid to read in my time? Ye'll be pleased the noo to sit down an' begin at that page—an' read, mark, learn, an' inwardly digest the history of Castiglione (Cesari)—an' the gude God gie ye grace to lay the same to heart."

I read that fearful story, and my heart sunk, and my eyes were full of tears, long ere I had finished it. Suddenly I looked up at Mackaye, half angry at the pointed allusion to my own case.

The old man was watching me intently, with folded hands, and a smile of solemn interest and affection worthy of Homer himself. He turned his head as I looked up, but his lips kept moving. I fancied, I know not why, that he was praying for me.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE TRIUMPHANT AUTHOR.

So to the party I went, and had the delight of seeing and hearing the men with whose names I had been long acquainted, as the leaders of scientific discovery in this wondrous age, and more than one poet, too, over whose works I had gloated, whom I had worshipped in secret. Intense was the pleasure of now realising to myself, as living men, wearing the same flesh and blood as myself, the names which had been to me mythic ideas. Lillian was there among them, more exquisite than ever, but even she at first attracted my eyes and thoughts less than did the tiny great men around her. I hung on every word they spoke, I watched every gesture, as if they must have some deep significance, the very way in which they drank their coffee was a matter of interest to me. I was almost disappointed to see them eat and chat like common men. I expected that pearls and diamonds would drop from their lips, as they did from those of the girl in the fairy tale, every time they opened their mouths, and certainly the conversation that evening was a new world to me—though I could only, of course, be a listener. Indeed, I wished to be nothing more. I felt that I was taking my place there among the holy guild of authors—that I too, however

humbly, had a thing to say, and had said it, and I was content to sit on the lowest step of the literary temple, without envy for those elder and more practised priests of wisdom, who had earned by long labours the freedom of the inner shrine. I should have been quite happy enough standing there, looking and listening—but I was at last forced to come forward. Lillian was busy chatting with grave, grey-headed men, who seemed as ready to hit, and pet, and admire the lovely little fairy, as if they had been as young and gay as herself. It was enough for me to see her appreciated and admired. I loved them for smiling on her, for handing her from her seat to the piano with reverent courtesy. Gladly would I have taken their place. I was content, however, to be only a spectator, for it was not my rank, but my youth, I was glad to fancy, which denied me that blissful honour. But as she sang, I could not help stealing up to the piano, and, feasting my greedy eyes with every motion of those delicious lips, listen and listen, entranced, and living only in that melody.

Suddenly, after singing two or three songs, she began fingering the keys, and struck into an old air, wild and plaintive, rising and falling like the swell of an Arabian harp upon a distant breeze.

"Ah! now," she said, "if I could get words for that! What an exquisite lament somebody might write to it, if they could only thoroughly take in the feeling and meaning of it!"

"Perhaps," I said, humbly, "that is the only way to write songs—to let some one get possession of one's whole soul, and gradually inspire the words for itself, as the old Hebrew prophets had music played before them, to wake up the prophetic spirit within them."

She looked up, just as if she had been unconsciously of my presence till that moment.

"Ah! Mr. Locke—well, if you understand my meaning so thoroughly, perhaps you will try and write some words for me."

"I am afraid that I do not enter sufficiently into the meaning of the air."

"Oh! then, listen while I play it over again. I am sure *you* ought to appreciate anything so sad and tender."

And she did play it, to my delight, over again, even more gracefully and carefully than before—making the articulate sounds speak a mysterious, train of thoughts and emotions. It is strange how little real intellect, in women especially, is required for an exquisite appreciation of the beauties of music—perhaps, because it appeals to the heart and not the head.

She rose and left the piano, saying, archly, "Now, don't forget your promise," and I, poor fool, my sunlight suddenly withdrawn, began torturing my brains on the instant to think of a subject.

As it happened, my attention was caught by hearing two gentlemen close to me discuss a beautiful sketch by Copley Fielding, if I recollect rightly, which hung on the wall—a wild waste of tidal sands, with here and there a line of stake-nets fluttering in the wind—a grey shroud of rain sweeping up from the westward, through which low red hills glowed dimly in the rays of the setting sun—a train of horses and cattle splashing slowly through shallow desolate pools and creeks, their wet, red, and black hides glittering in one long line of level light.

They seemed thoroughly conversant with art, and as I listened to their criticisms I learnt more in five minutes, about the characteristics of a really true and good picture, and about the perfection to which our univalued English landscape painters have attained, than I ever did from all the books and criticisms which I had read. One of them had seen the spot represented, at the mouth of the Dee, and began telling wild stories of salmon fishing, and wild fowl shooting—and then a tale of a girl, who, in bringing her father's cattle home across the sands, had been caught by a sudden flow of the tide, and found next day, a corpse, hanging among the stake-nets far below. The tragedy, the wit of the picture, the simple, dignified grandeur of the scenery, took possession of me, and I stood gazing a long time, and fancying myself pacing the sands, and wondering whether there were shells upon it—I had often longed for once only in my life to pick up shells—when Lady Ellerton, whom I had not before noticed, woke me from my reverie.

I took the liberty of asking after Lord Ellerton.

"He is not in town—he has stayed behind for one day to attend a great meeting of his tenants—you will see the account in the papers to-morrow morning—he comes to-morrow." And as she spoke, her whole face and figure seemed to glow and heave, in spite of herself, with pride and indignation.

"And now, come with me. Mr. Leake—the ambassador wishes to speak to you."

"The ambassador?" I said, startled for let us be democratic as we will, there is something in the name of great officers which awes, perhaps rightly for the moment, and it requires a strong act of self-possession to recollect that "ambassador" is a man for a' that. Besides, I knew enough of the great man in question to stand in awe of him for his own sake, having lately read a pincygne of him, which perfectly astounded me, by its description of his piety and virtue, his family affection, and patriarchal simplicity, the liberality and philanthropy of all his measures, and the enormous intellectual powers, and stores of learning, which enabled him, with the affairs of Europe on his shoulders, to write deeply and originally on the most abstruse questions of theology, history, and science.

Lady Ellerton seemed to guess my thoughts. "You need not be afraid of meeting an aristocrat, in the vulgar sense of the word. You will see one who, once perhaps as unknown as yourself, has risen by virtue and wisdom to guide the destinies of nations—and shall I tell you how? Not by fawning and yielding to the fancies of the great, not by compromising his own convictions to suit their prejudices—"

I felt the rebuke, but she went on.

"He owes his greatness to having dared, one evening, to contradict a crown prince to his face, and fairly conquer him in argument, and thereby bind the truly royal heart to him forever."

"There are few scenes of royalty to whose favour that would be a likely path."

"True, and therefore the greater honour is due to the young student who could contradict, and the prince who could be contradicted."

By this time we had arrived in the great man's presence; he was sitting with a little circle round him, in the further drawing-room, and certainly I never saw a nobler specimen of humanity. I felt myself at once before a hero—not of war and bloodshed, but of peace and civilisation—his portly and ample figure, fair hair, and delicate complexion, and, above all, the hegimant calm of his countenance, told of a character gentle and genial at peace with himself and all the world, while the exquisite proportion of his chiselled and classic features, the lofty and ample brow, and the keen, thoughtful eye, bespoke, at the first glance, refinement and wisdom—

* The reason from the temperate will—
Futurism, fore-sight, strength and skill.

I am not ashamed to say, Charist as I am, that I felt inclined to fall upon my knees, and own a master of God's own making.

He received my beautiful guide with a look of chivalrous affection, which I observed that she returned with interest, and then spoke in a voice peculiarly kind and melodious.

"So, my dear lady, this is the *protégé* of whom you have so often spoken."

So she had often spoken of me. Blind fool that I was, I only took it in as food for my own self-conceit, that my enemy (for so I actually fancied her) could not help praising me.

"I have read your little book, sir," he said, in the same soft, benignant voice, "with very great pleasure. It is another proof, if I required any, of the undiminished living and healthful thought which exists even in the less known ranks of your great nation. I shall send it to some young friends of mine in Germany, to show them that Englishmen can eloquently and speak boldly on the social evils of their country, without indulging in that fruitless and futile revolution."

ALTON LOCKE,

timid spirit, which warps so many young minds among us. You understand the German language at all?"

"I had not that honour."

"Well, you must learn it. We have much to teach you in the sphere of abstract thought, as you have much to teach us in those of the practical reason and the knowledge of mankind. I should be glad to see you some day in a German university. I am anxious to encourage a truly spiritual fraternisation between the two great branches of the Teutonic stock, by welcoming all brave young English spirits to the ancient father-land. Perhaps hereafter your kind friends here will be able to lend you to me. The means are easy, thank God! You will find in the German true brothers, in ways even more practical than sympathy and affection."

I could not but thank the great man, with many blushes, and went home that night uttering "*c'est monnaie*," as I believe the French phrase is—beside myself with gratified vanity and love, to lie sleepless under a severe fit of asthma—sent perhaps as a wholesome chastisement, to cool my excited spirits down to something like a rational pitch. As I lay in my castle building, Lillian's wild air rang still in my ears, and combined itself somehow with that picture of the Cheshire Sands, and the story of the drowned girl, till it shaped itself into a song, which, as it is yet unpublished, and as I have hitherto obtruded little or nothing of my own composition on my readers, I may be excused for inserting here

I.

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee.
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she."

II.

The creeping tide came up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see,
The blinding mist came down and hid the land
And never house came she."

III.

"Oh, is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress o' golden hair,
O' drowned mermaid's hair,
Above the net at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair,
Among the stakes on Dee."

IV.

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea.
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands o' Dee."

There—let it go!—it was meant as an offering for one whom it never reached. About mid-day I took my way toward the dean's house, to thank him for his hospitality

—and, I need not say, to present my offering in my noble shawl, and as I went I con- nected over a dozen complimentary speeches about Lord Ellerton's wisdom, liberality, eloquence—but behold! the shutters of the house were closed. What could be the matter? It was full ten minutes before the door was opened, and then, at last, an old woman, her eyes red with weeping, made her appearance. My thoughts flew instantly to Lillian—something must have befallen her. I gasped out her name first, and then, recollecting myself, asked for the dean.

"They had all left town that morning."

"Miss—Miss Winstanley—is she ill?"

"No."

"Thank God!" I breathed freely again. What matter what happened to all the world beside?

"Ay, thank God, indeed, but poor Lord Ellerton was thrown from his horse last night and brought home dead. A messenger came here by six this morning, and the lady is all gone off to * * *. Her ladyship's riding mad—and no wonder! And she burst out crying afresh and shut the door in my face."

Lord Ellerton dead! and Lillian gone too! Something whispered that I should have care to remember that day. My heart smelt within me. When should I see her again?

That day was the 1st of June, 1845. On the 10th of April, 1848, I saw Lillian Winstanley again. Dare I write my history between those two points of time? Yes, even that must be done, for the sake of the rich who read, and the poor who suffer.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PLUSH BREECHES TRAGEDY.

My triumph had received a cruel check, though, when just at its height, and none were appointed to follow. Behold! some two days after, another—all the more bitter, because my conscience whispered that it was not altogether undeserved. The people's press had been hitherto praising and putting me lovingly enough. I had been classed (and Heaven knows that the comparison was nearer to me than all the applause of the wealthy) with the Corn Law Rhymers, and the author of the "*Purgatory of Suicides*." My class had claimed my talents as their own—another "voice fresh from the heart of Nature," another "untutored songster of the wilderness," another "prophet arisen among the suffering millions,"—when, one day, behold in Mr. O'Flynn's paper a long and fierce attack on me, my poems, my early history! How he could have got at some of the facts there mentioned, how he could have dared to inform his readers that I had broken my mother's heart by my misconduct,

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I cannot conceive; unless my worthy brother-in-law, the Baptist preacher, had been kind enough to furnish him with the materials. But however that may be, he showed me no mercy. I was suddenly discovered to be a time server, a spy, a concealed aristocrat. Such paltzy talent as I had, I had prostituted for the sake of fame. I had deserted The People's Cause for filthy lucre, an allurement which Mr. O'Flynn had always treated with withering scorn *in print*. Nay more, I would write, and not only did write, in any paper, Whig, Tory, or Radical, where I could earn a shilling by an enormous gooseberry, or a scrap of private scandal. And the working-men were solemnly warned to beware of me and my writings, till the editor had further investigated certain ugly facts in my history, which he would in due time report to his patriotic and enlightened readers.

All this stung me in the most sensitive nerve of my whole heart, for I knew that I could not altogether exculpate myself, and to that miserable certainty was added the dread of some fresh exposure. Had he actually been *sharp* of the omissions in my poems?—and if he once touched on that subject, what could I answer? Oh! how bitterly now I felt the force of the critic's careless lash! The awful responsibility of those written words which we haphazard so thoughtlessly. As I recollected now, with shame and remorse, all the hasty and cruel utterance to which I, too, had given vent against those who had dared to differ from me, the harsh, one-sided judgments, the reckless imputations of motive, the bitter sneers, "rejoicing in evil rather than in the truth." How I, too, had longed to prove my victims in the wrong, and turned away not only lazily, but angrily, from many an explanatory fact! And here was my Nemesis come at last. As I had doped unto others, so it was done unto me!

It was right that it should be so. How ever malignant, mad, almost murderous, I felt at the time, I thank God for it now. It is good to be punished in kind. It is good to be made to feel what we have made others feel. It is good anything is good, however bitter, which shows us that there is such a law as retribution, that we are not the sport of blind chance or a triumphant devil, but that there is a God who judges the earth—righteous to repay every man according to his works.

But at the moment I had no such ray of comfort—and, full of rage and shame, I dashed the paper down before Mackaye. "How shall I answer him? What shall I say?"

The old man read it all through with a grim saturnine snarl.

"Hoochie, hoochie, speech is o' silver—silence is o' gold," says Thomas Carlyle, ancient this an' other matters. Whad he fished wi' sie blithers? Ye'll just abide patient, an' hand

still in the Lord, until this tyranny be ower past. Commit your cause to Him, and the an'bl Psalmist, an' he'll mak' your righteousness as clear as the light, an' you'll just dealing as the noonday."

But I must explain, I owe it as a duty to myself, I must refute these charges, I must justify myself to our friends."

"Can ye do that same, laddie?" asked he, with one of his quaint, searching looks. Somehow, I blushed, and could not altogether meet his eye, while he went on, "An' gin ye could, whaur would ye do it? I ken na periodical whaur the editor will gin ye a chur stage an' no favour to hang him ower the lugs."

"Then I will try some other paper."

"An' whint for then? They that read him wamma read the other, an' they that read the other wamma read him. He has his an' set o' dupes, like every other editor, an' ye mun let him gang his gait, an' feel his ain kye with his ain hay. He'll no' change it for your budding."

"What an abominable thing this whole business of the press is, then, if each editor is to be allowed to humbug his readers at his pleasure, without a possibility of exposing or contravening him!"

"An' ye've just spok'n the truth, laddie. There's na man mused inquisition, than this of these self-elected popes, the editors. That pun and Roman ane, ye're bringin' him forth whan ye list, had as he is. He mun hibe in coin his names ower his shop door. But these anonymous priests o' the order o' Mchusitic by the deevil's sole, without father or mother, beginning o' ye as na end o' days—without a local habitation or a name—as kittle to hand as a brick in a laith—"

"What do you mean, Mr. Mackaye?" asked I, for he was getting altogether intelligibly Scotch, as was his custom when excited.

"Oh, I forgot, ye're a pun Southern body, an' na' sensible to the grand metaphoric powers o' the true Dawie. But it's an an'ist stit a'the 'hoochie, the noo, this o' the anonymous pie, once againly devised, ye ken, by Balaam the son o' Ben, for serving Goid wi'out the deevil's humbug it out an' noo, after the way o' human institutions, translated ower to help folks to serve the deevil wi'out God's humbug it out. I'm astonished at the pun aspinning religious pieces for siccan a fa', but for the working men to be a' as bad it's gressome to behold. I'll tell ye what, my bunn, there's na salvation for the workmen, while they denie themselves this lathum, wi' a' the very uills o' their ain tyrants—wi' salvation by act o' Parliament—irresponsible rights o' property—anonymous Balaamry--fechtin that mny and furent fund, Mammon, wi' his ain weapons—and then a fleyed, because they get well beaten for their pains. I'm forfoughten this mony a year wi' watchin

the pun gowks, trying to do God's work wth the devil's tools. 'Tak' tent o' that."

And I did "tak' tent o' it." Still there would have been as little present consolation as usual in Mackaye's unwelcome truths, even if the matter had stopped there. But, alas! it did not stop there. O'Flynn seemed determined to "run minick" at me. Every week some fresh attack appeared. The very passages about the universities and Church property, which had caused our quarrel, were printed against me, with fine additions and comments, and, at last, to my horror, out came the very story which I had all along denied, about the expurgation of my poems, with the coarsest allusions to petty court influence—aristocratic kisses and the Duchess of Devonshire canvassing daymen for love, etc. etc. Now he got a clue to the scandal I cannot conceive. Mackaye and Crosthwaite, I had thought, were the only souls to whom I had ever breathed the secret, and they denied indignantly the having ever betrayed my weakness. How it came out, I say again, I cannot conceive, except because it is a great evilating law, and sure to fulfil itself, sooner or later, is we may see by the histories of every remarkable, and many in unremarkable, man—"There is nothing secret, but it shall be made manifest, and whatsoever ye have spoken in the closet, shall be proclaimed upon the house tops."

For some time after that last exposure, I was thoroughly crestfallen—and not without reason. I had been giving a few lectures among the working men, on various literary and social subjects. I had found my audience decrease—and those who remained seemed more inclined to hiss than applaud me. In vain I lauded and quoted poetry, often more violently than my own opinions justified. My words touched no responsive chord in my hearers' hearts, they had lost faith in me.

At last, in the middle of a lecture on Shelley, I was indulging, and honestly too, in some very glowing and passionate praise of the true nobleness of a man, whom neither birth nor education could blind to the evils of society, who, for the sake of the suffering many, could trample under foot his hereditary pride, and become an outcast for *The People's Cause*.

I heard a whisper close to me, from one whose opinion I valued, and value still—a scholar and a poet, one who had tasted poverty, and slander, and a prison, for the Good Cause.

"Fine talk, but it's 'all in his day's work.' Will he dare to say that to-morrow to the ladies at the West-End?"

No—I should not. I knew it, and at that instant I felt myself a liar, and stopped short—my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I fumbled at my papers—clutched the water tumbler—tried to go on—stopped short again—caught up my hat, and rushed

from the room, amid peals of astonished laughter.

It was some months after this that, fancying the storm blown over, I summoned up courage enough to attend a political meeting of our party, but even there my Nemesis met me full face. After some sanguinary speech, I really forgot from whom, and, if I recollected, God forbid that I should tell now, I dared to controvert, mildly enough, Heaven knows, some especially frantic assertion or other. But before I could get out three sentences, O'Flynn flew at me with a coarse invective, hummed on, by the bye, by one who, calling himself a gentleman, might have been expected to know better. But, indeed, he and O'Flynn had the same object in view, which was simply to sell their paper, and as a means to that great end, to pander to the nearest passions of their readers, to bully and silence all moderate and rational objectors, and put and tar on the physical force men, till the poor fellows begin to take them at their word. Then, when it came to deeds and not to talk, and people got frightened, and the sale of the paper decreased a little, a "desecrated change" came over them—and they awake one morning meeker than lambs, "ulterior measures" had vanished back into the barbarous ages, pikes, vitriol bottles, and all, and the public were entertained with nothing but homilies on pitiless and misguidance, the "triumphs of moral justice," the "omnipotence of public opinion," and the "gentle conquests of fraternal love"—till it was safe to talk treason and slaughter again.

But just then treason happened to be it a premium. Sedition, which had been lumbering on in a confused, disconsolate underground way ever since 1812, was supported by the public to be done, and for that very reason it was safe to talk it, or, at least, back up those who chose to do so. And so I got no quarter. Though really, if the truth must be told, I had said nothing unreasonable.

Home I went disgusted, to toil on at my lack writing, only praying that I might be let alone to scribble in peace, and often thinking, sadly, how little my friends in Harley Street could guess at the painful experience, the doubts, the struggles, the latter cares, which went to the making of the poetry which they admired so much.

I was not, however, left alone to scribble in peace, either by O'Flynn or by his readers, who formed, alas! just then, only too huge a portion of the thinking nation, every day brought some fresh slight or annoyance with it, till I received one afternoon, by the Pearly Delivery Company, a large wrapped packet, containing, to my infinite disgust, an old pair of yellow plush breeches, with a recommendation to wear them, whose meaning could not be mistaken.

Furious, I thrust the unoffending garment

into the fire, and held it there with the tongs, regardless of the horrible smell which accompanied its martyrdom, till the lady lodged on the first floor rushed down to inquire whether the house was on fire.

I answered her by hurling a book at her head, and brought down a volley of abuse, under which I sat in sulky patience, till Mackayo and Crosshwaite came in, and found her railing in the doorway, and me sitting over the fire, still intent on the fizzling remains of the brimstones.

"Was this result of your invention, Mr. Crosshwaite?" asked I, in a tone of lofty indignation, holding up the last scrap of unroasted plash.

Roars of laughter from both of them made me only more frantic, and I broke out so incoherently, that it was some time before the pair could make out the cause of my fury.

"Upon my honour, Locke," quoth John, at last, holding his sides, "I never sent them, though, on the whole—you've made my stomach ache." Laughing, I can't speak. But you must expect a joke or two, after your late fashionable connections.

I stood, stiff and white with rage.

"Really, my good fellow, how can you wonder if our friends suspect you? Can you deny that you've been off and on lately between Blunderdom and 'The Cause,' like a donkey between two bottles of hay? Have you not neglected our meetings? Have you not picked all the spice out of your poems? And can you expect to eat your

I keep it too? You must be one thing or the other, and, though Sandy, here, is too kind to tell you, you

disappointed us both miserably, and that's the long and the short of it.

I had my face in my hands, and sat moodily over the fire, my conscience told me that I had nothing to answer.

What, John, how can you sit on the fiddle this night at home still, and he'll do good service. But the devil always fights hardest with them he's meant to lead. What's this about agricultural distress we had to tell me the noon?"

"There is a rising down in the country, a friend of mine writes me. The people are starving, not because food is dear, but because it's cheap, and, like sensible men, they're going to have a great meeting, to inquire the rights and wrongs of all that. Now, I want to send a deputation down to see how far they are inclined to go, and let them know we up in London are with them. And then we might get up a corresponding association, you know. It's a great opening for spreading the principles of the Charter."

"I saw misdoit, it's just read they'll be wanting, they labourers, man than liberty. Then food is then belly, I'm thinking, and a vera poor, empty dol he is the noo, sma' munt offerings, and fat o' rams he gets, to propitiate him. But ye might send down a

canny body, just to spy out the nakedness o' the land."

"I will go!" I said, starting up. "They shall see that I do care for 'The Cause.' If it's a dangerous mission, so much the better; it will prove my sincerity. Where is the place?"

"About ten miles from D * * * *"

"D * * * *!" My heart sank—if it had been any other spot in England! But it was too late to retract. Sandy saw what was the matter, and tried to turn the subject, but I was peremptory, almost rude with him. I felt I must keep up my present excitement, or lose my heart, and my caste, forever, and as the hour for the committee was at hand, I pumped up and set off thither with them, whether they would or not. I heard Sandy whisper to Crosshwaite, and turned quite fiercely on him.

"If you want to speak about me, speak out. If you fancy that I shall let my connection with that place" (I could not bring myself to name it) "stand in the way of my duty, you don't know me."

I announced my intention at the meeting. It was at first received coldly, but I spoke energetically—perhaps, I told me afterwards, a little eloquently. When I got heated, I alluded to my former stay at D * * * *, and said (while my heart sank at the bravado which I was uttering) that I should consider it a duty to retrieve my character with them, and devote myself to the cause of the oppressed, in the very locality whence I first arose in their unjust but pardonable errors. In short, generous, trusting hints as they were, and always true, I talked them round, they shook me by the hand one by one, bade me God speed, told me that I stood higher than ever in their eyes, and then set to work to vote money from their purses for my travelling expenses, which I magnanimously refused, saying that I had a pound or two left from the sale of my poems, and that I must be allowed, as an act of repentance and restitution, to devote it to 'The Cause.'

My triumph was complete. Even O Flynn, who, like all Irishmen, had plenty of loose good nature at bottom, and was as sudden and furious in his loves as in his hostilities, over the land, regardless of patriotic ties, to shake me violently by the hand, and inform me that I was 'a brot of a boy,' and that "any little disagreements between us had vanished, like a passing cloud from the sun, from our fraternity!"—when my eye was caught by a face which there was no mistaking as an enemy's.

Yes, there he sat, while mine me like a basilisk, with his dark, glittering, meagre eyes, out of a remote corner of the room—not in contempt or anger, but there was a quiet, steady, sardonic smile about his lips, which chilled me to the bone.

The meeting was sufficiently public to allow of his presence, but how had he found

out its existence? Had he come there as a spy on me? Had he been in the room when my visit to D . . . was determined on? I trembled at the thought, and I trembled, too, lest he should be daring enough—and I knew he could dare anything—to claim acquaintance with me there and then. It would have ruined my now restored reputation forever. But he sat still and steady, and I had to go through the rest of the evening's business under the miserable, cramping knowledge that every word and gesture was being noted down by my most deadly enemy, trembling whenever I was addressed, lest some chance word of acquaintance should implicate me still further—though, indeed, I was deep enough already. The meeting seemed interminable, and there I fidgeted, with my face scarlet—always seeing those basilisk eyes upon me—in fancy, for I dared not look again towards the corner where I knew they were.

At last it was over—the audience went out, and when I had courage to look round, my cousin had vanished among them. A loud was taken off my breast, and I breathed freely again—for five minutes,—for I had not made ten steps up the street, when an arm was familiarly thrust through mine, and I found myself in the clutches of my evil genius.

"How are you, my dear fellow? Expected to meet you there. Why, what an orator you are! Really, I haven't heard more fluent or passionate English this month of Sundays. You must give me a lesson in sermon preaching. I can tell you, we parsons want a hint or two in that line. So you're going down to D . . ., to see after those poor starving labourers?" "Pon' my honour, I've a great mind to go with you."

So, then, he knew all! However, there was nothing for it but to brazen it out, and, besides, I was in his power, and however hateful to me his seeming courtesy might be, I dared not offend him at that moment.

"It would be well if you did. If you parsons would show yourselves at such places as these a little oftener, you would do more to make the people believe your mission real, than by all the tracts and sermons in the world."

"But, my dear cousin" (and he began to snuffle and sink his voice), "there is so much ungenerous language, so much unsanctified impudence, you frighten away all the meek apostolic men among the priesthood—the very ones who feel most for the lost sheep of the flock."

"Then the parsons are either great Pharisees or great cowards, or both."

"Very likely. I was in a precious fright myself, I know, when I saw you recognised me. If I had not felt strengthened, you know, as I could see one ought to be in all trials, by the sense of my holy calling, I think I should have bolted at once. However, I took the precaution of bringing my bowie

and revolver with me, in case the worst came to the worst."

"And a very needless precaution it was," said I, half laughing at the quaint incongruity of the priestly and the lay elements in his speech. "You don't seem to know much of working men's meetings, or working men's minds. Why, that place was open to all the world. The proceedings will be in the newspaper to-morrow. The whole bench of bishops might have been there, if they had chosen, and a great deal of good it would have done them!"

"I fully agree with you, my dear fellow. No one hates the bishops more than we true High-Churchmen, I can tell you—that's a great point of sympathy between us and the people. But I must be off. By the bye, would you like me to tell my friends at D . . ., that I met you? They often ask after you in their letters, I assure you."

This was a sting of complicated bitterness. I felt all that it meant at once. So he was in constant correspondence with them, while I—and that thought actually strove out of my head the more pressing danger of his utterly ruining me in their esteem, by telling them, as he had a very good right to do, that I was going to preach Chartism to discontented mobs.

"Ah! well! perhaps you wouldn't wish it mentioned? As you like, you know. Or, rather," and he laid his non-grasp on my arm, and dropped his voice this time in earnest—"as you behave, my wise and loyal cousin! Good night."

I went home—the excitement of self-applause, which the meeting had called up, damped by a strange weight of foreboding. And yet I could not help laughing, when, just as I was turning into bed, the door was knocked at my door, and, on being admitted, handed over to me a bundle wrapped up in paper.

"There's a pair of breeches for you—not plush ones, this time, old fellow—but you ought to look as smart as possible. There's so much in a man's looking dignified, and all that, when he's speculating. So I've just brought you down my best black trousers to travel in. We're just of a size, you know, little and good, like a Welshman's cow. And if you tear them, why, we're not like poor, miserable, useless aristocrats, tailors and makers can mend their own rents." And he vanished, whistling the Marseillaise.

I went to bed and tossed about, fancying to myself my journey, my speech, the faces of the meeting, among which Lillian's would rise, in spite of all the sermons which I preached to myself on the impossibility of her being there, of my being known, of any harm happening from the movement, but I could not shake off the fear. If there were a riot, a rising! If any harm were to happen to her! If—till, muddled into fatigue by a rabble of such miserable hypothetical ghosts, I fell asleep, to dream that I was going to be

hanged for sedition, and that the mob were all staring and hooting at me, and Lally clapping her hands and setting them on, and I awoke in an agony, to find Sandy Mackaye standing by my bedside with a light

"Hoochie, laddie! ye need na jump up that way. I'm no' gawn to huke ye the nicht, but I canna sleep, I'm sae unshoutful o' the thing. It seems ye're richt, an' I've been praying for us, an' that's aickle for me, to be taught on't way, but I dinna see aught for ye but to gang. If yon heart is richt with God in this matter, then He's o' yon side, an' I fear na' what men may do to ye. An' yet, ye're my Joseph, as it were, the son o' my mither, wi' a coat o' many colours, plash breeks included, an' gin naught take ye, ye'll bring down my gey haffits wi' sorrow to the grave."

The old man gazed at me as he spoke, with a deep, earnest affection I had never seen in him before, and the tears glistened in his eyes by the flaring candle light, as he went on—

"I ha' been reading the Bible the nicht. It's strange how the words o't rise up, and open themselves, whiles, to pun distractit bodies, though, maybe, no' always in just the orthodox way. An' I fell on that, 'Be hold, I send ye forth as lambs in the midst o' wolves.' Be ye therefore wise as serpents an' harmless as doves,' an' that gae me comfort, laddie for ye. Mind the warning, dinna gang wad, whatever ye may see an' hear. It's an ill way o' showing pity, to gang daft anent it. Dinna talk magnificently that the workman's darling son. An' mind ye, dinna go too deep wi' them. Ye canna trust them to understand ye, they're pun foolish sheep that ha' na shepherd swim that let na wash, rather. So cut na' your pearls before swine, laddie, lest they trample them under their feet, an' turn again an' rend ye."

He went out, and I lay awake, toiling, till morning, making a thousand good resolutions—like the rest of mankind.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MEN WHO ARE EATEN.

WITH many instructions from our friends, and warnings from Mackaye, I started next day on my journey. When I had caught sight of the old man, he was gazing fixedly after me, and using his pocket handkerchief in a somewhat suspicious way. I had remarked how depressed he seemed, and my own spirits shared the depression. A presentiment of evil hung over me, which not even the excitement of the journey—to me a new enjoyment—could dispel. I had no heart, somehow, to look at the country scenes around, which in general excited in me so much interest, and I tried to lose my

self in summing up my stock of information on the question which I expected to hear discussed by the labourers. I found myself not altogether ignorant. The horrible disclosures of S. G. O., and the barbarous abominations of the Andover Workhouse, then fresh in the public mind, had had their due effect on mine, and, like most thinking artisans, I had acquainted myself tolerably from books and newspapers with the general condition of the country labourers.

I arrived in the midst of a dreary, trackless country, whose broad brown and grey fields were only broken by an occasional line of dark doleful trees, at a knot of thatched hovels, all sinking and leaning every way but the right, the windows patched with paper, the doorways stopped with hith, which surrounded a bare slop. That was my destination—unpromising enough for any one but an agitator. If discontent and misery are propitiation for liberty, and they are so strange and unlike ours are the ways of God—I was likely enough to find them there.

I was welcomed by my intended host, a little pert snub-nosed shoemaker, who greeted me as his cousin from London—a relationship which it seemed prudent to accept.

He took me into his little room, and there, with the assistance of a shrewd good-natured wife, shared with me the best he had, and after supper, commenced, mysteriously and in trembling, as if the very walls might have ears, a trembling bitter dispute on the wrongs and sufferings of the times, which went on till late in the night, and which I shall spare my readers, for it they have either brains or hearts, they ought to know more than I can tell them, from the public prints, and, indeed, from their own eyes. Although, as a wise man says, there is nothing more difficult than to make people see first the facts which lie under their own nose.

Upon one point, however, which was new to me, he was very hence the custom of landlords letting the cottages with their farms, for the mere sake of saving themselves trouble, thus giving up all power of protecting the poor man, and debarring him over, bound hand and foot, even in the matter of his commonest home comforts, to farmers, too numerous, too ignorant, and often too poor, to keep the cottages in a state fit for the habitation of human beings. Thus the poor man's hovel, as well as his labour, became, he told me, a source of profit to the farmer, out of which he wrung the last drop of gain. The necessary repairs were always put off as long as possible. The labourers were robbed of their gardens, the slightest rebellion lost them not only work, but shelter from the elements; the slavery under which they groined penetrated even to the fireside and to the bedroom.

"And who was the landlord of this parish?"

"Oh! he believed he was a very good sort of man, and uncommon kind to the people where he lived, but that was fifty miles away, in another county, and he liked that estate better than this, and never came down here, except for the shooting."

Full of many thoughts, and tired out with my journey, I went up to bed, in the same lull with the colder and his wife, and fell asleep, and dreamt of Lilliam.

About eight o'clock the next morning, I started forth with my gun, the shrike-hawk over us desolate a country is men can well conceive. Not a house was to be seen for miles, except the knot of hovels which we had left, and here and there a great dreary lump of ruin buildings, with its yard of yellow stacks. Beneath our feet the earth was mud, and the sky iron above our heads. Dark clouded clouds, "which had built up everywhere an under-roof of doleful grey," swept on before the bitter northern wind, which whistled through the law headless bushes and rattling wattles, and crisped the dark sodden leaves of the scattered hollies, almost the only trees in sight.

We trudged on, over wide stinkidles thick with innumerable weeds, over wide drows, in which the deserted ploughs stood frozen fast, then over clover and grass, burnt black with frost, then over a field of turnips, where we passed a large fold of hundreds, within which some hundred sheep stood, with their heads turned from the cutting blast. All was dreary, ill, silent, no sound or sign of human beings. One wondered where the people lived, who cultivated so vast a tract of livid, over-peopled, nineteenth century England. As we came up to the fold, two little boys huddled us from the made - two little wretches with bare noses and white cheeks, scarecrows of rags and patches, their feet peeping through burnt shoes twice too big for them, who seemed to have shared between them a ragged pair of worsted gloves, and covered among the sheep, under the shelter of a hurdle, crying, and martinate with cold.

"What's the matter, boys?"

"Turnips is froze, and us can't turn the handle of the cutter. Do ye give us a turn, please!"

We scrambled over the hurdles, and gave the miserable little creatures the benefit of ten minutes' labour. They seemed too small for such exertion: their little hands were purple with chilblains, and they were so sorfooted they could scarcely limp. I was surprised to find them at least three years older than their size and looks denoted, and still more surprised, too, to find that their salary for all this latter exposure to the elements - such as I believe I could not have endured two days running - was the vast sum of one shilling a week each, Sundays included. "They didn't ever go to school, nor to church neither, except just

now and then, sometimes—they had to mind the sheep."

I went on, sickened with the contrast between the highly-bred, over fed, fat, thick-woolled animals, with their trappings of turnips and malt-dust, and then racks of rich clover-hay, and then little pent houses of rock-salt, having nothing to do but to eat and sleep, and eat again, and the little half-starved shivering animals who were their slaves. Man the master of the brutes? Bah! As society is now, the brutes are the masters—the least the sheep, the bullock, is the master, and the labourer is then slave.

"Oh! but the brutes are eaten!" Well, the horses at least are not eaten—they live, like landlords, till they die. And those who are eaten are certainly not eaten by their human servants. The sheep they fit, another kills, to parody Shelley, and, after all, is not the labourer, as well as the sheep, eaten by you, my dear Society? devoured body and soul, not the less really because you are larger about the meal, there being an old prejudice against cannibalism, and also against murder—except after the Riot Act has been read.

"What?" struck the insulted respectabilities. "Have we not paid him his wages weekly, and has he not lived upon them?" Yes, and have you not given your sheep and horses their daily wages, and have they not lived on them? You wanted to work them, and they could not work, you know, unless they were alive. But here lies your iniquity: you give the labourer nothing but his daily food—not even his lodgings, the pigs were not started of then wish to pay for their sty room, the man was, and his wages, thanks to your competitive system, were beaten down debilitated and conscientiously (for was it not according to political economy, and the laws thereof?) to the minimum on which he could or would work, without the hope or the possibility of saving a farthing. You know how to invest your capital profitably, dear Society, and to save money over and above your income of daily comforts, but what has he saved? what is he paid for all those years of labour? He has kept body and soul together—perhaps he could have done that without you or your help. But his wages are used up every Saturday night. When he stops working, you have in your pocket the whole real profits of his nearly fifty years' labour, and he has nothing. And then you say that you have not eaten him! You know, in your heart of hearts, that you have. Else, why in Heaven's name do you pay him poor rates? If, as you say, he has been duly repaid in wages, what is the meaning of that half-a-crown a week? you owe him nothing. Oh! but the man would abuse common humanity forbids! What now, Society? Give him alms, if you will, on the score of humanity, but do not tax people for his support, whether they choose

or not—that were a mere tyranny and robbery. If the landlord's feelings will not allow him to see the labourer slave, let him give, in God's name, but let him not cripple nor chain, by compulsory poor-laws, the farmer who has paid him his "just remuneration" of wages, and the parson who probably, out of his scanty income, gives away twice as much in alms as the landlord does out of his superfluous one. No, no, as long as you retain compulsory poor-laws, you confess that it is not merely humane, but just, to pay the labourer more than his wages. You confess yourself in debt to him, over and above, an incertum sum, which it suits you not to define, because such an investigation would expose ugly gaps and patches in that same smug competitive and property world of yours, and, therefore, being the stronger party, you compel your debtor to give up the claim which you confess, for an annuity of half a crown a week, that being the just above starving point of the economic thermometer. And yet you say you have not eaten the labourer! You see, we workmen too have our thoughts about political economy, differing slightly from yours, truly just as the man who is being hanged may take a somewhat different view of the process from the man who is hanging him, which view is likely to be the more practical one?

With some such thoughts I walked across the open down, toward a circular camp the earthwork, probably, of some old British town. Inside it, some thousand or so of labouring people were swarming restlessly round a single large block of stone, some relic of Druid times, on which a tall man stood, his dark figure thrown out in bold relief against the drab sky. As we pushed through the crowd, I was struck with the winnery look of all faces, their lack-lustre eyes and drooping lips, stooping shoulders, heavy, dragging steps, gave them a crushed, degraded air, which was infinitely painful, and bespoke a grade of misery more habitual and degrading than that of the excitable and passionate artisan.

There were many women among them, talking shilly, and looking even more pinched and wan than the men. I remarked, also, that many of the crowd carried heavy sticks, pitchforks, and other tools which might be used as fearful weapons—an ugly sign, which I ought to have heeded betimes.

They gazed with sullen curiosity at me and my Londoner's clothes, as, with no small feeling of self-importance, I pushed my way to the foot of the stone. The man who stood on it seemed to have been speaking some time. His words, like all I heard that day, were utterly devoid of anything like eloquence or imagination—a dull string of somewhat incoherent complaints, which derived their force only from the intense earnestness, which attested their truthfulness. As far as I can recollect, I will give

the substance of what I heard. But, indeed, I heard nothing but what has been bandied about from newspaper to newspaper for years—confessed by all parties, deplored by all parties, but never an attempt made to remedy it.

—"They farmers makes slaves on us. I can't hear no difference between a Christian and a nigger, except they flog the niggers and starve the Christians, and I don't know which I'd choose. I served farmer **** seven year, oil and oil, and after harvest he tells me he's no more work for me, nor my boy, neither, cause he's getting too big for him, so he gets a little 'un instead, and we does nothing, and my boy has about, getting into bad ways, like hundreds more, and then we goes to Board, and they bids us and look for work, and we goes up next part to London. I couldn't get none, they'd enough to do, they said, to employ them 'n, and we begs our way home, and goes into the Union, and they turns us out again in two or three days, and promises us work again, and gives us two days' gravel picking, and then says they has no more for us, and we was sore pinched, and let 'em all day, then next Board day we goes to 'em, and they gives us one day more, and that throws us off another week, and then next Board day we goes into the Union again for three days, and gets sent out again, and so I've been starving one half of the time, and they putting us oil and oil on o' purpose like that, and I'll be in it no longer, and that's what I says."

He came down, and a tall powerful, well-toiled man, evidently in his Sunday smock frock and clean yellowed gaiters, got up and began.

"I haven't no complaint to make about myself. I've a good master, and the parson is a right kind 'un, and that's more than all can say, and the squire's a real gentleman, and my master, he don't need to lower his wages. I gets my ten shillings a week all the year round, and harvesting, and a pig, and a botyent—and that's just why I come here. If I can get it, why can't you?"

"Cause our masters brint like yours."

"No, hy George, there haunt no money round here away like that, I can tell you."

And why int they? continued the speaker. "There's the shame on it. There's my master, he grow five quaters where youn only grows three, and so he can live and pry like a man, and so he say he don't care for his trade. You know as well as I, that there's not half o' the land round here grows what it ought. They aint nut money to make it grow more, and besides, they won't employ no hands to keep it clean. I come across more weeds in one field here, than I've seen for time year on our farm. Why aint some o' you a-getting they weeds up? It wd pay 'em to farm better, and they knows that, but they're too lazy, if they can just get a living off the land, they

don't care; and they'd sooner save money out o' your wages, than save it by growing more corn—it's easier for 'em, it is. There's the work to be done, and they won't let you do it. There's you crying out for work, and work crying out for you—and nether of you can get to the other. I say that's a shame, I do. I say a poor man's a slave. He daren't leave his parish—nobody won't employ him, as can employ his own folk. And if he stays in his parish, it's just a chance whether he gets a good master or a bad 'un. He can't choose, and that's a shame, it is. Why should he go starving because his master don't care to do the best by the land? If they can't till the land, I say let them get out of it, and let them work it as they can. And I think as we ought all to sign a petition to Government, to tell 'em all about it, though I don't see as how they could help us, unless they'd make a law to force the squire to put in nobody to a farm as hadn't money to work it fairly.

"I says," said the next speaker, a poor fellow whose sentences were continually broken by a hacking cough, "just what he said. If they can't till the land, let them do it as can. But they won't, they won't let us have a scrap on it, though we'd pay 'em more for it nor ever they'd make for themselves. But they says it 'nd make us too independent, if we had an acre or so o' land, and so it 'nd, for they. And so I says as he did—they want to make slaves on us altogether, just to get the flesh and bones off us at their own price. Look you at this here down, if I had an acre on it, to make a garden on, I'd live well with my wages, oil and o'k. Why, if this here was in garden, it 'nd be worth twenty, forty times, o' that it be now. And last spring I lays out o' work from Christmas till barley sowing, and I goes to the farmer and asks for a bit a land to dig and plant a few potatoes—and he says, 'You be ill—d'. If you're minding your garden after hours, you'll not be fit to do a proper day's work for me in hours—and I shall want you by and by, when the weather breaks'—for it was frost most bitter, it was. And if you gets potatoes you'll be getting a pig—and then you'll want straw, and meal to fat 'un, and then I'll not trust you in my barn, I can tell ye," and so there it was. And if I'd had only one half-acre of this here very down as we stands on, as isn't worth five shillings a year—and I'd a given ten shillings for it—my belly wouldn't a been empty now. Oh, they be dogs in the manger, and the Lord'll reward 'em therefore! First they says they can't afford to work the land 'em selves, and then they want let us work it either. Then they says prices is so low they can't keep us on, and so they lowers our wages, and then when prices goes up even so much, our wages don't go up with 'em. So, high prices or low prices, it's all the same. With the one we can't buy bread,

and with the other we can't get work. I don't mind free trade—not I, to be sure, if the loaf's cheap, we shall be ruined, but if the loaf's dear we shall be starved—and for that, we is starved, now. Nobody don't care for us, for my part, I don't much care for myself. A man must do some time or other. Only I thinks if we could some time or other just see the Queen once, and tell her all about it, she'll take our part, and not see us put upon like that, I do."

"Gentlemen!" cried my guide, the shoemaker, in a somewhat concited and dictatorial tone, as he skipped up by the speaker's side, and gently shouldered him down, "it an't like the ancient times as I've read of, when any poor man as had a petition could come promiscuously to the King's royal presence, and put it direct into his own hand, and be treated like a gentleman. Don't you know as how they licks up the Queen nowadays, and never lets a poor soul come near her, lest she should hear the truth of all their iniquities? Why, they never lets her stir out without a lot o' dragons with drawn swords, riding all round her, and if you dared to go up to her for ax mercy, whoot! they'd chop your head off before you could say 'Please your Majesty.' And then the hypocrites say as it's to keep her from being frightened—and that's true—for it is frightful she'd be, with a vengeance, if she knowed all that they grand folks make poor labourers suffer, to keep themselves in power and great glory. I tell ye, 'twas impracticable, at all, to ax the Queen for anything, she's afraid of her life on 'em. You just take my advice, and sign a round robin to the squire—you tell 'em as you're willing to till the land for 'em, if they'll let you. There's drawing and digging enough to be done as 'nd keep ye all in work, an't there?"

"Ay, ay, there's lots o' work to be done, if so be we could get at it. Everybody knows that."

"Well, you tell 'em that. Tell 'em here's hundreds and hundreds of ye starving, and willing to work, and then tell 'em, if they won't find ye work, they shall find ye meat. There's lots o' victuals in their larders now, haven't you as good a right to it as their jackanapes o' footmen? The squire is at the bottom of it all. What do you stupid fellows go grumbling at the farmers for? Don't they squire tax the land twenty or thirty shillings an acre, and what do they do for that? The best of 'em, if he gets five thousand a year out o' the lands, don't give back five hundred in charity, or schools, or poor rates—and what's that to speak of? And the more of 'em—curse 'em!—they draw the money out o' the land, and takes it up to London, or into foreign parts, to spend on fine clothes and fine dinners, or throws it away at elections, to make folks beastly drunk, and sell their souls for money—and we gets no good on it. I'll tell you

what it's come to, my men—that we can't afford no more landlords. We can't afford 'em, and that's the truth of it."

The crowd growled a dubious assent.

"Oh yes, you can grumble at the farmers, because you deals with them first hand, but you be too stupid to do nigh but hunt by sight. I be an old dog, and I hunt cunning. I sees farther than my nose, I does. I learnt politics to London when I was a 'prentice, and I ain't forgotten the plans of it. Look you here. The farmers, they say they can't live unless they can make four rents, one for labour, and one for stock, and one for rent, and one for themselves, ain't that about right? Veiy well, just now they can't make four rents in course they can't. Now, who's to suffer for that? the farmer is works, or the labourer is works, or the landlord as does nothing? But he takes care on himself. He won't give up his rent—not he. Perhaps he might give back ten per cent, and what's that?—two shillings an acre, maybe. What's that, if corn falls two pound a load, and more? Then the farmer gets a stinting, and he can't stint himself, he's 'tied enough off already. He's forty shillings out of pocket on every load of wheat that's eight shillings, maybe, on every acre of his land on a four-course shift—and where's the eight shillings to come from, for the landlord's only given him back two on it? He can't stint himself, he daren't stint his stock, and so he stints the labourers, and so it's you as pays the landlord's rent—yon, my boys, out of your flesh and bones, you do—and yon can't afford it any longer, by the look of you—so just tell 'em so."

This advice seemed to me as sadly unpractical as the rest. In short, there seemed to be no hope, no purpose among them—and they felt it, and I could hear, from the running comment of murmurs, that they were getting every moment more fierce and desperate at the contemplation of their own helplessness—a mood which the next speech was not likely to soften.

A pale, thin woman scrambled up on the stone, and stood there, her scanty and patched garments fluttering in the bitter breeze, as, with face sharpened with want, and eyes fierce with misery, she began in a querulous, scornful falsetto.

"I am an honest woman. I brought up seven children decently, and never axed the parish for a shilling, till my husband died. Then they tells me I can support myself and mine—and so I does. Early and late I hoel turnups, and early and late I rep, and left the children at home to mind each other, and one on 'em fell into the fire, and is gone to heaven, like a good angel; and two more it pleased the Lord to take in the fever, and the next, I hope, will soon be out of this miserable world. But look you here, three weeks ago, I goes to the Board. I had no work. They say they could not re-

live me for the first week, because I had money yet to take. The hypocrites! they knowing as I couldn't but owe it all, and a lot more beside. Next week they sends the officer to inquire. That was ten days gone, and we starving. Then, on Board day, they gives me two leaves. Then, next week, they takes it off again. And when I goes over (five times) to the Board to ax why—they'd find me work—and they never did, so we goes on starving for another week—for no one wouldn't trust us, how could they, when we was in debt already a whole lot?—you're all in debt!"

"That we are."

"There's some here as never made ten shillings a week in their lives, as owes twenty pounds at the shop!"

"Ay, and more—and how's a man ever to pay that?"

"So this week, when I comes, they offers me the house. Would I go into the house? They'd be glad to have me, because I'm strong and hearty and a good nurse. But would I, that am an honest woman, go to live with they obsecrings—they?" (she used a strong word)—"would I be parted from my children? Would I let them hear the talk and keep the company as they will there, and learn all sorts o' sins that they never heard on, blessed be God? I'll starve first, and see them starve too. Though, Lord knows, it's hard. Oh! it's hard," she said, bursting into tears, "to leave them as I did this mornin', crying after their breakfasts, and I none to give 'em. I've got no bread—what should I? I've got no fire—how can I give one shilling and seepence a hundred for coals? And if I did, whed fetch 'em home? And if I did break a hedge for a knitch o' wood, they'd put me in prison, they would, with the worst—what be I to do? What be you going to do? That's what I came here for. What be ye going to do for us women as that starve and stint, and wear on hands on for you men and your children, and get hard words, and hard blows from you? Oh! if I was a man, I know what I'd do, I do. But I don't think you be men, three parts o' you, or you'd not see the widow and the orphan starve as you do, and sit quiet and grumble, as long as you can keep your own bodies and souls together. Wh' ve cowards!"

What more she would have said in her excitement, which had risen to an absolute scream, I cannot tell, but some prudent friend pulled her down off the stone, to be succeeded by a speaker more painful, if possible, an aged blind man, the worn out melancholy of whose slow feeble voice made my heart sink, and hushed the murmuring crowd into silent awe.

Slowly he turned his grey, sightless head from side to side, as if feeling for the faces below him—and then began.

"I heard you was all to be here—and I suppose you are, and I said I would come—

though I suppose they'll take off my pay, if they hear of it. But I knows the reason of it, and the bad times and all. The Lord revealed it to me as clear as day, four year agoe come Eastertide. It's all along of our sins, and our wickedness—because we forgot Him—it is. I mind the old war times, what times they was, when there was smug glod brandy up and down in every public, and work more than hands could do. And then, how we all forgot the Lord, and went after our own lusts and pleasures—squires and parsons, and farmers and labouring folk, all alike. They oughted to ha' knowed better—and we oughted too. Many's the Sunday I spent in skittle plying, and cock fighting, and the pound I spent in beer, as might ha' been keeping me now. We was an evil and perverse generation—and so one o' my sons went for a sodeger, and was shot at Waterloo, and the other fell into evil ways, and got sent across seas—and I be left alone for my sins. But the Lord was very gracious to me, and showed me how it was all a judgment on my sins, he did. He has turned his face from us, and that's why we're troubled. And so I don't see no use in this meeting. It won't do no good, nothing won't do us no good, unless we all repent of our wicked ways, our drinking, and our dirt, and our love-children, and our picking and stealing, and gets the Lord to turn our hearts, and to come back again, and have mercy on us, and take us away speedily out of this wretched world, where there's no thing but misery and sorrow into His everlasting glory, Amen! Folks say as the day of judgment's a coming soon—and I partly think so myself. I wish it was all over, and we in heaven above, and that's all I have to say."

It seemed a not unnatural revulsion, when a tall, fierce man, with a foalading squint, spring jauntily on the stool, and setting his arms akimbo, broke out:

"Here be I, Blinky, and this as good a right to speak us cro' a one. You're all blarney fools, you are. Sods that old blind huffer there. You stacks like pigs in a gate, hollering and squawking, and never helping yourselves. Why can't you do like me? I never does no work—darned if I'll work to please the farmers. The rich folks robs me, and I robs them—and that's fair and equal. You only turn poachers—-you only go stealing turnips, and treed, and all as you can find—and then you'll not need to work. Ain't it yourn?" The game's no one's, is it now?—you know that. And if you takes turnips or corn, they'll youn you helped to grown 'om. And if you're put to prison, I tell yo, it's a darned dem warmer, and better victuals too, than ever a one of you gets at home, let alone the Union. Now, I knows the dodge. Whenever my wife's ready for her trouble, I gets coteched, then I lives like a pi nce in gaol, and she goes to the works, and when it's all over, start fair

again. Oh, you blockheads—to stand here shivering with empty bellies. You just go down to the farm and burn they stacks over the old rasent's head, and then they that let you starve now, will be forced to keep you then. If you can't get your share of the poor-rates, try the county rates, my bucks—-you can get fat on them at the Queen's expense—and that's more than you'll do in ever a Union as I hear on. Who'll come down and pull the farm about the folks' ears? Waint it he as turned hve on yer off last week? and ain't he more corn there than he fed you all round this day, and won't sell it, just because he's waiting till folks are starved enough, and prices rise? 'Taise the old villain!—who'll help to disappoint him o' that? 'Come along!"

A confused murmur arose, and a movement in the crowd. I felt that now or never was the time to speak. If once the spirit of mad aimless riot broke loose, I had not only no chance of a hearing, but every likelihood of being implicated in deeds which I abhorred, and I sprung on the stone and attracted a few minutes' attention, telling them that I was a deputation from one of the London Chartist committees. This seemed to turn the stream of their thoughts, and they gazed in stupid wonder at me, as I began hardly less excited than themselves.

I insured them of the sympathy of the London working men, made a comment on their own speeches—which the reader ought to be able to make for himself, and told them that I had come to enter it then assistance towards obtaining such a parliamentary representation as would secure them their rights. I explained the idea of the Chartist, and begged for their help in carrying it out.

To all which they answered smilingly, that they did not know anything about politics—that what they wanted was bread.

I went on, more vehement than ever, to show them how all their misery sprung (as I then fancied) from being misrepresented, how the laws were made by the rich for the poor, and not by all for all—how the taxes bit deep into the necessities of the labourer, and only nibbled at the luxuries of the rich—how the criminal code exclusively attacked the crimes to which the poor were prone, while it dared not interfere with the subtleties of the high born and wealthy—how poor-rates, as I have just said, were a confession on the part of society that the labourer was not fully remunerated. I tried to make them see that their interest, as much as common justice, demanded that they should have a voice in the councils of the nation, such as would truly proclaim their wants, their rights, their wrongs, and I have seen no reason since then to unsay my words.

To all which they answered, that their stomachs were empty, and they wanted bread. "And bread we will have!"

"Go, then," I cried, losing my self pos-

session between disappointment and the maddening desire of influence—and, indeed, who could hear their story, or even look upon their faces, and not feel some indignation still in him, unless self interest had dinged his heart and conscience—"go," I cried, "and get bread!" After all, you have a right to it. No man is bound to starve. There are rights above all laws, and the right to live is one. Laws were made for man, not man for laws. If you had made the laws yourselves, they might land you even in this extremity, but they were made in spite of you—against you. They rob you, crush you, even now they deny you bread! God has made the earth free to all, like the air and sunshine, and you are shut out from off it. The earth is yours, for you till it. Without you it would be a desert. Go and demand your share of that corn, the fruit of your own industry. What matter, if you want imprisonment, murder you?—they can but kill your bodies at once, instead of killing them piecemeal, as they do now, and your blood will cry against them from the ground! Ay, Woe! I went on, carried away by feelings for which I shall make no apology, for, however confused, there was, and is, and ever will be, a God's truth in them, as this generation will find out at the moment when its own scene of self satisfaction crumbles underneath it.—"Woe unto those that gild the faces of the poor!" Woe unto those who add honours to house, and hold to hold, till they stand alone in the land, and there is no room left for the poor man! The wages of their idlers, which they have held back by hand, cry out against them, and then cry has entered into the ears of the God of heaven!

But I had no time to finish. The yeoman swelled into a roar for "Bread! Bread!" My hearers had taken me at my word. I had used the spirit, could I command him, he was abroad!

"Go to Lemmings Farm!"

"No!" he said to me, he said "an all last week!"

"There's plenty at the Hill Farm!" Rouse out the old steward!

And, amid yells and execrations, the whole mass pointed down the hill, sweeping me away with them. I was shocked and terrified at their threats. I tried again and again to stop and harangue them. I shouted myself hoarse about the duty of honesty, warned them against pillage and violence, entreated them to take nothing but the corn which they actually needed, but my voice was drowned in the uproar. Still I felt myself in a measure responsible for their conduct, I had helped to excite them, and dare not, in honour, desert them, and, trembling, I went on, prepared to see the worst, following, and a flag of distress, a mouldy crust, banished on the point of a pitchfork.

Bursting through the rotting and half fallen palings, we entered a wide, rashy,

neglected park, and along an old gravel road, now green with grass, we appeared on a sheet of frozen water, and, on the opposite bank, the huge square corpse of a hall, the close shuttered windows of which gave it a dead and ghastly look, except where here and there a single open one showed, as through a black empty eye socket, the dark unfurnished rooms within. On the right, beneath us, lay, amid tall elms, a large mass of farm buildings, into the yard of which the whole mob rushed tumultuously just in time to see an old man on horseback dart out and gallop hatless up the park, amid the yells of the mob.

"The old rascal's gone!" and he'll call up the yeomanry. We must be quick, boys!" shouted our, and the first signs of plunder showed themselves in an indiscriminate chase after various screaming geese and turkeys, while a few of the more steady went up to the house door, and, knocking, demanded sternly the granary keys.

A fat yeoman planted herself in the doorway, and commenced talking at them, with the cowardly courage which the fancied minority of their sex gives to coarse women, but she was hastily shoved aside, and took shelter in an upper room, where she stood screaming and cursing at the window.

The mobsters returned, crumpling their mouths with bread, and chopping asunder slabs of bacon. The granary doors were broken open, and the contents scrambled for, amid immense waste, by the starving wretches. It was a sad sight. Here was a poor shivering woman, hiding scraps of food under her cloak, and hurrying out of the yard to the children she had left at home. There was a tall man, leaning against the palings, gazing ravenously at the same loaf with a little boy, who had scrambled up behind him. Then a huge blackguard came whistling up to me, with a can of ale. "Drink, my beauty! you're dry with hol-lering by now!"

"The ale is neither yours nor mine, I won't touch it!"

"Don't you bottom!" You said the wheat was ours, as we've grown it—and therefore so's the beer—for we grew the barley too!"

And so thought the rest, for the yard was getting full of drunkards, a woman or two among them, feeling knee deep in the loose straw among the pigs.

"I'll hush out they ricks!" roared another.

"Get out the threshing-machine!"

"You harness the horses!"

"No! there's but no time. Yeomanry'll be here. You must leave the ricks."

"Darned if we do! Old Woods shan't get caught by they!"

"Five em, then, and go on to Slater's Farm!"

"As well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb," hiccupped Blunkey, as he rushed through the yard with a lighted brand. I

"Yes," answered I, quietly, in D * * *
 "Exactly so."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TRIAL

THE day was come—quickly, thank Heaven, and I stood at the bar, with four or five miserable, haggard labourers, to take my trial for sedition, riot, and arson.

I had passed the intervening weeks half stupefied with the despair of utter disappointment—disappointment at myself and my own loss of self-possession, which had caused all my misfortune,—perhaps, too, and the thought was dreadful, that of my wretched fellow sufferers—disappointment with the labourers, with The Cause, and when the thought came over me, in addition, that I was irreparably disgraced in the eyes of my late patrons, parted forever from Lillian by my own folly, I laid down my head, and longed to die.

Then, again, I would recover awhile, and pluck up heart. I would plead my cause myself—I would testify against the tyrants to their face—I would say no longer to them hesitated slaves, but to the men themselves, "Go to, ye rich men, weep and howl!" The hire of your labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is by you kept back by fraud, craft, and the cries of them that have reaped hath entered into the ears of the Lord God of Hosts." I would brave my fate—I would die protesting, and glory in my martyrdom. But—

"Martyrdom!" said Mackaye, who had come up to D * * *, and was busy night and day about my trial. "Ye'll just leave alone the martyr dodge, my puny brain. Ye're no martyr at all, ye'll understand, but a vain foolish callant, that lost his temper, an' cast his pearls before swine—an' very questionable pearls they, too, to judge by the price they fetch in the market."

And then my heart sank again. And a few days before the trial a letter came, evidently in my cousin's handwriting, though only signed with his initials.

"Sir,—You are in a very great scrape—you will not deny that. How you will get out of it depends on your own common sense. You probably won't be hanged—for nobody believes that you had a hand in burning the farm, but, unless you take care, you will be transported. Call yourself John Nokes, entrust your case to a clever lawyer, and keep in the background. I warn you as a friend—if you try to speechify, and play the martyr, and let out who you are, the respectable people who have been patronising you will find it necessary for their own sakes to

clap a stopper on you for good and all, to make you out an impostor and a swindler, and get you out of the way for life—while, if you are quiet, it will suit them to be quiet too, and say nothing about you, if you say nothing about them, and then there will be a chance that they, as well as your own family, will do everything in their power to hush the matter up. So, again, don't let out your real name, and instruct your lawyers to know nothing about the W s, and then perhaps, the Queen's counsel will know nothing about them either. Mind—you are warned, and woe to you if you are fool enough not to take the warning. "G L."

Plead in a false name! Never, so help me Heaven! To go into court with a lie in my mouth—to make myself an impostor—probably a detected one—it seemed the most cunning scheme for running me which my evil genius could have suggested, whether or not it might serve his own selfish ends. But as for the other hints, they seemed not unreasonable, and promised to save me trouble, while the continual pressure of anxiety and responsibility was getting intolerable to my over-wearied brain. So I showed the letter to Mackaye, who then told me that he had taken for granted that I should come to my right mind, and had therefore already engaged an old companion as attorney, and the best counsel which money could procure.

"But where did you get the money?" You have not entirely been squandering your own savings on me."

"I can't say that I've done so, in case of need. But the men in town just subscribed, my honest fellows."

"What! is my folly to be the cause of robbing them of their slender earnings? Never, Mackaye! Besides, they cannot have subscribed enough to pay the barrister whom you just mentioned. Tell me the whole truth, or, positively, I will plead my cause myself."

"Awcel! then, there was n' bit bank-note or two cam' to hand—I canna say whaur fra! But they that sent it ducked it to be expended in the defence o' the sax prisoners—whic' ye make an'."

Again a world of fruitless conjecture. It must be the same unknown friend who had paid my debt to my cousin—Lillian.

And so the day was come. I am not going to make a long picturesque description of my trial—trials have become lately quite hackneyed subjects, stock properties for the fiction mongers—neither, indeed, could I do so, if I would. I recollect nothing of that day, but fragments—flashes of waking existence, scattered up and down in what seemed to me a whole life of heavy, confused, painful dreams, with the glare of all those faces concentrated on me—those countless eyes which I would not, could not meet—stony,

careless, unsympathising—not even angry—only curious. If they had but frowned on me, insulted me, gnashed their teeth on me, I could have glared back defiance; as it was, I stood cowed and stupefied, a craven by the side of cravens.

Let me see—what can I recollect? Those faces—faces—everywhere faces—a faint, sickly smell of flowers—a perpetual whispering and rustling of dresses—and all through it, the voice of someone talking, talking—I seldom knew what, or whether it was counsel, witness, judge, or prisoner, that was speaking. I was like one asleep at a foolish lecture, who hears in dreams, and only wakes when the prosing stops. Was it not prosing? What was it to me what they said? They could not understand me—my motives—my excuses, the whole pleading, on my side as well as the Crown's, seemed one huge fallacy—beside the matter altogether never touching the real point at issue, the eternal moral equity of my deeds or misdeeds. I had no doubt that it would all be conducted quite properly, and fairly, and according to the forms of law, but what was law to me? I wanted justice. And so I let them go on their own way, conscious of but one thought—was Lillian in the camp?

I dared not look and see. I dared not lift up my eyes toward the gaudy rows of ladies who had crowded to the “interesting trial of the D. . . . rioters.” The torture of anxiety was less than that of certainty might be, and I kept my eyes down, and wondered how on earth the attorneys had found in so simple a case enough to stuff those great blue bags.

When, however, anything did seem likely to touch on a reality, I woke up forthwith, in spite of myself. I recollect well, for instance, a squabble about challenging the jurymen, and my counsel's voice of pious indignation, as he asked, “Do you call these agricultural gentlemen and farmers, however excellent and respectable—in which point Heaven forbid that I, etc. etc.—the prisoner's ‘peers,’ peers, equals, or likes? What single interest, opinion, or motive, have they in common, but the universal one of self-interest, which, in this case, happens to pull in exactly opposite directions? Your lordship has often unadverted fully and boldly on the practice of allowing a bench of squires to sit in judgment on a peasant, surely it is quite as unjust that agricultural rioters should be tried by a jury of the very class against whom they are accused of rebelling.”

“Perhaps my learned brother would like a jury of rioters?” suggested some Queen's counsel.

“Upon my word, then, it would be much the fairer plan.”

I wondered whether he would have dared to say as much in the street outside—and relapsed into indifference. I believe there was some long delay, and wrangling about law quibbles, which seemed likely at one

time to quash the whole prosecution, but I was rather glad than sorry to find that it had been overruled. It was all a play, a game of bowls—this bowls happening to be human heads got up between the lawyers, for the edification of society, and it would have been a pity not to play it out, according to the rules and regulations thereof.

As for the evidence, its tenor may be easily supposed from my story. There were those who could swear to my language at the camp. I was seen accompanying the mob to the farm, and haranguing them. The noise was too great for the witnesses to hear all I said, but they were certain I talked about the sacred name of liberty. The farmer's wife had seen me run round to the stables when they were fired whether just before or just after, she never mentioned. She had seen me running up and down in front of the house, talking loudly, and gesticulating violently, she saw me, too, struggling with another voter for her husband's desk,—and the rest of the witnesses, some of whom I am certain I had seen busy plunking, though they were ready to swear that they had been merely accidentally passers by, seemed to think that they proved their own innocence, and testified their pious indignation, by avoiding carefully any fact which could excuse me. But, somehow, my counsel thought differently, and cross examined, and bullied, and tormented, and misstated—as he was bound to do, and so one witness after another, clumsy and cowardly enough already, was driven by his engines of torture, as if by a pitiless spell, to deny half that he had deposed truly, and confess a great deal that was utterly false till confusion became worse confounded, and there seemed no truth anywhere, and no falsehood either, and I might witness anything, and everything was a right, till I began to have doubts whether the mob had ever occurred at all—and, and of doubts of my own identity also, when I had heard the counsel for the Crown impite to me personally, as in duty bound, every scoundrelous atrocity which had been committed either in England or France since 1793. To him, certainly, I did listen tolerably—it was “as good as a play.” Atheism, blasphemy, vitriol throwing, and community of women, were among my lighter offences—for had I not actually been engaged in a plot for the destruction of property? How did the court know that I had not spent the night before the riot, as “the doctor” and his friends did before the riots of 1839, in drawing lots for the estates of the surrounding gentlemen, with my deluded dupes and victims?—for of course I, and not want of work, had deluded them into nothing, at least, they never would have known that they were starving, if I had not stirred up their evil passions by daring to inform them of that otherwise unpalatable fact. I, the only Chartist there? Might there not have

been dozens of them?—emissaries from London, dressed up as starving labourers, and rheumatic old women? There were actually traces of a plan for seizing all the ladies in the country, and setting up a seraglio of them in D*** Cathedral. How did the count know that there was not one?

Ay, how indeed? and how did I know either? I really began to question whether the man might not be right after all. The whole theory seemed so horribly coherent—possible, natural. I might have done it, under possession of the devil, and forgotten it in excitement—I might—perhaps I did. And if there, why not elsewhere? Perhaps I had helped Jourdan Compe tite at Lyons, and been king of the Minister Anabaptists—why not? What matter? When would this century of wigs, and bonnets, and glowing windows, and on gauding plate and jargon, as of a diabolic universe of street organs, end—end—and I get quietly hanged, and done with it all forever?

Oh, the terrible length of that day! It seemed to me as if I had been always on my trial, ever since I was born. I wondered at times how many years ago it had all begun. I felt what a far stronger and more single-hearted patriot than I, poor Somerville, says of him. If under the torture of the sergeant's cat in a passage, whose horrible simplicity and unconscious pithiness have haunted me ever since I read it, how, when only fifty out of his hundred lashes had fallen on the bleeding back,—"The time since they began was like a long period of life. I felt as if I had lived all the time of my cool life in torture, and that the days when cast me had a pleasure in it were a dream long, long gone by."

The reader may begin to suspect that I was fast going mad, and I believe I was. If he has followed my story with a human heart, he may excuse me of any extreme weakness, if I did at moments totter on the verge of that day.

What saved me, I believe now, was the keen, bright look of love and confidence which flashed from Crossswate's glittering eyes, when he was called forward as a witness to my character. He spoke out like a man, I hear, that day. But the counsel for the Crown tried to silence him triumphantly, by calling on him to confess himself a Charist, as if a man must needs be a hero and a villain because he holds certain opinions about the franchise. However, that was, I heard, the general opinion of the court. And the Crossswate lost his temper, and called the Queen's counsel a hired bully, and so went down, having done, as I was told afterwards, no good to me.

And then* there followed a passage of tongue fence between Ma Kaye and some barrister, and great laughter at the barrister's expense, and then I heard the old man's voice rise thin and clear.

"Let him that is without sin among ye cast the first stone."

And as he went down he looked at me—a look full of despair. I never had had a ray of hope from the beginning, but now I began to think whether men suffered much when they were hung, and whether one woke at once into the next life, or had to wait till the body had returned to the dust, and watch the ugly process of one's own decay. I was not afraid of death—I never experienced that sensation. I am not physically brave. I am as thoroughly afraid of pain as any child can be, but that next world has never offered any prospect to me, save boundless food for my insatiable curiosity.

But at that moment my attorney thrust into my hand a little dirty scrap of paper—"Do you know this man?" I read it.

"Sir,—I will tell all the truth. Mr. Locke is a murdered man if he be hanged. Let me speak out, for love of the Lord."

"J. DAVIS."

No. I never had heard of him, and I let the paper fall.

A murdered man? I had known that all along. Had not the Queen's counsel been trying all day to murder me, as was their duty, seeing that they got their living thereby?

A few moments after, a labouring man was in the witness box, and, to my astonishment, telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

I will not trouble the reader with his details, for they were simply and exactly what I have already stated. He was bulged, lashed, cross-examined, but nothing could shake him. With that dogged honesty and heroic dignity, which is the good side of the English peasant's character, he stood manfully to his assertion—that I had done every thing that words or notions could do to

the Queen's counsel asked if who had set him on hanging me in a story, there at the eleventh hour, he answered, equally to the astonishment of his questioner and of me,—

"Master Locke himself."

"What?" the prisoner* almost screamed. The counsellor, who fancied, I suppose, that he had stumbled on a confession of unblush-

ing of ten minutes, and I was coming up over hell, and says I, I'll hear what that chap's got to say—there can't be no harm in coming up after the likes of he, for, says I to myself, a man can't have got any great

wickedness a plotting in his head, when he'll stop a ten minutes to help two boys as he never set eyes on afore in his life, and I think then honours II say the same."

Whether my reader will agree or not with the worthy fellow, my counsel, I need not say, but, and made full use of his hint. All the previous evidence was now discovered to have corroborated the last witness, except where it had been notoriously overthrown. I was extolled as a miracle of calm benevolence, and black became grey, and grey became spotless white, and the whole feeling of the court seemed changed in my favour, till the little attorney popped up his head and whispered to me:

"By George! that last witness has saved your life."

To which I answered, "Very well"—and turned stupidly back upon that nightmare thought—was Lillian in the court?

At last a voice, the judge's, I believe, for it was grave, gentle, almost compassionate, asked us one by one whether we had any thing to say in our own defence. I recollect an indistinct murmur from one after another of the poor seem hutes on my left, and then my attorney, looking up to me, made me aware that I was expected to speak. On the moment, somehow, my whole courage returned to me. I felt that I must unburden my heart, now or never. With a sudden start I roused myself, and looking fixedly and proudly at the reverend face opposite, began:

"The utmost offence which has been proved against me is a few bold words, producing consequences as unexpected as illogical. If the stupid ferocity with which my words were misunderstood, as by a horde of savages, rather than Englishmen,—if the moral and physical condition of these prisoners at my side,—of those witnesses who have borne testimony against me, miserable white slaves, mis-called free labourers,—ay, if a single walk through the farms and cottages on which this mischief was bred, affords no excuse for one indignant sentence—"

There she was! There she had been all the time—right opposite to me, close to the judge—cold, bright, curious—smiling! And as our eyes met, she turned away, and whispered gaily something to a young man who sat beside her.

Every drop of blood in my body rushed into my forehead; the court, the windows, and the faces, whirled round and round, and I fell senseless on the floor of the dock.

I next recollect some room or other in the gaol, Mackaye with both my hands in his, and the rough kindly voice of the gaoler congratulating me on having "only got three years."

"But you didn't show half a good pluck," said someone. "There's two on 'em trans ported—took it as bold as brass, and thanked

the judge for getting em out o' this starv-ing place 'fice gracious for nothing,' says they."

"Ah!" quoth the little attorney, rubbing his hands, "you should have seen * * * and * * * after the row in '42! They were the boys for the Bull Ring! Gave a barrister as good as he brought, oh, Mr. Mackaye? My small services, you remember, were of no use—really no use at all—quite ashamed to send in my little account. Managed the case themselves, like two patriotic parties as they were, with a degree of forensic acuteness, inspired by the consciousness of a noble cause—Ahem! You remember friend M? Grand triumphs those, eh?"

"Ay," said Sandy, "I mind them unco weel—they cost me a my few savings, mair by token, an' mony a braw fallow paid for ither folks' sins that tide. But my poor laddie here's no made o' that stuff! He's ower thin skinned for a patriot."

"Ah, well, this little taste of British justice will thicken his hide for him, eh?" and the attorney chuckled and winked. "He'll come out again as tough as a bull-dog, and as surly too. Eh, Mr. Mackaye? ch?"

"Deed, then, I'm unco sae afraid that your opinion is no a together that unproph-able," answered Sandy, with a drawl of unusual solemnity.

CHAPTER XXX

IRISON THOUGHTS

I WAS alone in my cell.

Three years' imprisonment! Thirty six months! one thousand and ninety five days—and twenty four whole hours in each of them! Well—I should sleep half the time, one-third at least. Perhaps I should not be able to sleep! To be awake, and think—there! The thought was horrible—it was all horrible. To have three whole years out of my life, instead of having before me, as I had always as yet had, a mysterious El Dorado of new schemes and hopes, possible developments, possible triumphs, possible bliss—to have nothing, nothing, before me but blank and stagnation, dead loss and waste—and then to go out again, and start once more where I had left off yesterday!

It should not be! I would not lose those years! I would show myself a man, they should feel my strength just when they fancied they had crushed me utterly! They might bury me, but I should rise again!—I should rise again more glorious, perhaps to be henceforth immortal, and live upon the lips of men. I would educate myself. I would read—what would I not read? These three years should be a time of sacred retirement and contemplation, as of Thelaid

Anchorite, or Mahomet in his Arabian cave I would write pamphlets that should thunder through the land, and make tyrants tremble on their thrones! All England—at least all crushed and suffering hearts, should break forth at my fiery words into one roar of indignant sympathy. No—I would write a poem. I would concentrate all my experience, my aspirations, all the hopes, and wrongs, and sorrows of the poor, into one garland of thorns, one immortal epic of suffering. What should I call it? And I set to work deliberately—such a thing is man—to think of a title.

I looked up, and my eye caught the close bars of the little window, and then came over me, for the first time, the full meaning of that word Prison, that word which the rich use so lightly, knowing well that there is no chance, in these days, of their ever finding themselves in one, for the higher classes never break the laws—seeing that they have made them to fit themselves. Ay, I was in prison. I could not go out or come in at will. I was watched, commanded at every turn. I was a brute animal, a puppet, a doll, that children put away in a cupboard, and there it lies. And yet my whole soul was as wild, fierce, loving, struggling, as ever. Horrible contradiction! The dreadful sense of helplessness, the crushing weight of necessity, seemed to choke me. The smooth white walls, the smooth white ceiling, seemed squeezing in closer and closer on me, and yet dilating into vast infinite spaces, just as the nicest knot of moulton will transform itself, as one watches it, and nothing else, into enormous chills, long slopes of moon and spurs of mountain range. Oh these smooth white walls and ceiling! If there had but been a print—a stain of dirt—a colony, to flick their unbroken ghostliness! They stared at me, like grim, unimpassive, featureless, formless fiends; all the more dreadful for their sleek hypocritical cleanliness, partly as of a saint inquisitor watching with spotless conscience the victim on the rack. They choked me—I gasped for breath, stretched out my arms, rolled shuddering on the floor, the narrow chequered glimpse of free blue sky, seen through the window, seemed to fade dimmer and dimmer, farther and farther off. I sprang up, as if to follow it, rushed to the bars, shook and wrenched at them with my thin, puny arms—and stood spellbound, as I caught sight of the cathedral towers, standing out in grand repose against the horizontal fiery bars of sunset, like great angels at the gates of Paradise, watching in stately scorn all the wailing and the wailing below. And beneath, beneath—the well-known roofs—Lillian's home, and all its proud and happy memories! It was but a corner of a gable, a scrap of garden, that I could see beyond intervening roofs and trees—but could I mistake them? There was the very cedar-tree, I knew its dark pyramid but too well!

There I had walked by her, there, just behind that envious group of chestnuts, she was now. The light was fading, it must be six o'clock, she must be in her room now, dressing herself for dinner, looking so beautiful! And as I gazed, and gazed, all the intervening objects became transparent, and vanished before the intensity of my imagination. Were my poems in her room still? Perhaps she had thrown them away—the condensed notes & poems! Was she thinking of me? Yes—with horror and contempt. Well, at least she was thinking of me. And she would understand me at last—she must. Some day she would know all I had borne for love of her—the depth, the might, the purity of my adoration. She would see the world honouring me, in the day of my triumph when I was appreciated at last,—when I stood before the eyes of admiring men, a people's singer, a king of human spirits, great with the rank which genius gives, then she would find out what a man had loved her, then she would know the honour the privilege of a poet's worship.

But that trial scene!

Ay that trial scene. That cold, unmoved smile!—when she knew me, must have known me, not to be the wretch which those brutal slanderers had called me. If she had cared for me—if she had a woman's heart in her at all, any pity, any justice, would she not have spoken? Would she not have called on others to speak, and clear me of the calumny? Nonsense! Impossible! She so frail, tender, retiring, how could she speak? How did I know that she had not felt for me? It is a woman's nature—duty, to conceal her feelings, perhaps that, after all, was the true explanation of that smile. Perhaps, too she might have spoken—might be even now pleading for me in secret, not that I wish to be pardoned—not I—but it would be so delicious to have her, her, pleading for me! Perhaps, perhaps I might hear of her—from her! Surely she could not leave me here so close, without some token! And I actually listened, I know not how long, expecting the door to open, and a message to arrive till, with my eyes riveted on that bit of gable and my ears listening behind me like a hound in her form, to catch every sound in the wind on side, I fell fast asleep, and forgot all in the heavy dreamless torpor of utter mental and bodily exhaustion.

I was awakened by the opening of my cell door, and the appearance of the turnkey.

"Well, young man, all right again? You've had a long nap, and no wonder, you've had a hard time of it lately, and a good lesson to you, too."

"How long have I slept? I do not recollect going to bed. And how came I to lie down without undressing?"

"I found you at lock-up hours, asleep

there, kneeling on the chair, with your head on the window-sill, and a mercy you hadn't tamiled off and broke your back. Now, look here. You seems a civil sort of chap, and civil gets us civil gives with me. Only, don't you talk no politics. They ain't no good to nobody, except the big 'uns, wot gets their living thereby, and I should think you'd had dose enough on 'em to last for a month of Sundays. So just get your self tidy, there's a lad, and come along with me to chapel."

I obeyed him, in that and other things, and I never received from him, or, indeed, from anyone else there, aught but kindness. I have no complaint to make, but prison is prison. As for talking politics, I never, during those three years, exchanged as many sentences with any of my fellow-prisoners. What had I to say to them? Poachers and petty thieves, the scum of misery, ignorance, and idleness throughout the country. If my heart yearned toward them at times, it was generally shut close by the exclusive pride of superior intellect and knowledge. I considered it as it was, a degradation to be classed with such, never asking myself how far I had brought that degradation on myself, and I loved to show my sense of injustice by walking, manly and silent, up and down a lonely corner of the yard, and at last contrived, under the plea of ill health (and, truly, I never was ten minutes without coughing), to confine myself entirely to my cell, and escape altogether the company of a class whom I despised, almost hated, as my betrayers, before whom I had cast away my pearls—questionable though they were, according to Mackaye. Oh! there is, in the intellectual workman's heart, as in all others, the root of Pharisaism—the lust after self-glorifying superiority, on the ground of "genius." We too are men, frail, selfish, proud as others. The days are past, thank God, when the "gentlemen button-makers" used to insist on a separate tap room from the mere "button-makers," on the ground of earning a few more shillings per week. But we are not yet thorough democrats, my brothers, we do not yet utterly believe our own loud doctrine of equality, nor shall we till—But I must not anticipate the stages of my own experience.

I complain of no one, again I say—neither of judge, jury, gaolers, or chaplain. True, imprisonment was the worst possible remedy for my disease that could have been devised, if, as the new doctrine is, punishments are inflicted only to reform the criminal. What could prison do for me but embitter and confirm all my prejudices? But I do not see what else they could have done with me while law is what it is, and perhaps ever will be, dealing with the overt acts of the poor, and never touching the subtler and more spiritual iniquities of the rich respect-

able. When shall we see a nation ruled, not by the law, but by the Gospel, not in the letter which kills, but in the spirit which is love, forgiveness, life? When? God knows! And God does know.

But I did work during those three years, for months at a time, steadily and severely, and with little night, alas! to my temper of mind. I goaded my intellect, for I could do nothing else. The political questions which I longed to solve in some way or other, were tabooed by the well-meaning chaplain. He even forbade me a standard English work on political economy, which I had written to Mackaye to borrow for me, he was not so careful, it will be seen hereafter, with foreign books. He meant, of course, to keep my mind from what he considered at once useless and polluting, but the only effect of his method was, that all the doubts and questions remained, rankling and fierce, imperiously demanding my attention, and had to be solved by my own moody and somber meditations, warped and coloured by the strong sense of universal wrong.

Then he debased me with tracts, weak and well-meaning, which informed me that "Christians," being "not of this world," had nothing to do with politics, and preached to me the divine right of kings, passive obedience to the powers—or, iniquities—that be, etc., etc., with such success as may be imagined. I opened them each, read a few sentences, and laid them by. "They were written by good men, no doubt, but men who had no interest in keeping up the present system," at all events, by men who knew nothing of my temptations, my creed, my unbelief, who saw all he ever did with from a station antipodal to my own. I had simply nothing to do with them.

And yet, excellent man! pious, benign, compassionate! God forbid that I should, in writing those words, allow myself a desire so base as that of disparaging him! However thy words failed of their purpose, that bright, gentle, earnest face never appeared without bringing balm to the wounded spirit. Hadst thou not recalled me to humanity, those three years would have made a savage and a madman of me. May God reward thee hereafter! Thou hast thy reward on earth in the gratitude of many a broken heart bound up, of drunkards sobered, thieves reclaimed, and outcasts taught to look for a paternal hand denied them here on earth! While such thy deeds, what matter thine opinions?

But, alas! (for the truth must be told, as a warning to those who have to face the educated working men), his opinions did matter to himself. The good man laboured under the delusion, common enough, of choosing his favourite weapons from his weakest faculty, and the very inferiority of his intellect prevented him from seeing where his true strength lay. He could

argue, he would try and convert me from scepticism by what seemed to him reasoning, the common figure of which was, what logicians, I believe, call begging the question, and the common method what they call *ignoratio elenchis*—shooting at pigeons, while crows are the game desired. He always started by demanding my assent to the very question which lay at the bottom of my doubts. He would wrangle and wrestle blindly up and down, with tens of earnestness in his eyes, till he had lost his temper, as far as was possible for one so angel-guided as he seemed to be, and then, when he found himself confused contradicting his own words, making concessions at which he shuddered, for the sake of gaining from me assents which he found out the next moment I understood in quite a different sense from his—he would suddenly shift his ground, and try to knock me down authoritatively with a single text of Scripture, when all the while I wanted proof that Scripture had any authority at all.

He is awfully careful of his "no," and "out," to the detriment of his own argument, while I, on the other hand, am full of required justification for the strange, fanciful, technical meanings, which he attributed to his expressions. If he would only have talked English, if clergymen would only preach in English, and then they wonder that their sermons have no effect. Their notion seems to be, as my good chaplain was, that the teacher is not to condescend to the scholar, much less to become all things to all men, if by any means he may save some, but that he has a right to demand that the scholar shall ascend to him before he is taught, that he shall use himself up of his own strength into the teacher's region of thought as well as feeling, to do for himself, in short, under penalty of being called an unbeliever, just what the teacher professes to do for him.

At last, he seemed duly to discover that I could not acquiesce in his conclusions, while I denied his premises, and so he lent me, in an ill-studied moment "*Paley's Evidences*" and some tracts of the last generation against Deism. I read them, and remained, as hundreds more have done, just where I was before.

"Was Paley," I asked, "a really good and pious man?"

The really good and pious man hemmed and hawed.

"Because, if he was not, I can't trust a page of his special pleading, let it look as clever as the whole Old Bailey in one."

Besides, I never denied the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, or his apostles. I doubted the myths and doctrines, which I believed to have been gradually built up round the true story. The fact was, he was, like most of his class, "attacking extinct Saturs," fighting manfully against Voltaire, Volney, and Tom Paine; while I was fight-

ing for Strauss, Harnell, and Emerson. And, at last, he gave me up for some weeks as a hopeless infidel, without ever having touched the points on which I disbelieved. He had never read Strauss—hardly even heard of him, and, till clergymen make up their minds to do that, and to answer Strauss also, they will, as he did, leave the heretic artisan just where they found him.

The bad effect which all this had on my mind may easily be conceived. I felt myself his intellectual superior. I tripped him up, played with him, made him expose his weakness, till I really began to despise him. May Heaven forgive me for it! But it was not till long afterwards that I began, on looking back, to see how worthless was any superior cleverness of mine before his superior moral and spiritual excellence. That is just what he would not let me see at the time. I was worshipping intellect, mere intellect, and thence arose my doubts, and he tried to conquer them by exciting the very faculty which had begotten them. When will the clergy learn that their strength is in action, and not in argument? If they are to convert the masses, it must be by noble deeds, as Carlyle says, "not by noisy theories, the laudation of a Church, but by silent practical demonstration of the Church."

But, the reader may ask, where was your Bible all this time?

Yes, there was a Bible in my cell—and the chaplain read to me, both privately and in chapel, such portions of it as he thought suited my case, or rather his utterly mistaken view thereof. But to tell the truth, I cared not to read or listen. Was it not the book of the aristocrats—of kings and priests, passive obedience, and the slavery of the intellect? Had I been thrown under the influence of the more educated independents in former years, I might have thought differently. They, at least, have continued, with what logical consistency I know not, to reconcile orthodox Christianity with unflinching democratic opinions. But such was not my lot. My mother, as I said in my first chapter, had become a Baptist, because she believed that sect, and as I think rightly, to be the only one which logically and consistently carries out the Calvinistic theory, and now I looked back upon her delight in Gideon and Barak, Samson and Jehu, only as the mystic application of rare exceptions to the fanaticism of a chosen few—the elect the saints, who, as the fifth monarchy men held, were one day to rule the world with a rod of iron. And so I fell—willingly, alas!—into the vulgar belief about the politics of Scripture, common alike strange humanity!—to Infidel and Churchman. The great idea that the Bible is the history of mankind's deliverance from all tyranny, outward as well as inward, of the Jews, as the one free constitutional people among a world of slaves and tyrants, of their ruin, as the righteous fruit

of a voluntary return to despotism, of the New Testament, as the good news that freedom, brotherhood, and equality, once confined only to Judea and to Greece, and dimly seen even there, was henceforth to be the right of all mankind, the law of all society—who was there to tell me that? Who is there now to go forth and tell it to the millions who have suffered, and doubted, and despaired like me, and turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come? Again I ask—who will go forth and preach that Gospel, and save his native land?

But, as I said before, I read, and steadily in the first place, I, for the first time in my life, studied Shakespeare through and through, and found out now the treasure which I had overlooked. I assure my readers I am not going to give a lecture on him here, as I was minded to have done. Only, as I am asking questions, who will write us a "People's Commentary on Shakespeare?"

Then I waded, making copious notes and extracts, through the whole of Hume, and Hallam's "Middle Ages" and "Constitutional History," and found them barren to my soul. When (to ask a third and last question) will some man, of the spirit of Carlyle—one who is not ashamed to acknowledge the intervention of a God, a Providence, even of a devil, in the affairs of men—arise, and write a "People's History of England?"

Then I laboured long months at learning French, for the mere purpose of reading French political economy after my liberation. But at last, in my impatience, I wrote to Sandy to send me Proudhon and Louis Blanc, on the chance of their pursuing the good chaplain's counselship—and behold, they passed! He had never heard their names! He was, I suspect, utterly ignorant of French, and afraid of exposing his ignorance by venturing to criticise. As it was, I was allowed peaceable possession of them till within a few months of my liberation, with such consequences as may be imagined; and then, to his unfeigned terror and honor, he discovered, in some periodical, that he had been leaving in my hands books which advocated "the destruction of property," and therefore, in his eyes, of all which is mortal or sacred in earth and heaven! I gave them up without a struggle, so really painful was the good soul's concern, and the reproaches which he heaped, not on me—he never reproached me in his life—but on himself, for having so neglected his duty.

Then I read hard for a few months at physical science—at zoology and botany, and throw it aside again in bitterness of heart. It was too bitter to be tantalised with the description of Nature's wondrous forms, and I there a prisoner, between those four white walls!

Then I set to work to write an autobiography—at least to commit to paper in regu-

lar order the most striking incidents and conversations which I could recollect, and which I had noted down as they occurred in my diary. From that source I have drawn nearly the whole of my history up to this point. For the rest I must trust to memory—and, indeed, the strange deeds and sufferings, and the yet stranger revelations, of the last few months, have branded themselves deep enough upon my brain. I need not hope, or fear, that ought of them should slip my memory.

So went the weary time. Week after week, month after month, summer after summer, I scored the days off, like a lonely schoolboy, on the pages of a calendar, and day by day I went to my window, and knelt there, gazing at the gable and the cedar tree. That was my only recreation. Sometimes, at first, my eyes used to wander over the wide prospect of rich lowlands, and fumes, and hamlets, and I used to amuse myself with conjectures about the people who lived in them, and walked where they liked on God's earth—but soon I hated to look at the country, its perpetual change and progress mocked the dreary sameness of my dungeon. It was bitter, maddening, to see the grey boughs grow green with leaves, and the green fade to autumnal yellow, and the grey boughs reappear again, and I still there! The dark sleeping fallows bloomed with emerald blades of corn, and then the corn grew deep and crisp, and blackened before the summer breeze, in "waves of shadow," as Mr. Tennyson says in one of his most exquisite lyrics, and then the fields grew white to harvest day by day, and I saw the rows of sheaves rise one by one, and the carts crawling homeward under their load. I could almost hear the merry voices of the children round them—children that could go into the woods, and pick wild flowers, and I still there! No—I would look at nothing but the gable, and the cedar-tree, and the tall cathedral towers, there was no change in them—they did not laugh at me.

But who who lived beneath them? Months and seasons crawled along, and yet no sign or hint of her! I was forgotten, forsaken! And yet I gazed, and gazed. I could not forget her, I could not forget what she had been to me. Eden was still there, though I was shut out from it forever, and so, like a widower over the grave of her he loves, morning and evening I watched the gable and the cedar-tree.

And my cousin? Ah, that was the thought, the only thought, which made my life intolerable! What might he not be doing in the meantime? I knew his purpose—I knew his power. True I had never seen a hint, a glance, which could have given him hope, but he had three whole years to win her in—three whole years, and I fettered, helpless, absent! "Fool! could I have won her if I had been free?" At least, I would have tried.

we would have fought it fairly out, on even ground; we would have seen which was the strongest, respectability and cunning, or the simplicity of genius. But now!—and I tore at the bars of the window, and threw myself on the floor of my cell, and longed to die.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE NEW CHURCH

IN a poor suburb of the city, which I could see well enough from my little window, a new Gothic church was building. When I first took up my abode in the cell, it was just begun: the walls had hardly risen above the neighbouring sheds and garden fences. But month after month I had watched it growing, I had seen one window after another filled with tracery, one lattress after another finished off with its carved pinnacle, then I had watched the skeleton of the roof gradually clothed in tiling, and then the glazing of the windows—some of them painted, I could see, from the iron network which was placed outside them the same day. Then the doors were put up—were they going to hush that handsome tower? No, it was left with its wooden cup, I supposed for further funds. But the nave, and the deep chancel behind it, were all finished, and surmounted by a cross,—and beautiful enough the little sanctuary looked, in the virgin purity of its spotless freestone. For eighteen months I watched it grow before my eyes, and I was still in my cell.

And then there was a grand procession of supplices and twoskives, and among them I fancied I distinguished the old dean astately figure, and turned my head away, and looked again, and fancied I distinguished another figure—it must have been in the imagination—the distance was in too great for me to identify anyone, but I could not get out of my head the fancy,—say, rather, the instinct—that it was my cousin's, and that it was my cousin whom I saw daily after that, coming out and going in, when the bell rang to morning and evening prayers, for there were daily services there, and saints' day services, and Lent services, and three services on a Sunday, and six or seven on Good Friday and Easter day. The little musical bell above the chancel arch seemed always ringing, and still that figure haunted me like a nightmare, ever coming in and going out about its priestly calling—and I still in my cell! If it should be he! so close to her! I shuddered at the thought, and, just because it was so intolerable, it came to me, and tormented me, and kept me awake at nights, till I became utterly unable to study quietly, and I spent hours at the narrow window, watching for the very figure which I loathed to see.

And then a Gothic school-house rose at the churchyard end, and troops of children poured in and out, and women came daily for alms, and when the frosts came on, every morning I saw a crowd, and soup carried away in potters, and clothes and blankets given away, the giving seemed endless, boundless; and I thought of the times of the Roman Empire and the "sportula," when the poor had got to live upon the alms of the rich, more and more, year by year—till they devoured their own devourers, and the end came, and I shuddered. And yet it was a pleasant sight, as every new church is to the healthy-minded man, let his religious opinions be what they may. A fresh centre of civilisation, mercy, comfort for weary hearts, relief from frost and hunger, a fresh centre of instruction, humanising, disciplining, however meagre in my eyes, to hundreds of little savage spirits, altogether a pleasant sight, even to me there in my cell. And I used to wonder at the wasted power of the Church—her almost entire monopoly of the pulpits, the schools, the alms of England. And then thank Heaven, somewhat prematurely, that she knew and used so little her vast latent power for the destruction of liberty.

Oh for its realisation!

Ay, that is the question! We shall not see it solved—at least, I never shall.

But still that figure haunted me, all through that winter I saw it, clanking with old women, patting children's heads, walking to the church with ladies, sometimes with a tiny, tripping figure. I did not dare to let myself fancy who that might be.

December passed, and January came. I had now only two months more before my deliverance. One day I seemed to myself to have spent a whole life in that narrow room, and the next the years and months seemed short and blank as night's sleep on waking, and there was no salient point in all my memory, since that first sight of Lilian's smile, and the faces and the windows whirling round before me as I fell.

At last came a letter from Mackaye. "Ye spented for news o' your cousin an' I find he's a neebom o' yours, ca'd to a new kirk i' the city o' your captivity an' na stickit minister he makes, forbye, he's ane o' these new Puseyite sectarians to judge by your nuch's report. I met the unkl lauch-bodie on the street, an' I was gann to piss him by, but he was sae fu' o' good news he could na but stop an' he'd crack wi' me on politics, for we ha'e helpt thegither in certain municipal clargymen o' late. And he told me your cousin was honour fast, an' mun awely die a bishop's puri bairn! An' besides that, he's gann he married the spring I donna mind the laddy's name, but there's a teacher wi' less o' law, I'll warrant. He's na land o' Cockburn for a penniless lass wi' a long pedigree."

As I sat meditating over this news which made the ferment of suspicion and suspense more intolerable than ever—behold a post-script, added some two days after

"Oh! oh! Sic news! news to make bath the ears o' him that heareth it to tingle. God is God, an' no the devil after a'! Louis Philippe is down!—down, down, like a dog! an' the republic is proclaimed, an' the anvil villan here in England, they say, a wanderer and a beggar. I ha' sent ye the paper o' the day 18-73, 37, 12. Oh, the Psalms are full o' it! Never say the Bible's no true, man! I've been unco faithless myself, God forgive me! I got grieving to see the wicked in sic prosperity. I did na gang into the sanctuary enough, an' therefore I could na see the end of these men—how He does take them up suddenly after all, an' cast them down! vanish they do, perish, an' come to a fearful end. Yea, like as a dream when one awaketh, so shall thou make their image to vanish out of the city. Oh, but it's a day o' God! An' yet I'm sae afraid for they pun' feckless French! I ha' na faith, ye ken, in the Celtic blood, an' its spirit o' lies. The Saxon spirit o' covetise is a grewsome house-fund, and saes our Norse spirit o' shifts an' dodges, but the spirit o' lies is worse. I'lla lustful Renhens that they are!—instable as water, they shall not excel. Well, well—after all, there is a God that judgeth the earth, an' when a man is kens that, he's learnt enough to last him till he dies."

CHAPTER XXII

THE TOWER OF BABEL.

A glorious people vibrated a, on
The lightning of the nation's liberty
From heart to heart from tower to tower of old France,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky
cleaned. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay
And in the ruddy flames of song
Clothed itself sublime and strong.

STUBBINE and strong? Was not so. An outcast, heartless, faithless, and embittered, I went forth from my prison. But yet Louis Philippe had fallen! And as I whirled back to Babylon, and want, discontent, and discord, my heart was light, my breath came thick and fierce. The members of France had fallen! and from land to land, like the beacon fire which leapt from peak to peak proclaiming Trost's downfall, passed on the glare of burning idols, the crash of falling anachronies. Was I mad, sinful? Both and yet neither. Was I mad and sinful if, on my return to my old haunts, amid the grasp of loving hands, and the caresses of those who called me in their honest flattery a martyr and a hero—what things, as Carlyle says, men will fall down and worship in their extreme need!—was I mad and sinful,

if daring hopes arose, and desperate words were spoken, and wild eyes read in wild eyes the thoughts they dared not utter? "Liberty has risen from the dead, and we too will be free!"

Yes, mad and sinful, therefore are we as we are. Yet God has forgiven us, perhaps so have those men whose forgiveness is done worth having.

Liberty! And 'tis that word a dream, a ho, the watchword only of rebellious heads, as legends say even now? Our forefathers spoke not so—

"The shadow of her coming fell
On Saxon Alfred's olive-tinted brow."

Had not freedom, progressive, expanding, descending, been the glory and the strength of England? Were Magna Charta and the Habeas Corpus Act, Hampden's resistance to ship money, and the calm, righteous might of 1688—were they all futilities and fallacies? Ever downwards, for seven hundred years, welling from the heaven-watered mountain peaks of wisdom, had spread the stream of liberty. The nobles had gained their charter from John, the middle classes from William of Orange—was not the time at hand, when from a Queen, more gentle, charitable, upright, spotless, than had ever set on the throne of England, the working masses in their turn should gain their Charter?

If it was given, the gift was hers. If it was demanded to the uttermost, the demand would be made, not on her, but on those into whose hands her power had passed, the crowded tenement dives within the Crown door of the people, but of the very commercial class which was devouring us.

Such was our dream. Insane and wicked were the passions which accompanied it, in our mad wicked were the means we chose, and God in His mercy to us, rather than to Mammon, triumphant in his impurity, fat-tuning his heart even now for a spiritual day of slaughter more fearful than any physical slaughter which we mortals had prepared for him—God frustrated them.

We confess our sins. Shall the Christ alone be excluded from the promise, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness?"

And yet were there no excuses for us? I do not say not myself—and yet three years of prison might in some extent have hardened and hardened spirit—but I will not avail myself of the excuse, for there were men, stauncher Christians than ever I had been—men who had suffered not only imprisonment, but loss of health and loss of fortune, men whose influence with the workmen was firmer than my own, and whose temptations were therefore all the greater, who manfully and righteously kept themselves aloof from all those frantic schemes, and now reap

then reward, in being acknowledged as the true leaders of the artisans, while the mere preachers of sedition are scattered to the winds.

But were there no excuses for the mass? Was there no excuse in the spirit with which the English upper classes regarded the continental revolutions? None save in the un disguised dislike, fear, contempt, which they expressed for that very sacred name of Liberty, which had been for ages the pride of England and her laws.

"The old laws of England they
Whom revered in days of yore are grey—
Children of a wiser day
And whose solemn voices must be
Thine own echo Liberty."

for which, according to the latest improvements, is now substituted a bare authority of despotic commissions? Shame upon those who sneered at the very name of her to whom they owed the wealth they misused, who cry down Liberty because God has given it to them in such priceless abundance, boundless as the sunshine and the air of heaven, that they are become unconcerned of it as of the elements by which they live! Woe to those who despise the gift of God! Woe to those who have turned His grace in to a cloak for tyranny, who, like the Jews of old, have trampled under foot His covenant at the very moment that they were asserting their exclusive right to it, and denying His all embracing love!

And were there no excuses, too, in the very arguments which nineteen twentieths of the public press used to deter us from following the example of the Continent? If there had been one word of sympathy with the deep wrongs of France, Germany, Italy, Hungary—one attempt to discriminate the rights and God inspired desire of freedom from our furious and self-willed perversion of it, we would have listened to them. But, instead, what was the first, last, and cardinal, crowning argument? "The cost of sedition!" "Revolutions interfered with trade!" and therefore they were damnable! Interfered with the toil and labour of the millions? The millions would take the responsibility of that upon themselves. If the party of order cared so much for the millions, why had they left them what they are? No—it was with the profits of the few that revolutions interfered with the divine right not so much of kings, but of money making. They hampered Mammon the very fiend who is devouring the masses. The one end and aim of existence was, the maintenance of order of peace and room to make money in. And therefore Louis's spies might make France one great impation hell, German princes might sell their country piecemeal to French or Russian, the Hungarian constitution, almost the counterpart of our own, might be sacrificed at the will of an idiot or a villain; Papal misgovernment might con-

tinue to render Rome a worse den of thieves than even Papal superstition could have made it without the addition of tyranny, but order must be maintained, for how else could they make more out of the labour of the many? These were their own arguments. Whether they were likely to contribute the workmen to the powers that be, by informing him that those powers were now only the priests of the very system which was crushing him, let the reader judge.

The maintenance of order—the order of disorder—that was to be the new God before whom the working classes were to bow in spellbound awe, an idol more despicable and empty than even that old divine right of tyrants, newly applied by some well meaning but illogical personages, not merely as of old to hereditary sovereigns, but to Louis Philippe, usurers, upstarts—why not hereafter to demagogues? Bloodthirst and desperate hypocrites who would vainly thus, in the imbecility of terror, deny that very right of the physically strongest and cunningest, which, if anything, is anti Christ itself. That argument against sedition, the workmen heard, and, neglecting 1688, went on their way, such as it was, in heeding.

One would more, even at the risk of offending in my whom I should be very sorry to offend, and I have this hateful discussion, let it ever be remembered that the working men were themselves deceived, duped, by the priests of the Reform Bill, that they cherished whether rightly or wrongly it is not too late to ask a deep rooted grudge against those who had, as they thought, made their hopes and passions a stepping stone towards their own selfish ends. They were told to support the Reform Bill, not only that it was its intrinsic righteousness—which God forbid that I should deny—but because it was the first of a glorious line of steps towards their enfranchisement and now, the very men who told them this, talked presumptuously of "treachery," showed themselves the most arrogant and selfish of Conservatives, and pool poached away every attempt at further enlargement of the selfish. They were told to support it as the remedy for their own social miseries, and behold, those miseries were year by year becoming deeper, more widespread, more hopeless, then entreaties for help and mercy, in 1842, and at other times, had been hardly laid by unanswered, and almost the only practical efforts for their deliverance had been made by a Tory nobleman, they honoured and beloved Lord Ashley. They found that they had, in helping to pass the Reform Bill, only helped to give power to the two very classes who crushed them—the great labouring kings, and the small shopkeepers, that they had blindly armed their oppressors with the additional weapon of an ever increasing political majority. They had been

told, too (let that never be forgotten), that in order to carry the Reform Bill, sedition itself was lawful, they had seen the master manufacturers themselves give the signal for the plug riots, by stopping their mills. Their vanity, ferocity, sense of latent and fettered power, pride of numbers, and physical strength, had been flattered and puffed up by those who now talked only of grape shot and bayonets. They had heard the Reform Bill carried by the threats of men of rank and power, that "Manchester should march upon London." Were their masters, then, to have openly in sedition, as in everything else. What had been fair in order to compel the Reform Bill must surely be fairer still to compel the fulfilment of Reform Bill pledges. And so, imitating the example of those whom they fancied had first used and then deserted them, they, in their madness, concerted a rebellion, not primarily against the laws and constitution of their land, but against Mammon—against that accursed system of competition, slavery of labour, absorption of the small capitalists by the large ones, and of the workmen by all, which is, and was, and ever will be, their ruin. Silly and sanguinary enough were their schemes, God knows, and hopeless enough had they succeeded, for nothing diminishes in the revolutionary atmosphere but that lowest embodiment of Mammon—the black pool of Agre, and its money gamblers. But the little remains still to be fought, the struggle is internecine, only no more with weapons of flesh and blood, but with a mightier weapon—with that association which is the true bone of Mammon—the embodiment of brotherhood and love.

We should have known that before the tenth of April. Most true, reader—but wrath is blindness. You, too, surely have read more wisdom than you have perceived yet, seeing that you have von Bilde, and perhaps, too, Mills' "Political Economy." Have you perused therein the priceless chapter "On the probable fatality of the Labouring Class." If not, let me give you the reference—vol. II, p. 315, of the second edition. Read it, then self-satisfied Mammon, and perpend, for it is both a prophecy and a doom.

But, the reader may ask, how did you, with your experience of the reason, honesty, moderation, to be expected of mobs, join in a plan which, if it had succeeded, must have let loose on those "who had" in London, the whole flood of those "who had not?"

The reader shall hear. My story may be instructive, as a type of the feelings of thousands beside me.

It was the night after I had returned from D... sitting in Crossthwaite's little room, I had heard with mingled anxiety and delight the plans of my friends. They were

about to present a monster petition in favour of the Charter, to accompany it *en masse* to the door of the House of Commons, and if it was refused admittance—why then, ultion measures were the only hope. "And they will refuse it!" said Crossthwaite, "they're going, I hear, to revive some old law or other, that forbids processions within such and such a distance of the House of Commons. Let them forbid! To carry arms, to go in public procession, to present petitions openly, instead of having them made a humbug of by being laid on the table unopened by some careless member, they're our rights, and we'll have them! There's no use minding the matter—it's like the old fable of the farmer and his wheat—if we want it reaped, we must reap it ourselves. Public opinion and the pressure from without, are the only things which have carried any measure in England for the last twenty years. Neither Whigs nor Tories deny it: the governed govern their governors—that's the *'ordre de jour'* just now—and we'll have our turn at it! We'll use those House of Commons oligarchs—the tools of the squires and the shopkeepers—we'll give them a taste of pressure from without, as shall make the bar of the house creak again. And then to be under arms, day and night, till the Charter's granted!"

"And if it is refused?"

"Right! that's the word, and no other. There's no other hope. No Charter! No social reforms! We must give them ourselves, for no one else will. Look there, and judge for yourself!"

He pulled a letter out from among his papers, and threw it in my face.

"What's this?"

"That came while you were in gaol. They don't want many words about it. We sent up a memorial to Government about the ugly and pudic clothing. We told em how it was the lowest, most tyrannous most ill paid of all the branches of slop making, how men took to it only when they were starved out of everything else. We treated them to have mercy on us—entreated them to interfere between the merciless contractors, and the poor wretches on whose flesh and blood contractors, sweaters, and colonels, were all fattening, and there's the answer we got. Look at it! Read it! Again and again I've been minded to pin it on the walls, that all the world might see the might and the meanness of the Government. Read it! Sorry to say that it is utterly out of the power of Her Majesty's

to interfere as the question of wages rests entirely between the contractor and the workmen."

"He lies!" I said. "If it did, the workmen might put a pistol to the contractor's head, and say 'You shall not tempt the poor, needy, greedy, starving workers to their own destruction, and the destruction

of their class, you shall not offer these murderers, poisonous prices. If we saw you offering our neighbour a glass of laudanum, we would stop you at all risks, and we will stop you now." No! no! John, the question don't lie between workman and contractor, but between workman and contractor plus grape-and bayonets."

"Look again. There's worse comes after that. 'If Government did interfere, it would not benefit the workman, as his rate of wages depends entirely on the amount of competition between the workmen themselves.' Yes, my dear children, you must eat each other, we are far too fond parents to interfere with so delightful an amusement." Curse them—stuck, hard hearted, impotent, do-nothings! They confess themselves powerless against competition—powerless against the very devil that is destroying us, faster and faster every year! They can't help us on a single point. They can't check population, and if they could, they can't get rid of the population which exists. They don't give us a comprehensive emigration scheme. They don't lift a finger to prevent gluts in the labour market. They don't interfere between slave and slave, between slave and tyrant. They are cowards, and like cowards they shall fall!"

"Ay—like cowards they shall fall!" I answered, and from that moment I was a rebel and a conspirator.

"And will the country join us?"

"The cities will, never mind the country. They are too weak to resist their own tyrants—and they are too weak to resist us. The country's always dwelling in the back ground. A country party's sure to be a party of unbecome bigot. Nobody minds them."

I laughed. "It always was so, John. When Christianity first spread, it was in the cities—till a pagan a villager, got to mean a heathen forever and ever."

"And now it was in the French Revolution, when Popery had died out of all the rest of France, the priest and the aristocrats still found their dupes in the remote provinces."

"The sign of a dying system that, be sure, Woe to Foreignism and the Church of England, and everything like, when it gets to boasting that its stronghold is still the hearts of the agricultural poor. It is the cities, John, the cities, where the light dawns first—where man meets man, and spirit quickens spirit, and intercourse breeds knowledge, and knowledge sympathy, and sympathy enthusiasm, combination, power irresistible, which the agriculturists remain ignorant, selfish, weak, because they are isolated from each other. Let the country go. The towns shall win the Charter for England! And then for social reform, sanitary reform, adils reform, cheap food, interchange of free labour, liberty, equality, and brotherhood forever!"

Such was our Rabel Tower, whose top should reach to heaven. To understand the

maddening allurement of that dream, you must have lain, like us, for years in darkness and the pit. You must have struggled for bread, for lodging, for cleanliness, for water, for education—for all that makes life worth living—and found them becoming, year by year, more hopelessly impossible, if not to yourself, yet still to the millions less gifted than yourself, you must have sat in darkness and the shadow of death, till you were ready to welcome any ray of light, even though it should be the glare of a volcano.

CHAPTER XXXIII

PARLIAMENT REWARD

I NEVER shall forget my evening walk, as throughwaite and I strolled back together from the Convention. We had walked on some way arm in arm in silence, under the crushing and cadaverous sense of having something to conceal—something which, if those who passed carelessly in the street had known. It makes a villain and a savage of a man, that consciousness of a dark, hideous secret. And it was a hateful one—a dark and desperate necessity, which we tried to call by noble names, that faltered on our lips as we pronounced them, for the spirit of God was not in us, and instead of bright hope, and the clear, cold, lone star of duty, weltered in our imaginations a wild possible future of tumult, and flame, and blood.

"It must be done!—it shall be done!—it will be done!" burst out John, at last, in that positive, excited tone, which indicated a half-dishabit of his own words. "I've been reading Macdonald on street warfare, and I see the way as clear as day."

I felt nothing but the dogged determination of despair. "It must be tried, if the worst comes to the worst. But I have no hope. I read Somerville's answer to that Colonel Macgrime. Ten years ago he showed it was impossible. We cannot stand against artillery, we have no arms."

"I'll tell you where to buy plenty. There's a man, Power, or Bower, he's sold hundreds in the last few days, and he understands the matter. He tells us we're certain safe. There are hundreds of young men in the Government offices ready to join, if we do but succeed at first. It all depends on that. The first hour settles the fate of a revolution."

"If we succeed, yes. The cowardly world will always side with the conquering party, and we shall have every pickpocket and ruffian in our wake, plundering in the name of liberty and order."

"Then we'll shoot them like dogs, as the French did." "Mort au voleurs," shall be the word."

"Unless they shoot us. The French had

a national guard, who had property to lose, and took care of it. The shopkeepers here will be all against us, they'll all be sworn in special constables, too many, and between them and the soldiers, we shall have three to one upon us."

"Oh! that Power assumes me the soldiers will fraternise. He says there in three regiments at least have promised solemnly to shoot their officers, and give up their arms to the mob."

"Very important, if true, and very acconitely, too. I'd sooner be shot myself by fighting than see officers shot by cowardly treason."

"Well, it is ugly. I like fun play as well as any man. But it can't be done. There must be a surprise, a *coup de main*, as the French say. (poor Crossthwaite was always quoting French in those days). "Once show our strength—burst upon the tyrants like a thunder clap—and then!"

'Men of England, hours of glory,
Hours of unwritten story
Rise, shake off the chains like dew
Which on sleep have fallen on you
Ye are many, they are few'

"That's just what I am afraid they are not. Let's go and find out this man Power, and hear his authority for the soldier story. Who knows him?"

"Why, Mike Kelly and he have been a deal together of late. Kelly's a true heart, now—a true Irishman—ready for anything. Those Irish are the boys, after all—though I don't deny they do bluster and have their way a little too much in the Convention. But still Ireland's wrongs are England's. We have the same oppressors. We must make common cause against the tyrants."

"I wish to Heaven they would just have stayed at home, and ranted on the other side of the water, they had their own way there, and no Mammonts middle class to keep them down, and yet they never did an atom of good. Then eloquence is all bono-bast, and what's more, Crossthwaite though there are some fine fellows among them, nine tenths are huns in grain, and you know it."

Crossthaite turned angrily to me. "Why, you are getting as reactionary as old Mackaye himself."

"I am not—and he is not. I am ready to die on a hurdle to-morrow, if it comes to that. I haven't six months lease of life—I am going into a consumption, and a bullet is as easy a death as spitting up my lungs piecemeal. But I despise these Irish, because I can't trust them—they can't trust each other—they can't trust themselves. You know as well as I that you can't get common justice done in Ireland, because you can depend on no man's oath. You know as well as I, that in Parliament or out, nine out of ten of them will stick at no lie, even if it had been exposed and refuted fifty

times over, provided it serves the purpose of the moment, and I often think, that after all, Mackaye's right, and what's the matter with Ireland is just that and nothing else—that from the nobleman in his castle to the beggar on his dunghill, they are a nation of liars, John Crossthwaite."

"Sandy's a prejudiced old Scotchman."

"Sandy's a wiser man than you or I, and you know it."

"Oh, I don't deny that, but he's getting old, and I think he has been failing in his mind of late."

"I'm afraid he's failing in his health, he has never been the same man since they hooted him down in John Street. But he hasn't altered in his opinions one jot, and I'll tell you what I believe he's right. I'll die in this matter. Many have seen its the cause of liberty—but I've said about it, just because Irishmen are at the head of it."

"Of course they are—they have the deepest wrongs, and that makes them most earnest in the cause of right. The sympathy of suffering, as they say themselves, has bound them to the English working man against the same oppressors."

"Then let them fight those oppressors at home, and we'll do the same, that's the true way to show sympathy. Thirty beggars at home. They're always crying 'Ireland for the Irish'—why can't they leave England for the English?"

"You're envious of O'Connor's power."

"Say that again, John Crossthwaite, and we part forever!" and I threw old huns at him indignantly.

"No—but don't let's—oh, my dear old fellow, now, that perhaps, perhaps we may never meet again—but I can't bear to hear the Irish abused. They're noble, enthusiastic, generous fellows. If we English had half as warm hearts, we shouldn't be as we are now, and O'Connor's a glorious man, I tell you. Just think of him, the descendant of the ancient kings, throwing away his rank, his name, all he had in the world, for the cause of the suffering millions!"

"That's a most aristocratic speech, John, said I, smiling, in spite of my gloom. "So you keep a leader because he's descended from ancient kings, do you? I should prefer him just because he was not—just because he was a working man, and came of workmen's blood. We shall see, we shall see, whether he's staunch, after all. To my mind, little Cully's worth a great deal more, as far as earnestness goes."

"Oh! Cully's a low-bred, uneducated fellow."

"Anstocrat again, John!" said I, as we went upstairs to Kelly's room, and Crossthwaite did not answer.

There was so great a hubbub inside Kelly's room, of English, French, and Irish, all talking at once, that we knocked at intervals for full five minutes, unheeded by the

noisy crew, and I, in despair, was trying the handle, which was fast, when, to my astonishment, a heavy blow was struck on the panel from the inside, and the point of a sharp instrument driven right through, close to my knees, with the exclamation,—

"What do you think o' that, now, in a policeman's broad-basket?"

"I think," answered I, as loud as I dare, and as near the dangerous door, "if I intended really to use it, I wouldn't make such a fool's misse about it."

There was a dead silence, the door was hastily opened, and Kelly's nose poked out, while we, in spite of the horrors of the whole thing, could not help laughing at his face of terror. Seeing who we were, he welcomed us in at once, into a miserable apartment, full of pikes and daggers, brandished by some dozen miserable, ragged, half-starved artisans. Three months, I saw at once, were sleep working time. There was a blessed and landed Frenchman or two, but the majority were, as was to have been expected, the oppressed, the starved, the outcast, the despairing, the insane, "the dangerous classes," which society creates, and then shrinks in horror like Frankenstein, from the monster her own clumsy civilization has created. Then I'minkinsten Maunton! bast them not had warnings enough, either to make thy machines like men, or stop thy bungling, and let God make them for Himself."

I will not repeat what I heard there. There is only a little Italian id that night now sitting "in his right mind"—though not yet "balded" waiting for God's deliverance rather than his own.

We got Kelt out of the room into the street, and began inquiring of him the whereabouts of this sad fellow, or Power. He didn't know, the flattened-headed Irishman that he was. "Pax, by the bye, he'd forgotten an he went to look for him at the place he told him, and they didn't know such a one there."

"Oh, ho! Mr. Power has an *alias*, then? Perhaps an *alias* too?"

"He didn't know his name rightly. Some said it was Brown, but he was a loath of a boy—a thine people's man. Boddad, he gov' away arms affther and affther to them that couldn't buy 'em. An' he's as free-spoken as a hound, but he's put me into the confidence. Come down the street a bit, an' I'll tell ye. I'll be Lord Lieutenant o' Dublin Castle myself, if it so happens, as shure as there's no snakes in onbl Ireland, an' revenge her wrongs ankle-deep in the blood o' the Saxon." Whinnoo! for the martyrized memory o' the three hundred thousand vargens o' Wexford!"

"Hold your tongue, you ass!" said Cross-thwaite, as he clapped his hand over his mouth, expecting every moment to find us all there in the Rhadamanthine grasp of a policeman, while I stood long, long, as people

will, for mere disgust at the ridiculous which almost always intermingles with the horrible.

At last, out it came—

"Boddad! we're going to do it! London's to be set o' fire in seventeen places at the same moment, an' I'm to light two of them to me own self, and make a hollycrust—ay, that's the word—o' Ireland's scorpions to sting them elves to death in circling flame—"

"You would not do such a villainous thing?" cried we, both at once.

"Boddad! but I won't harm a hair o' their heads! Shure, we'll save the women and children alive, and run for the fire engines our blessed selves, and then out with the pikes, and save the Bank and the Tower—"

"An' av' I live, I live victoriously,
An' av' I die, my soul in glory lies,
I love it all—well!"

I was getting desperate—the whole thing seemed at once so horrible and so impossible. There must be some villainous trap at the bottom of it.

"If you don't tell me more about this fellow Power, Mike," said I, "I'll blow your brains out on the spot—either you or he are villains." And I valiantly pulled out my only weapon, the door key, and put it to his head.

"Oh! my ye mind him? He's a broth of a boy, and I'll tell ye. Shure he knows all about the red coats, case he's an artful cry-mur himself, and that's the way he's found out his gran' combustible."

"An' artful man?" said John. "He told me he was a writer for the press."

"Boddad, then, he's mistaken himself intrudely, for he told me with his own mouth. And I'll show ye the thing he sould me as is to do it. Shure, it'll set fire to the stones o' the street, an' ye point a bit vittol on it."

"Set fire to stones? I must see that before I believe it."

"Shure in' ye shall, then. Where'll I buy a bit? Shure a shop is there open this time o' night, an' I troth I forgot the name o' it intrudely. Foker o' Moses, but here's a bit in my pocket."

And out of his tattered coat tail he higgled a flask of powder and a lump of some cheap chemical salt, whose name I have, I am ashamed to say, forgotten.

"You're a pretty fellow to keep such things in the same pocket with gunpowder!"

"Come along to Muckay's," said Cross-thwaite. "I'll see to the bottom of this. Boddad, but I think the fellows a cursed monstherd—some Government spy."

"Spy is he, then? Oh! the thief o' the world! I'll stab him! I'll murder him! an' burn the town afterwards, all the same."

"Unless," said I, "just as you've got your precious combustible to light off, up he comes from behind the corner and gives you in charge to a policeman. It's a villainous

trap, you miserable fool, as sure as the moon's in heaven."

"Upon my word, I am afraid it is—and I'm trapped too."

"Blood and turf! thin, it's he that I'll trap, thin. There's two millions free and mightened Irishmen in London, to avenge my martyrdom wi' pikos and baggonets like raving salvages, and blood for blood!"

"Like salvages, indeed!" said I to Cross-thwaite. "And pretty savage company we are keeping. Liberty, like poverty, makes a man acquainted with strange companions."

"And who's made 'em savages? Who has left them savages? That the greatest nation of the earth has had Ireland in her hands three hundred years—and her people still to be savages!—if that don't justify a revolution, what does? Why, it's just because these poor hutes are what they are, that rebellion becomes a sacred duty. It's for them—for such fools, brutes, as that thug, and the millions more like him, and likely to remain like him, that I've made up my mind to do or die to-morrow!"

There was a grand half-truth, distorted, miscoloured in the words, that silenced me for the time.

We entered Mackaye's door, strongly enough at that time of night, it stood wide open. What could be the matter? I heard loud voices in the inner room, and ran forward calling his name, when, to my astonishment, out past me rushed a tall man, followed by a steaming kettle, which, missing him, took full effect on Kelly's chest, as he stood in the entry, filling his shoes with boiling water, and producing a roar that might have been heard at Temple Bar.

"What's the matter?"

"Have I hit him?" said the old man, in a state of unusual excitement.

"Bedad! it was the man in Power! the cursed spy! An' just as I was going to slate the villain nately, came the kettle, and kilt me all over!"

"Power? He's as many names as a pick-pocket, and as many callings, too, I'll warrant. He came sneaking in to tell me the rogues were a' ready to give up their arms if I'd come forward to them to-morrow. So I tauld him, sir! he was so sure o't, he'd better gang and tak' the arms himself, an' then he let out he'd been a policeman!"

"A policeman!" said both Cross-thwaite and Kelly, with strong expletives.

"A policeman doon in Manchester, I thought I kenne'd his face for the first. And when the rascal saw he'd let out too much, he wanted to make out that he'd been a' doing a spy for the Chartists, while was makin' believe to be a spy o' the Government. Saw when he came that far, I put up wi' the hot water, and bleezed awa' at him, an' noo I maun gang and get some more, for my drop toky!"

Sandy had a little vitriol in the house so we took the combustible down into the cellar,

and tried it. It blazed up; but burnt the stone as much as the reader may expect. We next tried it on a lump of wood. It just scorched the place where it lay, and then went out, leaving poor Kelly perfectly frantic with rage, terror, and disappointment. He dashed upstairs, and out into the street, on a wild-goose chase after the rascal, and we saw no more of him that night.

I relate a simple fact. I am afraid—perhaps, for the poor workmen's sake, I should say I am glad, that it was not an unique one. Villains of this kind, both in April and in June, mixed among the working-men, excited their worst passions by bloodthirsty declamations and extravagant promises of success, sold them arms, and then, like the shameless wretch on whose evidence Cuffy and Jones were principally convicted, bore witness against their own victims, unblushingly declaring themselves to have been all along the tools of the Government. I entreat all those who disbelieve this apparently prodigious assertion, to read the evidence given on the trial of the John Street conspirators, and judge for themselves.

"The petition's billing faster than ever!" said Cross-thwaite, as that evening we returned to Mackaye's little back room.

"Don't plenty," grumbled the old man, who had settled himself again to his pipe, with his feet on the fender, and his head half-way up the chimney.

"Now, or never!" went on Cross-thwaite, without minding him. "Now, or never! The manufacturing districts seem more firm than ever."

"An' words cheap," commented Mackaye, *salto loco*.

"Well," I said, "Heaven keep us from the necessity of ulterior resources! But what must be, must."

"The Government expect it, I can tell you. They're in a pitiable funk, I hear. One regiment's ordered to Uxbridge already, because they don't trust it. They'll find soldiers are men, I do believe, after all."

"Men they are," said Sandy, "an' therefore they'll no be fools enough to stan' by an' see ye put down a' that is, to build up ye yourselves dunnit yet rightly ken what Men? Ay, and wi' man common sense in them than some that had man opportunities."

"I think I've settled everything," went on Cross-thwaite, who seemed not to have heard the best speech "settled everything—for poor Kate, I mean. If anything happens to me, she has friends at Cork—she thinks so at least—and they'd get her out to service somewhere (God knows)." And his face worked fearfully a minute.

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori!" said I.

"There are twa methods o' fulfilling that saw, I'm thinkin'. Impremsis, to shoot your neighbour, in secundis, to hang yourself."

"What do you mean by grumbling at the whole thing in this way, Mr. Mackaye? Are you, too, going to shrink back from The Cause, now that liberty is at the very doors?"

"Oo, then, I'm stanch enouch I ha' laid in my ain stock o' weapons for the fecht at Armageddon."

"You don't mean it?" What have you got?"

"A braw now halter, an' a muckle nail. There's a gran' tough bonny here ayont the ingle, will band me a crumse and cantie, when the time comes."

"What on earth do you mean?" asked we both together.

"Ha' ye looked into the monster petition?"

"Of course we have, and signed it too!"

"Monster? Ay, ferlie! Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum. Desmit in pisces mulier for mosca superne. Leeberty, the bonnie lassie, wi' a sough's fud to her? I'll no sign it. I dinna consort wi' shoplifters, an' rholes, an' suckin' bairns—wi' long nose, an' short nose, an' pug nose, an' seventeen Denks o' Wellington, it alone a baker's dozen o' Queens. It's no company, that, for a pur mild patriot!"

"Why, my dear Mackaye," said I, "you know the Reform Bill petitions were just as bad."

"And the Anti Corn Law ones, too, for that matter," said Crossthwaite. "You know we can't help accidents, the petition will never be looked through."

"It's always been the plan with Whigs and Tories, too."

"I ken that better than ye, I guess."

"And isn't everything fair in a good cause?" said Crossthwaite. "Desperate men really can't be so dainty."

"How long ha' ye learnt that devil's loo, Johnnie? Ye were no o' that mind five years ago, had ha' ye been to Exeter—a the while? As fair in the cause o' Mammon, in the cause o' cheap bread, that means cheap wages, but in the cause o' God—wae's me, that ever I suld see this day ower again! ower again! Like the dog to his vomit—just as it was ten, twenty, fifty years ago!" I'll just ha' a petition o' ains to myself. I, an' a twa or three honest men. Besides, ye're just eight days ower time wi' it."

"What do you mean?"

"Suld ha' sent it in the 1st o' April, an' no the 10th, A' Fools' Day wud ha' suited wi' it ferlie!"

"Mr. Mackaye," said Crossthwaite, in a passion, "I shall certainly inform the Convention of your extraordinary language!"

"Do, laddie! do, then! Au' tell 'em thus, too"—and, as he rose, his whole face and figure assumed a dignity, an awfulness, which I had never seen before in him—"tell them that ha' driven out * * * and * * *, an' everyone that daur speak a word o' common sense, or common humanity—they

that stone the prophets, an' quench the Spirit o' God, and love a lie an' them that mak' the same—them that think to bring about the reign o' love an' brotherhood wi' pikes an' vitriol bottles, murder an' blasphemy—tell 'em than an' o' fourscore years and mair—an' that has grawn grey in the people's cause—that sat at the feet o' Cuthwright, an' knelt by the deathbed o' Rabbin Burns—an' that dicent Burlett as he went to the Tower, an' spent his wee earnings for Hunt an' Cobbett—an' that beheld the shaking o' the nations in the ninety three, and heard the birth-shriek o' a new-born world—an' that, while he was yet a callant, saw Liberty afar off, an' seeing her, was glad, as for a bonny bride, an' followed her through the wilderness for threescore weary, wae'ful years—sends them the last message that e'er he'll send on earth, tell 'em that they're the slaves o' worse than priests and kings—the slaves o' their ain lusts an' passions—the slaves o' every loud-tongued knave an' mountebank that'll pamper them in their self-conceit, and that the gude God'll smite 'em down, and bring em to nought, and scatter 'em abroad, till they repent, an' get clean hearts an' a richt spirit within them, and learn His lesson that he's been trying to teach 'em this threescore years—that the cause o' the people is the cause o' Him that made the people an' wae to them that tak' the deevil's tools to do his wark wi'! Gude, gude us!—What was you, Alton, laddie?"

"What?"

"But I saw a spark o' fire fa' into your bosom! I've a faith in sicca heathen omens, but auld Cathmas wud say it's a sign o' death within the year save ye from it, my poor misguidit bairn! Aiblins a hie slinight o' my een, it might be—I've had them unco often the day—"

And he stooped down to the fire, and began to light his pipe, muttering to himself,—

"Sixty years o' madness! sixty years o' madness! How long, O Lord, before thou bring these poor daff bodies to their richt mind again!"

We stood watching him, and interchanging looks—expecting something, we knew not what.

Suddenly he sank forward on his knees, with his hands on the bars of the grate, we rushed forward and caught him up. He turned his eyes up to me, speechless with a ghastly expression; one side of his face was all drawn aside and helpless as a child, he let us lift him to his bed, and there he lay, staring at the ceiling.

Four weary days passed by—it was the night of the ninth of April. In the evening of that day his speech returned to him on a sudden—he seemed uneasy about something, and several times asked Katie the day of the month.

"Before the tenth—ay, we mair pray for

that I doubt but I'm owor hearty yet—I canna bide to see the shamo o' that day—

Na—I'll tak' no potions nor pills—gin it were na for scruples o' conscience, I'd apocartereeze a'thegithor, after the manner o' the ancient philosophers. But it's no lawful, I misdoubt, to starve onesel'."

"Here is the doctor," said Katie

"Doctor? Wha ca'll for doctors? Canst thou administer to a mind diseased? Can ye tak' long nose, an' short nose, an' snub nose, an' seventeen Denks o' Wellingtons out o' my puddins? Will you castor oil, and your calomel, an' your eroton, do that? D'yo ken a medicamentum that'll put humans into workmen? Non tribus Anticyis! Tons o' hellebore—acres o' strait-waistcoats—a hail police force o' head-doctors winna do it. Juvat insanire—this their way is their folly, as auld Benjamin o' Tudela saith of the heathen Heigho! 'Forty years lang was he grievit wi' this generation, an' swore in His wrath that they suldna enter into His rest.' Pulse 'tongue' ay, shak' your lugs, an' tak' your fee, and dinna keep auld folk out o' their graves. Can ye sang?"

The doctor meekly confessed his inability

"That's pity—or I'd gar ye sang 'Auld Langsyne,'—

"We twa hae paddit in the burn—"

Aweel, aweel, aweel—"

Weary and solemn was that long night, as we sat there, with the crushing weight of the morrow on our minds, watching by that deathbed, listening hour after hour to the rambling soliloquies of the old man, as "he babbl'd of green fields," yet I vorily believe that to all of us, especially to poor little Katie, the active present interest of tending him, kept us from going all but mad with anxiety and excitement. But it was weary work, —and yet, too, strangely interesting, as at times there came scraps of old Scotch love-poetry, contrasting sadly with the grim withered lips that uttered them—hints to me of some sorrow long since suffered, but never healed. I had never heard him allude to such an event before but once, on the first day of our acquaintance.

"I went to the kirk,
My luve sat afore me,
I trow my twa een
Tauld him a sweet story
Aye yakin' o'—
Wakin' aye and weary—
I thoct a the kirk
Saw me an' my deary"

'Aye wakin' o'!'—Do ye think, noo, we sail ha' knowledge in the next wail o' them we loved on earth? I askit that same o' Rab Burns ance, sitting up a' canty at Tibbie Shiels in Meggot Vale, an' he said, pur shiol, he 'didna ken ower weell, we maun

bide and see,—bide and see—that's the gran' philosophy o' life, after a' Aiblins folk'll ken their true freens there, an' there'll be na mair luve coft and sauld for aillie—

"(Fear and tocher is needit nane
I' the countrie whaur my luve is gane."

(Gin I had a true freen the noo' to gang down the wynd, an' find if it war but an auld Abraham o' a blue-gown, wi' a bit crowl, or a fizzle-pipe, to play fae the Bush aboon Traquair! Na, na, na, it's singing the Lord's song in a strange land, that wad be; an' I hope the application's no irreverent, for aye that was rearit amang the hills o' God, an' the trees o' the forest which He hath planted

"Oh the broom, an' the bonny yellow broom,
The broom o' the Cowden knows!"

Hech, but sho wad hit that bounily!

Did ye ever gang listering saumons by night? Ou, but it's bray sport, wi' the seas an' the brack's a' glowering out bludo red i' the lorch-light, and the bonnie hizzas skelping an' skirling on the bank—

There was a gran' lolly, a bonnie lolly, cam' in and talked like an angel o' Gail to pur auld Sandy, anent the salvation o' his soul. But I tauld her no' to fash hersel'! It's no my view o' human life, that a man's sent into the world just to save his soul, an' creep out again. An' I saul I wad leave the savin' o' my soul to Him that made my soul, it was in richt gude keepin' there, I'd war rant. An' then she was unco sleyel when she found I didna laud wi' the Athanasian creed. An' I tauld her, na', if He that died on the cross was sic a aye as sho mial I tenk Him to be, there was na that pido nor spito in him, be sure, to send a punn auld sinful, guileless body to eternal fire, because he didna a'thegither understand the honour due to His name."

"Who was this lady?"

He did not seem to know, and Katie had never heard of her before—"some district visitor" or other."

"I sair misdoubt but the auld creeds are in the richt anent Him, after a'! I'd gie muckle to think it—there's na comfort as it is. Aiblins there might be a wee comfort in that, for a poor auld worn-out patriot. But it's ower late to change. I tauld her that, too, ance. It's ower late to put new wine into auld bottles. I was unco ill-winn to the high doctrines anco, when I was a bit ladlie, an' sat in the wee kirk by my minnie an' my daddie—a richt stern auld Cameroman sort o' bodie he was, too, but as I grew, and grew, the bed was ower short for a man to stretch himsel' thereon, and the plaidie ower strait for a man to fauld himsel' therein; and so I

had to gang my gate a' naked in the matter
o' formulae, as Maister Tuinmas has it."

"Ah! do send for a priest, or a clergy-
man!" said Katie, who partly understood
his meaning.

"Parson? He canna put new skin on auld
scars. Na bit stickit crinate laddie for me,
to gang argumentin' wi' me that's auld
enough to be his gran'father. When the
persons will hear me faucit God's people,
then I'll hear them anent Heil

"—Sae I'm wearin' awa, Jean,
To the land o' the leal—"

Gin I ever get thither. Katie, here, hands
wi' purgatory, yo ken, whaur souls are
burnt clean again—like bacey-pipe—

"When Razor brigs is over and past,
Every night and aile,
To Whinny Muir thou comest at last,
And God receive thy sawle

"Gin hosen an' shoon thou gavest nane,
Every night and aile,
The whins shall pike thee until the bane,
And God receive thy sawle."

Amen. There's mair things aheon, as well
as below, than are dreamt o' mon philosophy.
At least, where'er I go, I'll meet no long
nose, nor short nose, nor snub nose patriots
there, nor purr gowks stealing the deil's
tools to do God's wark wi'. Out among the
eternities an' the idealities—it's no that di'ny
outlook, after a', to find truth an' fact—
naught but truth an' fact—e'en beside the
worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not
quenched!"

"God forbid!" said Katie.

"Gin do whatsoever shall please Him,
Katie an' that's aye gude, like Himsel!
Shall no the Judge of all the earth do right
—right—right?"

And murmuring that word of words to
himself, over and over, more and more faintly,
he turned slowly over, and seemed to
slumber—

Some half hour passed before we tried to
stu him. He was dead.

And the candles waned grey, and the great
light streamled in through every crack and
cranny, and the sun had risen on the Tenth
of April. What would be done before that
sun had set?

What would be done? Just what we had
the might to do, and therefore, according
to the formula on which we were about to
act, that mights are rights, jnat what we
had the right to do—nothing. Futility, ab-
surdity, vanity, and vexation of spirit. I
shall make my next a short chapter. It is
a day to be forgotten—and forgiven.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE TENTH OF APRIL.

AND he was gone at last! Kind women,
whom his unknown charities had saved
from shame, laid him out duly, and closed
his eyes, and bound up that face that never
would beam again with genial humour,
those lips that would never again speak
courage and counsel to the sinful, the op-
pressed, the forgotten. And there he lay,
the old warrior dead upon his shield, worn
out by long years of manifold toil in The
People's Cause, and, saddest thought of all,
by disappointment in those for whom he
spent his soul. True, he was aged, no one
knew how old. He had said, more than
eighty years, but we had shortened his life,
and we knew it. He would never see that
deliverance for which he had been toiling
ever since the days when, as a boy, he had
listened to Tooke and Cartwright, and the
patriarchs of the people's freedom. Bitter,
bitter, were our thoughts, and bitter were
our tears, as Cressethwaite and I stood
watching that beloved face, now in death
refined to a grandeur, to a youthful simpli-
city and delicacy, which we had never seen
on it before—calm and strong—the square
jaws set firm even in death—the lower lip
still clenched above the upper, as if in a
divine indignation and everlasting protest,
even in the grave, against the devourers of
the earth. Yes, he was gone—the old lion,
worn out with many wounds, dead in his
cage. Where could we replace him?
There were gallant men amongst us, eloquent
well read, earnest—men whose names will
ring through this land ere long—men who
had been taught wisdom, even as he, by the
sinfulness, the apathy, the ingratitude, as
well as by the sufferings of their fellows.
But where should we two find again the
learning, the moderation, the long experi-
ence—above all, the more than woman's
tenderness of him whom we had lost? And
at that time, too, of all others! Alas! we
had despised his counsel, wayward and
fierce, we would have none of his reproof,
and now God had withdrawn him from us,
the righteous was taken away from the evil
to come. For we knew that evil was coming.
We felt all along that we should *not* succeed.
But we were desperate, and his death
made us more desperate, still at the moment
it threw us nearer to each other. Yes—we
were rudderless upon a roaring sea, and all
before us blank with lurid blinding mist, but
still we were together, to live and die, and as
we looked into each other's eyes, and clasped
each other's hands above the dead man's
face, we felt that there was love between us
as of Jonathan and David, passing the live
of woman.

Few words passed. Even our passionate artisan nature, so sensitive and voluble in general, in comparison with the cold reserve of the field labourer and the gentleman, was hushed in silent awe between the thought of the past and the thought of the future. We felt ourselves trembling between two worlds. We felt that to-morrow must decide our destiny—and we felt rightly, though little we guessed what that destiny would be!

But it was time to go. We had to prepare for the meeting. We must be at Kennington Common within three hours at furthest, and Crossthwaite hurried away, leaving Kate and me to watch the dead.

And then came across me the thought of another deathbed—my mother's—how she had lain and lain, while I was far away. And then I wondered whether she had suffered much, or faded away at last in a peaceful sleep, as he had. And then I wondered how her corpse had looked, and pictured it to myself, lying in the little old room, day after day, till they scrowled the coffin down—before I came! Cruel! Did she look as calm, as grand in death, as he who lay there? And as I watched the old man's features, I seemed to trace in them the strangest likeness to my mother's. The strangest likeness! I could not shake it off. It became intense—miraculous. Was it she, or was it he, who lay there? I shook my self and. My limbs ached, my limbs were heavy, my brain and eyes swam round. I must be over-fatigued by excitement and sleeplessness. I would go downstairs into the fresh air, and shake it off.

As I came down the passage, a woman, dressed in black, was standing at the door, speaking to one of the lodgers. "And he is dead! Oh, if I had but known sooner that he was even ill!"

That voice—that figure—surely, I knew them!—them, at least, there was no mistaking! Or was it another phantom of my disordered brain? I pushed forward to the door, and as I did so, she turned, and our eyes met full. It was she—Lady Ellerton! and, worn, transformed by widow's weeds, but that face was like no other's still. Why did I drop my eyes and draw back at the first glance like a guilty coward? She beckoned me towards her, went out into the street, and herself began the conversation, from which I shrank, I know not why.

"When did he die?"

"Just at sunrise this morning. But how came you here to visit him? Were you the lady who, as he said, came to him a few days since?"

She did not answer my question. "At sunrise this morning?—A fitting time for him to die, before he sees the ruin and disgrace of those for whom he laboured. And you, too, I hear, are taking your share in this projected madness and iniquity?"

"What right have you," I asked, brist-

ling up at a sudden suspicion that crossed me, "to use such words about me?"

"Recollect," she answered mildly but firmly, "your conduct, three years ago, at D."

"What," I said, "was it not proved upon my trial, that I exerted all my powers, endangered my very life, to prevent outrage in that case?"

"It was proved upon your trial," she replied, in a marked tone, "but we were informed, and, alas! from authority only too good, namely, from that of an eyewitness, of the sanguinary and ferocious language which you were not afraid to use at the meeting in London, only two nights before the riot."

I turned white with rage and indignation. "Toll me," I said—"tell me, if you have any honour, who dared forge such an atrocious calumny? No! you need not tell me. I see well enough now. He should have told you that I exposed myself that night to insult, not by advocating, but by opposing violence, as I have always done. As I would now, were not I desperate—hopeless of any other path to liberty. And as for this coming struggle, have I not written to my cousin, humiliating as it was to me, to beg him to warn you all from me, lest—"

I could not finish the sentence.

"You wrote? He has warned us, but he never mentioned your name. He spoke of his knowledge as having been picked up by himself at personal risk to his clerical character."

"The risk, I presume, of being known to have actually received a letter from a Unitarian, but I wrote—on my honour I wrote—a week ago, and received no word of answer."

"Is this true?" she asked.

"A man is not likely to deal in useless falsehoods, who knows not whether he shall live to see the sot of sin!"

"Then you are implicated in this expected insurrection?"

"I am implicated," I answered, "with the people, what they do I shall do. Those who once called themselves the patrons of the tailor poet, left the mistaken enthusiast to languish for three years in prison, without a sign, a hint of mercy, pity, remembrance. Society has cast me off, and, in casting me off, it has sent me off to my own people, where I should have stayed from the beginning. Now I am at my post, because I am among my class. If they triumph peacefully, I triumph with them. If they need blood to gain their rights, be it so. Let the blood be upon the head of those who refuse, not those who demand. At least, I shall be with my own people. And if I die, what better thing on earth can happen to me?"

"But the law?" she said.

"Do not talk to me of law! I know it too well in practice to be moved by any

theories about it. Laws are no law, but tyranny, when the few make them, in order to oppress the many by them."

"Oh!" she said, in a voice of passionate earnestness, which I had never heard from her before, "stop—for God's sake, stop! You know not what you are saying—what you are doing. Oh! that I had met you before—that I had had more time to speak to poor Mackayo! Oh! wait, wait—there is a deliverance for you! but never in this path—no! And just while I, and nobler far than I, are longing and struggling to find the means of telling you your deliverance, you, in the madness of your haste, are making it impossible!"

There was a wild sincerity in her words—an almost imploring tenderness in her tone.

"So young!" she said—"so young to be lost thus!"

I was intensely moved. I felt, I knew, that she had a message for me. I felt that this was the only intellect in the world to which I would have submitted mine, and, for one moment, all the angel and all the devil in me wrestled for the mastery. If I could but have trusted her one moment!

No! all the pride, the spite, the suspicion, the prejudice of years, rolled back upon me. "An aristocrat! and she, too, the one who has kept me from Lillian!" And in my bitterness, not daring to speak the real thought within me, I answered with a flippant sneer—

"Yes, madam! like Cordelia, so young, yet so intender"—thanks to the metrices of the upper classes!"

Did she turn away in indignation? No, by Heaven! there was nothing upon her face but the intensest yearning pity. If she had spoken again, she would have conquered, but for those perfect lips could open, the thought of thoughts flashed across me.

"Tell me one thing! Is my cousin George to be married to—" and I stopped.

"He is."

"And yet," I said, "you wish to turn me back from dying on a barricade!" And, without waiting for a reply, I hurried down the street in all the fury of despair.

I have promised to say little about the tenth of April, for indeed I have no heart to do so. Every one of Mackayo's predictions came true! We had arrayed against us, by our own folly, the very physical force to which we had appealed. The dread of general plunder and outrage by the savages of London, the national hatred of that French and Irish interference of which we had boasted, arrayed against us thousands of special constables, who had in the abstract little or no objection to our political opinions. The practical common sense of England, whatever discontent it might feel with the existing system, refused to let it be buried rudely down, on the mere chance of building up on its ruins something as yet untried, and

even undefined. Above all, the people would not rise. Whatever sympathy they had with us, they did not care to show it. And then futility after futility exposed itself. The meeting which was to have been counted by hundreds of thousands, numbered hardly its tens of thousands, and of them a frightful proportion were of those very rascal classes, against whom we ourselves had offered to be sworn in as special constables. O'Connor's courage failed him after all. He contrived to be called away, at the critical moment, by some problematical superintendent of police. Poor Cuffey, the honestest, if not the wisest, speaker there, leapt off the waggon, exclaiming that we were all "humbugged and betrayed!" and the meeting broke up pitifully piecemeal, drenched and cowed, body and soul, by pouring rain, on its way home—for the very heavens mercifully helped to quench our folly—while the monster petition crawled ludicrously away in a hack cab, to be dragged to the floor of the House of Commons amid roars of laughter—"mextinguishable laughter," as of Tennyson's Epicurean Gods.

"Careless of mankind

For they lie beside their nectar, and their bolts are hurled
Far below them in their valleys, and the clouds are
lightly curled
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
world
There they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring
deeps and fiery rain is
Clanging lights, and flashing towns and sinking ships,
and fragrant winds
But they smile—they find it music, central in a doleful
world,
Steaming up, a lamentation, and an ancient tale of
wrong
Like a tale of little meaning, though the words are
strong,
Chanted by an ill-used race of men that cleave the
soil,
Now the seed and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing little yearly dues of wheat and wine and oil,
Till they perish, and they suffer—some, tis whispered,
down in hell
Suffer endless anguish!"

Truly truly, great poets words are vaster than the singers themselves suppose!

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE LOWEST DEGREE

SULLEN, disappointed, desperate, I strode along the streets that evening, careless whither I went. The people's cause was lost the Charter a laughing stock. That the party which monopolises wealth, rank, and, as it fancied, education and intelligence, should have been driven, degraded, to appeal to brute force for self defence—that thought gave me a savage joy, but that it should have conquered by that last, lowest resource! That the few should be still stronger than

the many, or the many still too cold-hearted and coward to face the few—that sickened me. I hated "the well-born young special constables whom I passed, because they would have fought. I hated the gent and shopkeeper special constables, because they would have run away. I hated my own party, because they had gone too far—because they had not gone far enough. I hated myself, because I had not produced some marvellous effect—though what that was to have been I could not tell—and hated myself all the more for that ignorance.

A group of effeminate shopkeepers passed me, shouting "God save the Queen!" "Hypocrites!" I cried in my heart—they mean "God save our shops!" Lurs! They keep up willingly the useful calumny, that their slaves and victims are disloyal as well as miserable!

I was utterly abused—no, not utterly, for my self-contempt still vented itself—not in forgiveness, but in universal hatred and defiance. Suddenly I perceived my cousin, laughing and jesting with a party of fashionable young specials. I shrank from him, and yet, I know not why, drew as near him as I could, unobserved—near enough to catch the words,

"Upon my honour, Locke, I believe you are a Chartist yourself at heart."

"At least I am no Communist," said he, in a significant tone. "There is one little bit of real property which I have no intention of sharing with my neighbours."

"What, the little beauty somewhere near Cavendish Square?"

"That's my business."

"Whereby you mean that you are on your way to her now? Well, I am invited to the wedding, remember."

He pushed on, laughingly, without answering. I followed him fast—"near Cavendish Square!"—the very part of the town where Lillian lived! I had had, as yet, a horror of going near it, but now, an intolerable suspicion scourged me forward, and I dogged his steps, hiding behind pillars, and at the corners of streets, and then running on, till I got sight of him again. He went through Cavendish Square, up Harley Street—was it possible? I gnashed my teeth at the thought. But it must be so. He stopped at the dean's house, knocked, and entered, without parley.

In a minute I was breathless on the doorstep, and knocked. I had no plan, no object, except the wild wish to see my own despair. I never thought of the chances of being recognised by the servants, or of anything else, except of Lillian by my cousin's side.

The footman came out smiling. "What did I want?"

"I—I—Mr Locke."

"Well, you needn't be in such a hurry!" (with a significant grin). "Mr. Locke's

likely to be busy for a few minutes yet, I expect!"

Evidently the man did not know me.

"Tell him that—that a person wishes to speak to him on particular business." Though I had no more notion what that business was than the man himself.

"Sit down in the hall."

And I heard the fellow, a moment afterwards, gossiping and laughing with the maids below about "the young couple."

To sit down was impossible; my only thought was—where was Lillian?

Voices in an adjoining room caught my ear. His! yes—and her's too—soft and low. What devil prompted me to turn eaves-dropper? to run headlong into temptation? I was close to the dining-room door, but they were not there—evidently they were in the back room, which, as I knew, opened into it with folding doors. I—I must confess all—Noiselessly, with craft like a mad-mau's, I turned the handle, slipped in as stealthily as a cat—the folding doors were slightly open. I had a view of all that passed within. A horrible fascination seemed to keep my eyes fixed on them, in spite of myself. Honour, shame, despair, bade me turn away, but in vain.

I saw them. How can I write it? Yet I will. I saw them sitting together on the sofa. Their arms were round each other. Her head lay upon his breast, he bent over her with an intense gaze, as of a basilisk, I thought, how do I know that it was not the fierceness of his love? Who could have helped loving her?

Suddenly she raised her head, and looked up in his face—her eyes burning with tenderness, her cheeks burning with mingled delight and modesty—their lips met, and clung together. . . . It seemed a life—an eternity—before they parted again. Then the spell was broken, and I rushed from the room.

Faint, giddy, and blind, I just recollect leaning against the wall of the staircase. He came hastily out, and started as he saw me. My face told all.

"What? Eavesdropping?" he said, in a tone of unutterable scorn. I answered nothing, but looked stupidly and fixedly in his face, while he glared at me with that keen, burning, intolerable eye. I longed to spring at his throat, but that eye held me as the snake's holds the deer. At last I found words.

"Traitor! everywhere—in everything—tricking me—supplanting me—in my friends—in my love!"

"Your love? Yours?" And the fixed eye still glared upon me. "Lusson, cousin Alton! The strong and the weak have been matched for the same prize and what wonder, if the strong man conquers? Go and ask Lillian how she likes the thought of being a Communist's love!"

As when, in a nightmare, we try by a

desperate effort to break the spell, I sprang forward, and struck at him, he put my hand by carelessly, and felled me bleeding to the ground. I recollect hardly anything more, till I found myself thrust into the street by snoring footmen, and heard them call after me "Chartist" and "Communist" as I rushed along the pavement, careless where I went.

I strode and staggered on through street after street, running blindly against passengers, dashing under horses' heads, hoodlums of warnings and execrations, till I found myself, I know not how, on Waterloo Bridge. I had meant to go there when I left the door. I know that at least—and now I was there.

I buried myself in a recess of the bridge, and stared around and up and down.

I was alone—deserted even by myself. Mother, sister, friends, love, the idol of my life, were all gone. I could have borne that. But to be shamed, and know that I deserved it, to be deserted by my own honour, self-respect, strength of will—who can bear that?

I could have borne it, had one thing been left—faith in my own destiny—the inner hope that God had called me to do a work for him.

"What drives the Frenchman to suicide?" I asked myself, arguing ever even in the face of death and hell—"His faith in nothing but his own lusts and pleasures; and when they are gone, then comes the pan of charcoal and all is over. What drives the German? His faith in nothing but his own brain. He has fallen down and worshipped that miscreant 'Ich' of his, and made that, and not God's will, the centre and root of his philosophy, his poetry, and his self-idolising aesthetics, and when it fails him, then for prismatic acid, and nonentity. Those old Romans, too—why, they are the very *experimentum crucis* of suicide! As long as they fancied that they had a calling to serve the State, they could live on and suffer. But when they found no more work left for them, then they could die—as Porcia did—as Cato—as I ought. What is there left for me to do?—outcast, disgraced, useless, decrepit."

I looked out over the bridge into the desolate night. Below me the dark moaning river-eddies hurried downward. The wild west wind howled past me, and leapt over the parapet downward. The huge reflection of Saint Paul's, the great tap roots of light from lamp and window that shone upon the lurid stream, pointed down—down—down. A black wherry shot through the arch beneath me, still and smoothly downward. My brain began to whirl madly—I sprang upon the step. A man rushed past me, clambered on the parapet, and threw up his arms wildly. A moment more, and he would have leapt into the stream. The sight recalled me to my senses—say, rather, it re-awoke in me the spirit of mankind. I

seized him by the arm, tore him down upon the pavement, and held him, in spite of his frantic struggles. It was Johnny Downes! Gaunt, ragged, sodden, blear-eyed, drivelling, the worn-out gin drinker stood, his momentary paroxysm of strength gone, trembling and staggering.

"Why won't you let a cove die? Why won't you let a cove die? They're all dead—drunk, and poisoned, and dead! What is there left?"—he burst out suddenly in his old ranting style—"what is there left on earth to live for? The prayers of liberty are answered by the laughter of tyrants, her sun is sunk beneath the ocean wave, and her pipe put out by the raging billows of aristocracy! These starving millions of Kensington Common—where are they? Where? I axes you," he cried fiercely, raising his voice to a womanish scream—"where are they?"

"Gone home to bed, like sensible people, and you had better go too."

"Bed? I sold ours a month ago, but we'll go. Come along, and I'll show you my wife and family, and we'll have a tear-party—Jacob's Island tea. Come along!"

"Fly, flea, unfortunate flea!
Bereft of his wife and his small family!"

He clutched my arm, and dragging me off towards the Surrey side, turned down Stamford Street.

I followed half perforce, and the man seemed quite demented whether with gin or sorrow I could not tell. As he strode along the pavement, he kept continually looking back, with a perplexed terrified air, as if expecting some fearful object.

"The rats!—the rats! don't you see 'em coming out of the gully holes, between the area railings—dozens and dozens?"

"No, I saw none."

"You lie, I hear their tails whisking, there's them shiny hats a glistening, and every one on 'em with peckers' staves! Quick! quick! or they'll have me to the station-house!"

"Nonsense!" I said; "we are free men! What are the policemen to us?"

"You lie!" cried he, with a fearful oath, and a wrench at my arm which almost threw me down. "Do you call a sweater's man a free man?"

"You a sweater's man?"

"Ay!" with another oath. "My men ran away—folks said I drank, too, but here I am; and I, that sweated others, I'm sweated myself—and I'm a slave! I'm a slave—a negro slave, I am, you aristocrat villain!"

"Mind me, Downes, if you will go quietly, I will go with you; but if you do not let go of my arm, I give you in charge to the first policeman I meet."

"Oh, don't, don't!" whined the miserable wretch, as he almost fell on his knees,

gin-drinkers' tears running down his face, "or I shall be too late. And then the rats 'll get in at the roof, and up through the floor, and eat 'em all up, and my work too—the grand new three pound coat that I've been stitching at this ten days, for the sum of one half crown sterling—and don't I wish I may see the money? Come on, quick, there are the rats, close behind!" And he dashed across the broad roaring thoroughfare of Bridge Street, and hurrying almost at a run down Tooty Street, plunged into the wildernesses of Bermondsey.

He stopped at the end of a miserable blind alley, where a dirty gas-lamp just served to make darkness visible, and show the pitched windows and rickety doorways of the crazy houses, whose upper stories were lost in a brooding cloud of fog; and the pools of stagnant water at our feet; and the huge heap of cinders which filled up the waste end of the alley—a dreary, black, formless mound, on which two or three spectral dogs prowled up and down after the usual, appearing and vanishing like dark mops in and out of the black misty chaos beyond.

The neighbourhood was undergoing, as it seemed, "improvements," of that peculiar metropolitan species which consists in pulling down the dwellings of the poor, and building up rich men's houses instead, and great buildings, within high temporary palings, had already eaten up half the little houses, as the great fish, and the great estates, and the great shopkeepers, eat up the little ones of their species—by the law of competition, lately discovered to be the true creator and preserver of the universe. There they loomed up, the tall bulwarks, against the dreary sky, looking down with their grim, proud, stony visages, on the misery which they were driving out of one corner, only to accumulate and intensify it in another.

The house at which we stopped was the last in the row; all its companions had been pulled down, and there it stood, leaning out with one naked ugly side into the gap, and stretching out long props, like feeble arms and crutches, to resist the work of demolition.

A group of slatternly people were in the entry, talking loudly, and as Downes pushed by them, a woman seized him by the arm.

"Oh! you unnatural villain!—to go away after your drink, and leave all them poor dead corpses locked up, without even letting a body go in to stretch them out!"

"And breeding the fever, too, to poison the whole house!" growled one.

"The relieving officer's been here, my cove," said another, "and he's gone for a peeler and a search warrant to break open the door, I can tell you."

But Downes pushed past unheeding, unlocked a door at the end of the passage, thrust men, locked it again, and then pushed across the room in chase of two or three rats, who vanished into cracks and holes.

And what a room! A low lean-to with wooden walls, without a single article of furniture; and through the broad clinks of the floor shone up as it were ugly glaring eyes, staring at us. They were the reflections of the rushlight in the sewer below. The stench was frightful—the air heavy with pestilence. The first breath I drew made my heart sink, and my stomach turn. But I forgot everything in the object which lay before me, as Downes tore a half-finished coat off three corpses laid side by side on the bare floor.

There was his little Irish wife,—dead—and naked—the wasted white limbs gleamed in the lurid light; the unclosed eyes stared, as if reproachfully, at the husband whose drunkenness had brought her there to kill her with the pestilence, and on each side of her a little, shrivelled, impish, child corpse—the wretched man had laid their arms round the dead mother's neck—and there they slept, then hungering and wailing over at last forever—the rats had been busy already with them—but what matter to them now?

"Look!" he cried, "I watched 'em dying! Day after day I saw the devils come up through the cracks, like little maggots and beetles, and all manner of ugly things, creeping down their throats; and I asked 'em, and they said they were the fever devils."

It was too true, the poisonous exhalations had killed them. The wretched man's *delirium tremens* had given that horrible substantiality to the poisonous fever gases.

Suddenly Downes turned on me, almost menacingly. "Money! money! I want some gun!"

I was thoroughly terrified—and there was no shame in feeling fear, looked up with a man in far my superior in size and strength, in so ghastly a place. But the shame, and the folly too, would have been in giving way to my fear, and with a boldness half assumed, half the real fruit of excitement and indignation at the horrors I beheld, I answered,—

"If I had money, I would give you none. What do you want with gun? Look at the fruits of your accursed tippling. If you had taken my advice, my poor fellow," I went on, gaining courage as I spoke, "and become a water-drinker, like me—"

"Curse you and your water-drinking! If you had no water to drink or wash with for two years but that—thint," pointing to the foul ditch below—"if you had emptied the slops in there with one hand, and filled your kettle with the other—"

"Do you actually mean that that sewer is your only drinking-water?"

"Where else can we get any? Everybody drinks it, and you shall, too—you shall!" he cried, with a fearful oath, "and then see if you don't run off to the gin-shop, to take the taste of it out of your mouth. Drink! and who can help drinking, with his stomach

turned with such hell-broth as that—or such a hell's blast as this air is here, ready to vomit from morning till night with the smells? I'll show you. You shall drink a bucket full of it, as sure as you live you shall."

And he ran out of the back door, upon a little balcony, which hung over the ditch.

I tried the door, but the key was gone, and the handle too. I beat furiously on it, and called for help. Two gruff authoritative voices were heard in the passage.

"Let us in, I'm the policeman!"

"Let me out, or mischief will happen!"

The policeman made a vigorous thrust at the crazy door; and just as it burst open, and the light of his lantern streamed into the horrible den, a heavy splash was heard outside.

"Ho has fallen into the ditch!"

"He'll be drowned, then, as sure as he's a born man," shouted one of the crowd behind.

We rushed out on the balcony. The light of the policeman's lantern glared over the ghastly scene—along the double row of miserable house backs, which lined the sides of the open tidal ditch—over strange rambling jetties, and balconies, and sleeping sheds, which hung on rotting piles over the black waters, with phosphorescent scraps of rotten hali gleaming and twinkling out of the dark hollows, like devilish grave lights—over mounds of poisonous gas, and bloated carcasses of dogs, and lumps of oil, floating on the stagnant olive green hell-broth—over the slow sullen rows of only rattle which were dying away into the darkness far beyond, sending up, as they stired, hot breaths of miasma—the only sign that a spark of humanity, after years of foul life, had quenched itself at last in that foul death. I almost fancied that I could see the haggard face staring up at me through the slimy water, but no—it was as opaque as stone.

I shuddered and went in again, to see slatternly gin-smelling women stripping off their clothes—true women even there—to cover the poor naked corpses; and pointing to the bruises which told a tale of long tyranny and cruelty, and unguing their lamentations with stories of shrieks and beating, and children locked up for hours to starve, and the men looked on sullenly, as if they too were guilty, or rushed out to relieve themselves by helping to find the drowned body. Ugh! it was the very mouth of hell, that room. And in the midst of all the rout, the relieving officer stood impassive, jotting down scraps of information, and warning us to appear the next day, to state what we knew before the magistrates. Needless hypocrisy of law! Too careless to save the women and children from brutal tyranny, nakedness, starvation!—too superstitious to offend its idol of vested interests, by protecting the poor man against his tyrants, the house-owning shop-

keepers under whose greed the dwellings of the poor become nests of filth and pestilence, drunkenness and degradation. Careless, superstitious, unbecile law!—leaving the victims to the unhelped, and then, when the fever and the tyranny has done its work, in thy sanctimonious prudishness, dragging thy respectable conscience by a "searching inquiry" as to how it all happened—lest, forsooth, there should have been "foul play!" Is the knife or the bludgeon, then, the only foul play, and not the cesspool and the curse of Kabschukoh? Go through Richmondsey or Spitalfields, St Giles's or Lambeth, and see if there is not foul play enough already—to be tried hereafter at a more awful coroner's inquest than thou thinkest of!

CHAPTER XXXVI

DREAMLAND

It must have been two o'clock in the morning before I reached my lodgings. Too much exhausted to think, I hurried to my bed. I remember now that I reeled strangely as I went upstairs. I lay down, and was asleep in an instant.

How long I had slept I know not, when I awoke with a strange confusion and whirling in my brain, and an intolerable weight and pain about my back and loins. By the light of the gas lamp I saw a figure standing at the foot of my bed. I could not discern the face, but I knew instinctively that it was my mother. I called to her again and again, but she did not answer. She moved slowly away, and passed out through the wall of the room.

I tried to follow her, but could not. An enormous, unutterable weight seemed to lie upon me. The bed clothes grew and grew before me, and upon me, into a vast mountain, millions of miles in height. Then it seemed all glowing red, like the cone of a volcano. I heard the roaring of the fires within, the rattling of the embers down the heaving slope. A river ran from its summit, and up that river bed it seemed I was doomed to climb and climb forever, millions and millions of miles upwards, against the rushing stream. The thought was intolerable, and I shrieked aloud. A raging thirst had seized me. I tried to drink the river-water, but it was boiling-hot—sulphureous—reeking of putrefaction. Suddenly I fancied that I could pass round the foot of the mountain, and jumbling, as madmen will, the sublime and the ridiculous, I sprang up to go round the foot of my bed, which was the mountain.

I recollect lying on the floor. I recollect the people of the house, who had been awake by my shriek and my fall, rushing in and calling to me. I could not rise or answer.

I recollect a doctor; and talk about brain-fever and delirium. It was true I was in a raging fever. And my fancy, long pent up and crushed by circumstances, burst out in uncontrollable wildness, and swept my other faculties with it helpless away over all heaven and earth, presenting to me as in a vast kaleidoscope, fantastic symbols of all I had ever thought, or read, or felt.

That fancy of the mountain returned, but I had climbed it now. I was wandering along the lower ridge of the Himalaya. On my right the line of snow peaks showed like a rosy saw against the clear blue morning sky. Raspberries and cyclamens were peeping through the snow around me. As I looked down the abysses, I could see far below, through the thin veils of blue mist that wandered in the glens, the silver spires of giant cedars, and huge rhododendrons that glowed like trees of flame. The longing of my life to behold that cradle of mankind was satisfied. My eyes revelled in vastness, as they swept over the broad flat jungle at the mountain foot, a desolate sheet of dark, gigantic grasses, furrowed with the paths of the buffalo and rhinoceros, with barren sandy water-courses, desolate pools, and here and there a single tree, stunted with malaria, shattered by mountain floods, and far beyond, the vast plains of Hindoostan, enlaced with myriads of silver rivers and canals, tanks and rice-fields, cities with their mosques and minarets, gleaming among the stately palm-groves along the boundless horizon. Above me was a Hindoo temple, cut out of the yellow sandstone. I climbed up to the higher tier of pillars among monstrous shapes of gods and fiends, that mouthed, and writhed, and mocked at me, struggling to free themselves from their bed of rock. The bull Nandi rose and tried to gore me, hundred handed gods brandished quarts and sabres round my head, and Kali dropped the skull from her gore-dripping jaws, to clutch me for her prey. Then my mother came, and seizing the pillars of the portico, bent them like reeds. An earthquake shook the hills—great sheets of woodland slid roaring and crashing into the valleys—a tornado swept through the temple halls, which rocked and tossed like a vessel in a storm—a crash—a cloud of yellow dust which filled the air—choked me—blinded me—buried me—

And Eleanor came by, and took my soul in the palm of her hand, as the angels did Faust's, and carried it to a cavern by the sea-side, and dropped it in; and I fell and fell for ages. And all the velvet mosses, rock flowers, and sparkling spars and ores, fell with me, round me, in showers of diamonds, whirlwinds of emerald and ruby, and pattered into the sea that moaned below, and were quenched; and the light lessened above me to one small spark, and vanished;

and I was in darkness, and turned again to my dust.

And I was at the lowest point of created life, a madrepore rooted to the rock, fathoms below the tide-mark, and worst of all, my individuality was gone. I was not one thing, but many things—a crowd of innumerable polypi, and I grow and grew, and the more I grew the more I divided, and multiplied thousand and ten thousandfold. If I could have thought, I should have gone mad at it, but I could only feel.

And I heard Eleanor and Lillian talking, as they floated past me through the deep, for they were two angels; and Lillian said, "When will he be one again?"

And Eleanor said, "He who falls from the golden ladder must climb through ages to its top. He who tears himself in pieces by his lusts, ages only can make him one again. The madrepore shall become a shell, and the shell a fish, and the fish a bird, and the bird a beast, and then he shall become a man again, and see the glory of the latter days."

And I was a soft crab, under a stone on the sea shore. With infinite starvation, and struggling, and kicking, I had got rid of my armour, shield by shield, and joint by joint, and covered, naked and pitiable, in the dark, among dead shells and ooze. Suddenly the stone was turned up, and there was my cousin's hated face laughing at me, and pointing me out to Lillian. She laughed, too, as I looked up, sneaking, ashamed, and defenceless, and squirmed up at him with my soft useless claws. Why should she not laugh? Are not crabs, and toads, and monkeys, and a hundred other strange forms of animal life, jests of nature—embodiments of a divine humour, at which men are meant to laugh and be merry? But alas! my cousin, as he turned away, thrust the stone back with his foot, and squelched me flat.

And I was a remora, weak and helpless, till I could attach myself to some living thing, and then I had power to stop the largest ship. And Lillian was a flying-fish, and skimmed over the crests of the waves on gauzy wings. And my cousin was a huge shark, rushing after her, greedy and open-mouthed, and I saw her danger, and clung to him, and held him back; and just as I had stopped him, she turned and swam back into his open jaws.

Sand—sand—nothing but sand! The air was full of sand, drifting over granite temples, and painted kings and triumphs, and the skulls of a former world; and I was an ostrich, flying madly before the storm wind, and the giant sand pillars, which stalked across the plains, hunting me down. And Lillian was an Amazon queen, beautiful,

and cold, and cruel, and she rode upon a charmed horse, and carried behind her on her saddle a spotted ounce, which was my comrade, and, when I came near her, she made him leap down and course me. And we ran for miles and for days through the interminable sand, till he sprung on me, and dragged me down. And as I lay quivering and dying, she reined in her horse above me, and looked down at me with beautiful, pitiless eyes; and a wild Arab tore the plumes from my wings, and she took them and wreathed them in her golden hair. The broad and blood-red sun sank down beneath the sand, and the horse, and the Amazon, and the ostrich plumes shone blood red in his lurid rays.

I was a mylodon among South American forests—a vast sleepy mass, my elephantine limbs and yard-long talons contrasting strangely with the little meek rabbit's head, furnished with a poor dozen of clumsy grinders, and a very small kernel of brains, whose highest consciousness was the enjoyment of muscular strength. Where I had picked up the sensation which my dreams realised for me, I know not my waking life, alas! had never given me experience of it. Has the mind power of creating sensations for itself? Surely it does so, in those delicious dreams about flying which haunt us poor wingless mortals, which would seem to give my namesake's philosophy the lie. However that may be, intense and new was the animal delight, to plant my hinder claws at some tree foot deep into the black rotting vegetable mould which steamed rich gases up wherever it was pierced, and clasp my huge arms round the stem of some palm or tree fern, and then slowly bring my enormous weight and muscle to bear upon it, till the stem bent like a withie, and the lace bark cracked, and the fibres groaned and shrank, and the roots sprung up out of the soil, and then, with a slow, circular wrench, the whole tree was twisted bodily out of the ground, and the maddening tension of my muscles suddenly relaxed, and I sank sleepily down upon the turf, to hrowse upon the crisp, cut foliage, and fall asleep in the glare of sunshine which streamed through the new gap in the green forest roof. Much as I had envied the strong, I had never before suspected the delight of mere physical exertion. I now understood the wild gambols of the dog, and the madness which makes the horse gallop and strain onwards till he drops and dies. They fulfil their nature, as I was doing, and in that is always happiness.

But I did more—whether from mere animal destructiveness, or from the spark of humanity which was slowly rekindling in me, I began to delight in tearing up trees, for its own sake. I tried my strength daily on thicker and thicker boles. I crawled up to the high palm-tops, and bowed them down

by my weight. My path through the forest was marked, like that of a tornado, by snapped and prostrate stems, and withering branches. Had I been a few degrees more human, I might have expected a retribution for my sin. I had fractured my own skull three or four times already. I used often to pass the carcasses of my race, killed, as geologists now find them, by the fall of the trees they had overthrown, but still I went on, more and more reckless, a slave, like many a so-called man, to the mere sense of power.

One day I wandered to the margin of the woods, and climbing a tree, surveyed a prospect new to me. For miles and miles, away to the white line of the smoking Cordillera, stretched a low rolling plain; one vast thistle-head, the down of which flew in great gauzy clouds before a soft fitful breeze, innumerable inches flittered and pecked above it, and bent the countless flower-heads. Far away, one tall tree rose above the level thistle ocean. A strange longing seized me to go and tear it down. The forest leaves seemed tasteless, my stomach sickened at them, nothing but that tree would satisfy me, and descending, I slowly brushed my way, with half-shut eyes, through the tall thistles which buried even my bulk.

At last, after days of painful crawling, I dragged my unwieldiness to the tree-foot. Around it the plain was bare, and scored by burrows and heaps of earth, among which gold, some in dust, some in great knots and ingots, sparkled everywhere in the sun, in fearful contrast to the skulls and bones which lay bleaching round. Some were human, some were those of vast and monstrous beasts. I knew (one knows every thing in dreams) that they had been slain by the winged ants, as large as panthers, who snuffed and watched around over the magic treasure. Of them I felt no fear: and they seemed not to perceive me, as I crawled with greedy, hunger-sharpened eyes, up to the foot of the tree. It seemed miles in height. Its stem was bare and polished like a palm's, and above, a vast feathery crown of dark green velvet slept in the still sunlight. But wonders of wonders! from among the branches hung great sea-green lilies, and, nestled in the heart of each of them, the bust of a beautiful girl. Their white bosoms and shoulders gleamed rosy white against the emerald petals, like couch-shells half hidden among sea-weeds, while their delicate waists melted mysteriously into the central sanctuary of the flower. Their long arms and golden tresses waved languishingly downward in the breeze; their eyes glittered like diamonds, their breaths perfumed the air. A blind ecstasy seized me—I awoke again to humanity, and fiercely clasping the tree, shook and tore at it, in the blind hope of bringing nearer to me the magic beauties above. For I knew that I was in the famous

land of Wak-Wak, from which the Eastern mercenaries used to pluck those flower-born beauties, and bring them home to fill the harems of the Indian kings. Suddenly I heard a rustling in the thistles behind me, and looking round, saw again that dreaded face—my cousin!

He was dressed—strange jumble that dreams are!—like an American backwoodsman. He carried the same revolver and bowie-knife which he had showed me the fatal night that he intruded on the Chartist club. I shook with terror, but he, too, did not see me. He threw himself on his knees, and began fiercely digging and scraping for the gold.

The winged ants rushed on him, but he looked up, and "held them with his glittering eye," and they shrank back abashed into the thistle covert, while I strained and tugged on, and the faces of the dryads above grew sadder and older, and their tears fell on me like a fragrant rain.

Suddenly the tree bole cracked—it was breaking. I looked round, and saw that my cousin knelt directly in the path of its fall. I tried to call to him to move; but how could a poor odentate like myself articulate a word? I tried to catch his attention by signs. He would not see. I tried convulsively to hold the tree up, but it was too late, a sudden gust of air swept by, and down it rushed, with a roar like a whirlwind, and leaving my cousin untouched, struck me full across the loins, broke my backbone, and pinned me to the ground in mortal agony. I heard one wild shriek rise from the flower fairies, as they fell each from the lily cup, no longer of full human size, but withered, shrivelled, diminished a thousandfold, and lay on the bare sand, like little rowy humming-birds' eggs, all crushed and dead. The great blue heaven above me spoke, and cried, "Selfish and sense bound! thou hast murdered beauty!"

The sighing thistle-ocean answered, and murmured, "Discontented! thou hast murdered beauty!"

One flower fairy alone lifted up her tiny cheek from the gold-strewn sand, and cried, "Presumptuous! thou hast murdered beauty!"

It was Lillian's face—Lillian's voice! My cousin heard it too, and turned eagerly, and as my eyes closed in the last death-shiver, I saw him coolly pick up the little beautiful figure, which looked like a fragment of some exquisite cameo, and deliberately put it away in his cigar case, as he said to himself, "A charming fit-bit for me when I return from the diggings!"

When I awoke again, I was a baby-ape in Borneo forests, perched among fragrant trailers and fantastic orchis flowers, and as I looked down, beneath the green roof, into the clear waters paved with unknown water-lilies on which the sun had never

shone, I saw my face reflected in the pool—a melancholy, thoughtful countenance, with large projecting brow—it might have been a negro child's. And I felt stirring in me germs of a new and higher consciousness.—yearnings of love towards the mother ape, who fed me, and carried me from tree to tree. But I grew and grew, and then the weight of my destiny fell upon me. I saw year by year my brow recede, my neck enlarge, my jaw protrude, my teeth became tusks, skinny wattles grew from my cheeks—the animal faculties in me were swallowing up the intellectual. I watched in myself, with stupid self-disgust, the fearful degradation which goes on from youth to age in all the monkey race, especially in those which approach nearest to the human form. Long melancholy moping, fruitless strugglings to think, were periodically succeeded by wild furies, agonies of lust and aimless ferocity. I flew upon my brother apes, and was driven off with wounds. I rushed howling down into the village gardens, destroying everything I met. I caught the birds and insects, and tore them to pieces—a savage glee. One day, as I sat among the boughs, I saw Lillian coming along a flowery path—decked as Eve might have been the day she turned from Paradise. The skins of gorgeous birds were round her waist, her hair was wreathed with fragrant tropic flowers. On her bosom lay a baby—it was my cousin's. I knew her, and hated her. The madness came upon me. I lunged to leap from the bough and tear her limb from limb, but brutal terror, the dread of man which is the doom of beasts, kept me rooted to my place. Then my cousin came—a hunter missionary, and I heard him talk to her with pride of the new world of civilisation and Christianity which he was organising in that tropic wilderness. I listened with a dim, jealous understanding—not of the words, but of the facts. I saw them instinctively, as in a dream. She pointed up to me in terror and disgust, as I sat gnashing and gibbering overhead. He threw up the muzzle of his rifle carelessly, and fired—I fell dead, but conscious still. I knew that my carcase was carried to the settlement, and I watched while a smirking, chuckling surgeon dissected me, bone by bone, and nerve by nerve. And as he was fumbling at my heart, and discoursing sneeringly about Van Helmont's dreams of the Archæus, and the animal spirit which dwells within the solar plexus, Eleanor glided by again, like an angel, and drew my soul out of the knot of nerves, with one velvet finger-tip.

Child dreams—more vague and fragmentary than my animal ones, and yet more calm and simple, and gradually, as they led me onward through a new life, ripening into detail, coherence, and reflection. Dreams of a hut among the valleys of Thibet—the young of forest animals, wild cats, and dogs,

and fowls, brought home to be my play mates, and grow up tame around me. Snow peaks which glittered white against the nightly sky, barring in the horizon of the narrow valley, and yet seeming to beckon upwards, outwards. Strange unspoken aspirations—instincts which pointed to unfulfilled powers, a mighty destiny. A sense, awful and yet cheering, of a wonder and a majesty, a presence, and a voice around, in the cliffs and the pine forests, and the great, blue, rainless heaven. The music of loving voices, the sacred names of child and father, mother, brother, sister, first of all inspirations. Had we not an All-Father, whose eyes looked down upon us from among those stars above, whose hand upheld the mountain roots below us? Did He not love us, too, even as we loved each other?

The noise of wheels crushing slowly through meadows of tall marigolds and astors, orchises, and fragrant lilies. I lay, a child, upon a woman's bosom. Was she my mother, or Eleanor, or Lillian? Or was she neither, and yet all—some ideal of the great Arian tribe, containing in herself all future types of European women? So I slept and woke, and slept again, day after day, week after week, in the lazy bullock waggon, among herds of grey cattle, guarded by huge loped mastiffs, among shaggy, white-haired, heavy-horned sheep, and silky goats, among tall, bare-limbed men, with stone axes on their shoulders, and horn hews at their backs. Westward, through the boundless steppes, whither or why we knew not, but that the All-Father had sent us forth. And behind us the rosy snow peaks died into ghastly grey, lower and lower, as every evening came, and before us the plains spread infinite, with gleaming salt lakes, and ever fresh tribes of gaudy flowers. Behind us dark lines of living beings streamed down the mountain slopes, around us dark lines crawled along the plains—all westward, westward ever, the tribes of the Holy Mountain poured out like water to replenish the earth and subdue it—lava streams from the crater of that great soul volcano,—Titan halues, dumb angels of God, bearing with them, in the unconscious progeny, the law, the freedom, the science, the poetry, the Christianity of Europe and the world.

Westward ever—who could stand against us? We met the wild asses on the steppe, and tamed them, and made them our slaves. We slew the bison herds, and swam broad rivers on their skins. The Python snake lay across our path, the wolves and the wild dogs snarled at us out of their coverts, we slew them and went on. The forest rose in black tangled barriers, we hewed on way through them and went on. Strange giant tribes met us, and eagle visaged hordes, fierce and foolish, we smote them hip and thigh, and went on, westward ever. Days, and weeks, and months rolled on, and

our wheels rolled on with them. New alps rose up before us, we climbed and climbed them, till, in lonely glens, the mountain walls stood up, and barred our path.

Then one arose and said, "Rocks are strong, but the All-Father is stronger. Let us pray to Him to send the earthquakes, and blast the mountains asunder."

So we sat down and prayed, but the earthquake did not come.

Then another arose and said, "Rocks are strong but the All-Father is stronger. If we are the children of the All-Father, we, too, are stronger than the rocks. Let us portion out the valley, to every man an equal plot of ground, and bring out the sacred seeds, and sow, and build, and come up with me and bore the mountain."

And all said, "It is the voice of God. We will go up with thee, and bore the mountain, and thou shalt be our king, for thou art wisest, and the spirit of the All-Father is on thee, and whosoever will not go up with thee shall die as a coward and an idler."

So we went up, and in the morning we bored the mountain, and at night we came down and tilled the ground, and sowed wheat and barley, and planted orchards. And in the upper glens, we met the mining dwarfs, and saw their tools of iron and copper, and then tack houses and forges, and cured them. But they would give us none of them. Then our king said,—

"The All-Father has given all things and all wisdom. We to him who keeps them to himself, we will teach you to sow the sacred seeds, and do you teach us your smith-work, or you die."

Then the dwarfs taught us smith work; and we loved them, for they were wise, and they married our sons and daughters, and we went on boring the mountain.

Then some of us arose and said, "We are stronger than our brethren, and can till ground than they. Give us a greater portion of land, to each according to his power."

But the king said, "Wherefore? that ye may eat and drink more than your brethren? Have you larger stomachs as well as stronger arms? As much as a man needs for himself, that he may do for himself. The rest is the gift of the All-Father, and we must do his work therewith. For the sake of the women and the children, for the sake of the sick and the aged, let him that is stronger go up and work the harder at the mountain." And all men said, "It is well spoken."

So we were all equals—for none took more than he needed, and we were all free, because we loved to obey the king by whom the spirit spoke, and we were all brothers, because we had one work, and one hope, and one All-Father.

But I grew up to be a man, and twenty years were past, and the mountain was not bored through; and the king grew old, and

men began to love their flocks and herds better than quarrying, and they gave up boring through the mountain. And the strong and the cunning said, "What can we do with all this might of ours?" So because they had no other way of employing it, they turned it against each other, and swallowed up the heritage of the weak, and a few grew rich, and many poor; and the valley was filled with sorrow, for the land became too narrow for them.

Then I arose and said, "How is this?" And they said, "We must make provision for our children."

And I answered, "The All-Father meant neither you nor your children to devour your brethren. Why do you not break up more waste ground? Why do you not try to grow more corn in your fields?"

And they answered, "We till the ground as our forefathers did: we will keep to the old traditions."

And I answered, "O ye hypocrites! have ye not forgotten the old traditions, that each man should have his equal share of ground, and that we should go on working at the mountain, for the sake of the weak and the children, the fatherless and the widow?"

And they answered nought for a while.

Then one said, "Are we not better off as we are? We buy the poor man's ground for a price, and we pay him his wages for tilling it for us—and we know better how to manage it than he."

And I said, "O ye hypocrites! See how your lie works! Those who were free are now slaves. Those who had peace of mind are now anxious from day to day for their daily bread. And the multitude gets poorer and poorer, while ye grow fatter and fatter. If ye had gone on boring the mountain, ye would have had no time to eat up your brethren."

Then they laughed and said, "Thou art a singer of songs, and a dreamer of dreams. Let those who want to get through the mountain go up and bore it, we are well enough here. Come now, sing us pleasant songs, and talk no more foolish dreams, and we will reward thee."

Then they brought out a veiled maiden, and said, "Look! her feet are like ivory, and her hair like threads of gold, and she is the sweetest singer in the whole valley. And she shall be thine, if thou wilt be like other people, and prophesy smooth things unto us, and torment us no more with talk about liberty, equality, and brotherhood, for they never were, and never will be, on this earth. Living is too hard work to give in to such fancies."

And when the maiden's veil was lifted, it was Lillian. And she clasped me round the neck, and cried, "Come! I will be your bride, and you shall be rich and powerful; and all men shall speak well of you, and you shall write songs, and we will sing them to-

gether, and feast and play from dawn to dawn."

And I wept, and turned me about, and cried, "Wife and child, song and wealth, are pleasant, but blessed is the work which the All-Father has given the people to do. Let the maimed and the halt and the blind, the needy and the fatherless, come up after me, and we will bore the mountain."

But the rich drove me out, and drove back those who would have followed me. So I went up by myself, and bored the mountain seven years, weeping; and every year Lillian came to me, and said, "Come, and be my husband, for my beauty is fading, and youth passes fast away." But I set my heart steadfastly to the work.

And when seven years were over, the poor were so multiplied, that the rich had not wherewith to pay their labour. And there came a famine in the land, and many of the poor died. Then the rich said, "If we let these men starve, they will turn on us, and kill us, for hunger has no conscience, and they are all but like the beasts that perish." So they all brought, one a bullock, another a sack of meal, each according to his substance, and fed the poor therewith; and said to them, "Behold our love and mercy towards you!" But the more they gave, the less they had wherewithal to pay their labourers, and the more they gave, the less the poor liked to work, so that at last they had not wherewithal to pay for tilling the ground, and each man had to go and till his own, and knew not how, so the land lay waste, and there was great perplexity.

Then I went down to them and said, "If you had hearkened to me, and not rubbed your brethren of their land, you would never have come into this strait, for by this time the mountain would have been bored through."

Then they cursed the mountain, and me, and Him who made them, and came down to my cottage at night, and cried, "One siled and left handed! father of confusion, and disciple of dead donkeys, see to what thou hast brought the land, with thy blasphemous doctrines! Here we are starving, and not only we, but the poor misguided victims of thy abominable notions!"

"You have become wondrous pitiful to the poor," said I, "since you found that they would not starve that you might wanton."

Then once more Lillian came to me, thin, and pale, and worn. "See, I, too, am starving! and you have been the cause of it; but I will forgive all if you will help us but this once."

"How shall I help you?"

"You are a poet and an orator, and win over all hearts with your talk and your songs. Go down to the tribes of the plain, and persuade them to send us up warriors, that we may put down these riotous and idle wretches; and you shall be king of all the

land, and I will be your slave, by day and night."

But I went out, and quarried steadfastly at the mountain.

And when I came back the next evening, the poor had risen against the rich, one and all, crying, "As you have done to us, so will we do to you," and they hunted them down like wild beasts, and slew many of them, and threw their carcasses on the dunghill, and took possession of their land and houses, and cried, "We will be all free and equal as our forefathers were, and live here, and eat and drink, and take our pleasure."

"Then I ran out, and cried to them, 'Fools! will ye do as these rich did, and neglect the work of God? If you do to them as they have done to you, you will sin as they sinned, and devour each other at the last, as they devoured you. The old path is the best. Let each man, rich or poor, have his equal share of the land, as it was at first, and go up and dig through the mountain, and possess the good land beyond, where no man need jostle his neighbour, or rob him, when the land becomes too small for you. Were the rich only in fault? Did not you, too, neglect the work which the All-Father had given you, and run every man after his own comfort? No you entered into a he, and by your own sin raised up the rich men to be your punishment. For the last time, who will go up with me to the mountain?'"

Then they all cried with one voice, "We have sinned! We will go up and pierce the mountain, and fulfil the work which God set to our forefathers."

We went up, and the first stroke that I struck, a crack fell out, and behold, the light of day! and far below us the good land and large, stretching away boundless towards the western sun.

I sat by the cave's mouth at the dawning of the day. Past me the tribe poured down, young and old, with their waggons, and their cattle, their seeds, and their arms, as of old yet not as of old—wiser and stronger, taught by long labour and sore affliction. Downward they streamed from the cave's mouth into the glens, following the guidance of the silver water-courses, and as they passed me, each kissed my hands and feet, and cried, "Thou hast saved us—thou hast given up all for us. Come and be our king!"

"Nay," I said, "I have been your king this many a year; for I have been the servant of you all."

I went down with them into the plain, and called them round me. Many times they besought me to go with them and lead them.

"No," I said, "I am old and grey-headed, and I am not as I have been. Choose out the wisest and most righteous among you and let him lead you. But bind him to yourselves with an oath, that whenever he shall say to you, 'Stay here, and let us sit down and build, and dwell here forever,

you shall cast him out of his office, and make him a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, and choose one who will lead you forward in the spirit of God."

The crowd opened, and a woman came forward into the circle. Her face was veiled, but we all knew her for a prophetess. Slowly she stepped into the midst, chanting a mystic song. Whether it spoke of past, present, or future, we knew not; but it sank deep into all our hearts.

"True freedom stands in meekness—
True strength in utter weakness—
Justice in forgiveness lies—
Riches in self-sacrifice—
Own no rank but God's own spirit—
Whom rule!—and worth inherit!
Work for all, and all employ—
Share with all, and all enjoy—
God alike to all has given,
Heaven as Earth, and Earth as Heaven,
When the land shall find her king again,
And the reign of God be come."

We all listened, awe-struck. She turned to us and continued,—

"Harken to me, children of Japhet, the unresting!"

"On the holy mountain of Paradise in the Asgard of the Hindoo-Koh, in the cup of the four rivers, in the womb of the mother of nations, in brotherhood, equality, and freedom, the sons of men were begotten, at the wedding of the heaven and the earth. Mighty infants, you did the right you knew not of, and sinned not, because there was no temptation. By selfishness you fell, and became beasts of prey. Each man coveted the universe for his own lusts, and not that he might fulfil in it God's command to people and subdue it. Long have you wandered—and long will you wander still. For here you have no abiding city. You shall build cities, and they shall crumble; you shall invent forms of society and religion, and they shall fail in the hour of need. You shall call the lands by your own names, and fresh waves of men shall sweep you forth, westward, westward ever, till you have travelled round the path of the sun, to the place from whence you came. For out of Paradise you went, and into Paradise you shall return, you shall become once more as little children, and renew your youth like the eagle's. Feature by feature, and limb by limb ye shall renew it, ago after ago, gradually and painfully, by hunger and pestilence, by superstitions and tyranny, by need and blank despair, shall you be driven back to the All-Father's home, till you become as you were before you fell and left the likeness of your father for the likeness of the beasts. Out of Paradise you came, from liberty, equality, and brotherhood, and unto them you shall return again. You went forth in unconscious infancy—you shall return in thoughtful manhood. You went forth in ignorance and need—you shall return in science and wealth, philosophy and art. You went forth with the world a wilderness

before you—you shall return when it is a garden behind you. You went forth selfish savages—you shall return as the brothers of the Son of God.

"And for you," she said, looking on me, "your penance is accomplished. You have learned what it is to be a man. You have lost your life and saved it. He that gives up house, or land, or wife, or child, for God's sake, it shall be repaid him an hundredfold 'twake!"

Surely I knew that voice! She lifted her veil. The face was Lillian's! No!—Eleanor's!

Gently she touched my hand—I sank down into soft, weary, happy sleep.

The spell was snapped. My fever and my dreams faded away together, and I woke to the twittering of the sparrows, and the scent of the poplar leaves, and the sights and sounds of my childhood, and found Eleanor and her uncle sitting by my bed, and with them Crossthwaite's little wife.

I would have spoken, but Eleanor laid her finger on her lips, and taking her uncle's arm, glided from the room. Katie kept stubbornly a smiling silence, and I was fain to obey my new-found guardian angels.

What need of many words? Slowly, and with relapses into insensibility, I passed, like one who recovers from drowning, through the painful gate of birth into another life. The fury of passion had been replaced by a delicious weakness. The thunder-clouds had passed roaring down the wind, and the calm, bright, holy evening was come. My heart, like a fiefid child had stamped and wept itself to sleep. I was past even gratitude; infinite submission and humility, feelings too long forgotten, absorbed my whole being. Only, I never dreamed meet Eleanor's eye. Her voice was like an angel's when she spoke to me—friend, mother, sister, all in one. But I had a dim recollection of being unjust to her—of some bar between us.

Katie and Crossthwaite, as they sat by me, tender and careful nurses both, told me, in time, that to Eleanor I owed all my comforts. I could not thank her—the debt was infinite, inexplicable. I felt as if I must speak all my heart or none, and I watched her lavish kindness with a sort of sleepy, passive wonder, like a new-born babe.

At last, one day, my kind nurses allowed me to speak a little. I broached to Crossthwaite the subject which filled my thoughts. "How came I here? How came you here? and Lady Ellerton? What is the meaning of it all?"

"The meaning is, that Lady Ellerton, as they call her, is an angel out of heaven. Ah, Alton! she was your true friend, after all, if you had but known it, and not that other one at all."

I turned my head away.

"What!—how! then, Johnny darling!

and don't go tormenting the poor dear soul, just when he's comin' round again."

"No, no! tell me all. I must—I ought—I deserve to hear it. How did she come here?"

"Why, then, it's my belief, she had her eye on you ever since you came out of that Bastille, and before that, too, and she found you out at Mackaye's, and me with you, for I was there looking after you. If it hadn't been for your illness, I'd have been in Texas now, with our friends, for all's up with the Charter, and the country's too hot, at least for me. I'm sick of the whole thing together, patriots, aristocrats, and everybody else, except this blessed angel. And I've got a couple of hundred to emigrate with; and what's more, so have you."

"How's that?"

"Why, when poor dear old Mackaye's will was read, and you raving mad in the next room, he had left all his stock-in-trade, that was, the books, to some of our friends, to form a workman's library with, and £400 he'd saved, to be parted between you and me, on condition that we'd G.T.T., and cool down across the Atlantic, for seven years come the tenth of April."

So, then, by the lasting love of my adopted father, I was at present at least out of the reach of want! My heart was ready to overflow at my eyes, but I could not rest till I had heard more of Lady Ellerton. What brought her here, to nurse me as if she had been a sister?

"Why, then, she lives not far off by. When her husband died, his cousin got the estate and title, and so she came, Katie tells me, and lived for one year down somewhere in the East End among the needlewomen, and spent her whole fortune on the poor, and never kept a servant, so they say, but made her own bed and cooked her own dinner, and got her bread with her own needle, to see what it was really like. And she learnt a lesson there. I can tell you, and God bless her for it. For now she's got a large house hereby, with fifty or more in it, all at work together, sharing the earnings among themselves, and putting into their own pockets the profits which would have gone to their tyrants, and she keeps the accounts for them, and gets the goods sold, and manages everything, and reads to them while they work, and teaches them every day."

"And takes her victuals with them," said Katie, "share and share alike. She that was so grand a lady, to demean herself to the poor unfortunate young things! She's as blessed a saint as any a one in the Calendar, if they'll forgive me for saying so."

"Ay! demeaning, indeed! for the best of it is, they're not the respectable ones only, though she spends hundreds on them—"

"And sure, haven't I seen it with my own eyes, when I've been there charing?"

"Ay, but those she lives with are the fallen and the lost ones—those that the rich would not set up in business, or help them to emigrate, or lift them out of the gutter with a pair of tongs, for fear they should stain their own whitewash in handling them."

"And sure they're as decent as me self now, tho' poor darlings! It was misery driv' em to it, everyone, perhaps it might hav' driv' me the same way if I'd a lot o' childer, and Johnny gone to glory—and the blessed saints save him from that same at all, at all!"

"What! from going to glory?" said John.

"Och, thin, and wouldn't I just go mad if ever such ill luck happened to yees as to be taken to heaven in the prime of your days, asthore?"

And she began sobbing, and hugging, and kissing the little man, and then suddenly recollecting herself, scolded him heartily for making such a "whillybaloo," and thrust him out of my room, to recommence kissing him in the next, leaving me to many meditations.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE TRUE DEMAGOGUE

I USED to try to arrange my thoughts, but could not, the past seemed swept away and buried, like the wreck of some drowned land after a flood. Plunged by affliction to the core, my heart lay fallow for every seed that fell. Elcanor understood me, and gently and gradually, beneath her skilful hand, the chins began again to bloom with verdure. She and Crossthwaite used to sit and read to me—from the Bible, from poets, from every book which could suggest soothing, graceful, or hopeful fancies. Now, out of the stillness of the darkened chamber, one or two pithless sentences of a Keats, or a spirit-stirring Hebrew psalm, would fall upon my ear and then there was silence again, and I was left to brood over the words in vacancy, till they became a fibre of my own soul's core. Again and again the stories of Lazarus and the Magdalene alternated with Milton's *Penseroso*, or with Wordsworth's tenderest and most solemn strains. Exquisite prints from the history of our Lord's life and death were hung one by one, each for a few days, opposite my bed, where they might catch my eye the moment that I woke, the moment before I fell asleep. I heard one day the good dean remonstrating with her on the "sentimentalism" of her mode of treatment.

"Poor drowned butterfly!" she answered, smiling, "he must be fed with honey dew. Have I not surely had practice enough already?"

"Yes, angel that you are!" answered the old man. "You have indeed had practice enough!" and lifting her hand reverentially to his lips, he turned and left the room.

She sat down by me as I lay, and began to read from Tennyson's *Lotus-Eaters*. But it was not reading—it was rather a soft dreamy chant, which rose and fell like the waves of sound on an *Aeolian harp*.

Than first eyelids upon birds' eyes,
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the high
 ful skies
Here the cool moon's peep,
And though the moon the lava creeps,
And in the stream the long leaved flowers weep,
And from the crazy ledge the poppy hangs, in
 sleep

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest—why should we toil alone?
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wandering
Nor sleep our brows in slumber a holy balm,
Nor mark what the inner spirit sings
"There is no joy but calm!"

Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of
 things?"

She paused.

"My soul was an enchanted boat
Which, like a sleeping swan, did float
Upon the silver waves of her sweet singing."

Half unconscious, I looked up. Before me hung a copy of Rallalle's cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes. As my eye wandered over it, it seemed to blend into harmony with the feelings which the poem had stirred. I seemed to float upon the glassy lake. I watched the vista of the waters and mountains, receding into the dreamy infinite of the still summer sky. Softly from distant shores came the hum of eager multitudes; towers and palaces slept quietly beneath the eastern sun. In front, fantastic fishes, and the birds of the mountain and the lake, confessed His power, who sat there in His calm godlike beauty, His eye ranging over all that still infinity of His own works, over all that wondrous line of figures, which seemed to express every gradation of spiritual consciousness, from the dark self-condemned dislike of Judas's averted and wily face, through mere animal greediness, to the first dawns of surprise, and on to the manly awe and gratitude of Andrew's majestic figure, and the self-aborrent humility of Peter, as he sank down into the bottom of the skiff, and with convulsive palms and bursting brow, seemed to press out from his inmost heart the words, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Truly, pictures are the books of

the unlearned, and of the mislearned too, Glorious Raffaele! Shakespeare of the south! Mighty preacher, to whose blessed intuition it was given to know all human hearts, to embody in form and colour all spiritual truths, common alike to Protestant and Papist, to workman and to sage. Oh that I may meet thee before the throne of God, if it be but to thank thee for that one picture, in which thou didst reveal to me, in a single glance, every step of my own spiritual history!

She seemed to follow my eyes, and guess from them the workings of my heart; for now, in a low, half abstracted voice, as Diotima may have talked of old, she began to speak of rest and labour, of death and life, of a labour which is perfect rest—of a daily death, which is but daily birth—of weakness, which is the strength of God, and so she wandered on in her speech to Him who died for us. And gradually she turned to me. She laid one finger solemnly on my listless palm, as her words and voice became more intense, more personal. She talked of Him, as Mary may have talked just risen from His feet. She spoke of Him as I had never heard Him spoken of before—with a tender passionate loyalty, kept down and softened by the deepest awe. The sense of her intense belief, shining out in every lineament of her face, carried conviction to my heart more than ten thousand arguments could do. It must be true! Was not the power of it around her like a glory! She spoke of Him as near us—watching us—in words of such vivid eloquence that I turned half startled to her, as if I expected to see Him standing by her side.

She spoke of Him as the great Reformer; and yet as the true conservative, the inspirer of all new truths, revealing in His Bible to every age abysses of new wisdom, as the times require, and yet the vindicator of all which is ancient and eternal—the justifier of His own dealings with man from the beginning. She spoke of Him as the true demagogue—the champion of the poor, and yet as the true King, above and below all earthly rank, on whose will alone all real superiority of man to man, all the time-justified and time-honoured usages of the family, the society, the nation, stand and shall stand forever.

And then she changed her tone, and in a voice of infinite tenderness, she spoke of Him as the Creator, the Word, the Inspirer, the only perfect Artist, the Fountain of all Genus.

She made me feel—would that His ministers had made me feel it before, since they say that they believe it—that He had passed victorious through my vilest temptations, that He sympathised with my every struggle.

She told me how He, in the first dawn of manhood, full of the dim consciousness of

His own power, full of strange yearning presentiments about His own sad and glorious destiny, went up into the wilderness, as every youth, above all every genius, must, there to be tempted of the devil. She told how alone with the wild beasts, and the brute powers of nature, He saw into the open secret—the mystery of man's twofold life, His kingship over earth, His sonship under God—and conquered in the might of His knowledge. How He was tempted, like every genius, to use His creative powers for selfish ends—to yield to the lust of display and singularity, and break through those laws which He came to reveal and to fulfil—to do one little act of evil, that He might secure thereby the harvest of good which was the object of His life and how he had conquered in the faith that He was the son of God. She told me how He had borne the sorrows of genius, how the slightest pang that I had ever felt was but a dim, faint pattern of His, how He, above all men, had felt the agony of calumny, misconception, misinterpretation; how He had fought with bigotry and stupidity, casting His pearls before swine, knowing full well what it was to speak to the deaf and the blind, how He had wept over Jerusalem, in the bitterness of disappointed patriotism, when He had tried in vain to awaken within a nation of slavish and yet rebellious bigots, the consciousness of their glorious calling.

It was too much! I hid my face in the covert, and burst out into a long, low, and yet most happy weeping. She rose and went to the window and beckoned Katie from the room within.

"I am afraid," she said, "my conversation has been too much for him."

"Showers sweeten the air," said Katie, and truly enough, as my own lightened brain told me.

Eleanor—for so I must call her now—stood watching me for a few minutes, and then glided back to the bedside, and sat down again.

"You find the room quiet?"

"Wonderfully quiet. The roar of the city outside is almost ceasing, and the noise of every carriage seems to cease suddenly, just as it becomes painfully near."

"We have had straw laid down," she answered, "all along this part of the street."

This last drop of kindness filled the cup to overflowing: a veil fell from before my eyes—it was she who had been my friend, my guardian angel, from the beginning!

"You—you—idiot that I have been! I see it all now. It was you who laid that paper to catch my eye on that first evening at D****—you paid my debt to my cousin!—you visited Mackaye in his last illness!"

She made a sign of assent.

"You saw from the beginning my danger, my weakness—you tried to turn me from my frantic and fruitless passion—you tried

to save me from the very gulf into which I forced myself—and I—I have hated you in return—cherished suspicious too ridiculous to confess, only equalled by the absurdity of that other dream!”

“Would that other dream have ever given you peace, even if it had ever become reality?”

She spoke gently, slowly, seriously, waiting between each question for the answer which I dared not give.

“What was it that you adored?—a soul or a face? The inward reality, or the outward symbol, which is only valuable as a sacrament of the loveliness within?”

“Ay!” thought I, “and was that loveliness within? What was that beauty but a hollow mask?” How barren, borrowed, trivial, every thought and word of hers seemed now as I looked back upon them, in comparison with the rich luxuriance, the startling originality, of thought, and deed, and sympathy, in her who now sat by me, wan and faded, beautiful no more as men call beauty, but with the spirit of an archangel gazing from those clear, fiery eyes! And as I looked at her, an emotion utterly new to me arose; utter trust, delight, submission, gratitude, awe—if it was love, it was love as of a dog towards his master.

“Ay,” I murmured, half unconsciously that I spoke aloud, “her I loved, and love no longer, but you, you, I worship, and forever!”

“Worship God!” she answered. “If it shall please you hereafter to call me friend, I shall refuse neither the name nor its duties. But remember always, that whatsoever interest I feel in you, and, indeed, have felt from the first time I saw your poems, I cannot give or accept friendship upon any ground so shallow and changeable as personal preference. The time was, when I thought it a mark of superior intellect and refinement to be as exclusive in my friendships as in my theories. Now I have learnt that that is most spiritual and noble which is also most universal. If we are to call each other friends, it must be for a reason which equally includes the outcast and the prodigal, the felon and the slave.”

“What do you mean?” I asked, half disappointed.

“Only for the sake of Him who died for all like.”

Why did she rise and call Cresswaine from the next room where he was writing? Was it from the womanly tact and delicacy which feared lest my excited feelings might lead me on to some too daring expression, and give me the pain of a rebuff, however gentle; or was it that she wished him, as well as me, to hear the memorable words which followed, to which she seemed to have been all along alluring me, and calling up in my mind, one by one, the very questions to which she had prepared the answers?

“That name!” I answered. “Alas! has

it not been in every age the watchword, not of an all-embracing charity, but of self-interest and hugotry, excommunication and persecution?”

“That is what men have made it, not God, or He who bears it, the Son of God. Yes, men have separated from each other, slandered each other, murdered each other in that name, and blasphemed it by that very act. But when did they unite in any name but that? Look all history through—from the early churches, unconscious and infantile ideas of God’s kingdom, as Eden was of the human race, when love alone was law, and none said that aught that he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common—whose name was the bond of unity for that brotherhood, such as the earth had never seen—when the Roman lady and the negro slave partook together at the table of the same bread and wine, and sat together at the feet of the Syrian tent-maker? ‘One is our Master, even Christ, who sits at the right hand of God, and in Him we are all brothers.’ Not self-chosen preference for His precepts, but the overwhelming faith in His presence, His rule, His love, bound those rich hearts together. Look onward, too, at the first followers of St. Bennet and St. Francis, at the Cameronians among their Scottish hills, or the little persecuted flock who, in a dark and godless time, gathered around John Wesley by path-moors and on Cornish cliffs—Look, too, at the great societies of our own days, which, however imperfectly, still lovingly and earnestly do their measure of God’s work at home and abroad, and say, when was there ever real union, co-operation, philanthropy, equality, brotherhood, among men, save in loyalty to Him—Jesus, who died upon the cross?”

And she bowed her head reverently before that unseen Majesty, and then looked up at us again. Those eyes, now brimming full of earnest tears, would have melted stonier hearts than ours that day.

“Do you not believe me? Then I must quote against you one of your own prophets—a ruined angel—even as you might have been.”

“When Camille Desmoulins, the revolutionary, about to die, as is the fate of such, by the hands of revolutionaries, was asked his age, he answered, they say, that it was the same as that of the ‘bon sans-culotte Jesus.’ I do not blame those who shrink from that speech as blasphemous. I, too, have spoken hasty words and hard, and prided myself on breaking the bruised reed, and quenching the smoking flax. Time was, when I should have been the loudest in denouncing poor Camille, but I have long since seemed to see in those words the distortion of an almighty truth—a truth that shall shake thrones, and principalities, and powers, and fill the earth with its sound, as with the trump of God, a prophecy like

Balaam's of old,—'I shall see Him, but not nigh, I shall behold Him, but not near.'

"Take all the heroes, prophets, poets, philosophers—where will you find the true demagogue—the speaker to man simply as man—the friend of publicans and sinners, the stern foe of the scribe and the Pharisee—with whom was no respect of persons—where is he? Socrates and Plato were noble, Zoroaster and Confucius, for aught we know, were nobler still; but what were they but the exclusive mystagogues of an enlightened few, like our own Emersons and Strausses, to compare great with small? What gospel have they, or Strauss, or Emerson, for the poor, the suffering, the oppressed? The People's Friend? Where will you find him, but in Jesus of Nazareth?"

"We feel that, I assure you, we feel that," said Crosswhite. "There are thousands of us who delight in His moral teaching, as the perfection of human excellence."

"And what gospel is there in a moral teaching? What good news is it to the savage of St. Giles's, to the artisan, crushed by the competition of others and his own evil habits, to tell him that he can be free—if he can make himself free? That all men are his equals if he can rise to their level, or pull them down to his?—All men his brothers—if he can only stop them from devouring him, or making it necessary for him to devour them? Liberty, equality, and brotherhood? Let the history of every nation, of every revolution let your own sad experience, speak—have they been aught as yet but delusive phantoms—angels that turned to fiends the moment you seemed about to clasp them? Remember the tenth of April, and the plots thereof, and answer your own hearts."

Crosswhite buried his face in his hands.

"What?" answered passionately, "will you rob us poor creatures of our only faith, our only hope, on earth? Let us be deceived and deceived again, yet we will believe. We will hope on in spite of hope. We may die, but the idea lives forever. Liberty, equality, and fraternity must come. We know, we know, that they must come; and woe to those who seek to rob us of our faith!"

"Keep, keep your faith," she cried, "for it is not yours, but God's, who gave it! But do not seek to realise that idea for yourselves."

"Why, then, in the name of reason and mercy?"

"Because it is realised already for you. You are free; God has made you free. You are equals—you are brothers, for He is your King, who is no respecter of persons. He is your King, who has bought for you the rights of sons of God. He is your King, to whom all powers given in heaven and earth, who reigns, and will reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet. That was Luther's

charter—with that alone he freed half Europe. That is your charter, and mine; the everlasting ground of our rights, our rights, our duties, of ever gathering storm for the oppressor, of ever brightening sunshine for the oppressed. Own no other. Claim your investiture as free men from none but God. His will, His love, is a stronger ground, surely, than abstract rights and ethnological opinions. Abstract rights? What ground, what root have they, but the ever changing opinions of men, born anew and dying anew with each fresh generation?—while the word of God stands sure—"You are mine, and I am yours, bound to you in an everlasting covenant."

"Abstract rights? They are sure to end, in practice, only in the tyranny of their further opinion. In favoured England here, the notions of abstract right among the many are not so incorrect, thanks to three centuries of Protestant civilization, but only because the right notions suit the many at this moment. But in America, even now, the same ideas of abstract right do not interfere with the tyranny of the white man over the black. Why should they? The white man is handsomer, stronger, cunninger, worthier than the black. The black is more like an ape than the white man. He is—the fact is there, and no notions of an abstract right will put that down. Nothing but another fact is mightier, more universal fact—Jesus of Nazareth died for the negro as well as for the white. Looked at apart from Him, each race, each individual of mankind, stands separate and alone owing no more brotherhood to each other than wolf to wolf, or pike to pike—himself a mightier beast of prey—even as he has proved himself in every age. Looked at as he is, as joined into one family in Christ, his archetype and head, even the most frantic declamations of the French democrat, about the majesty of the people, the divinity of mankind, become rational, reverent, and literal. God's grace outwits all man's boasting—"I have said, ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the most highest;"—"children of God, members of Christ, of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,"—kings and priests to God,—free inheritors of the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of prudence and courage, of reverence and love, the spirit of Him who has said, 'Behold, the days come, when I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and no one shall teach his brother, saying, know the Lord, for all shall know Him, from the least even unto the greatest. Ay, even on the slaves and on the handmaiden in those days will I pour out of my spirit, saith the Lord!'"

"And that is really in the Bible?" asked Crosswhite.

"Ay," she went on, her figure dilating, and her eyes flashing, like an inspired prophetess—"that is in the Bible! What would you more than that? That is your

charter; the only ground of all charters. You, like all mankind, have had dim inspirations, confused yearnings after your future destiny, and, like all the world from the beginning, you have tried to realise, by self-willed methods of your own, what you can only do by God's inspiration, by God's method. Like the builders of Babel in old time, you have said, 'Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top shall reach to heaven' and God has confounded you as He did them. By mistrust, division, passion, and folly, you are scattered abroad. Even in those last few days, the last drops of your late plot have exploded miserably and ludicrously—your late companions are in prison, and the name of Chartist is a laughing stock as well as an abomination.

"Good heavens! Is this true?" asked I, looking at Crossthwaite for confirmation.

"Too true, dear boy, too true. And if it had not been for these two angels here, I should have been in Newgate now!"

"Yes," she went on. "The Charter seems dead, and liberty further off than ever."

"That seems true enough, indeed," said I, bitterly.

"Yes. But it is because Liberty is God's beloved child, that He will not have her purity sullied by the touch of the profane. Because He loves the people, He will allow none but Himself to lead the people. Because He loves the people, He will teach the people by afflictions. And even now, while all this madness has been destroying itself, He has been hiding you in His secret place from the strife of tongues, that you may have to look for a state founded on better things than nets of Parliament, social contracts, and abstract rights—a city whose foundations are in the eternal promises, whose builder and maker is God."

She paused—"Go on, go on," cried Crossthwaite and I in the same breath.

"That state, that city, Jesus said, was come was now within us, hid we eyes to see. And it is come. Call it the Church, the Gospel, civilisation, freedom, democracy, association, what you will—I shall call it by the name by which my Master spoke of it—the name which includes all these and more than these—the kingdom of God. 'Without observation,' as he promised, secretly, but mightily, it has been growing, spreading, since that first Whiteacre, civilising, humanising, uniting this distracted earth. Men have fancied they found it in this system or in that, and in them only. They have cried in its own name, when they found it too wide for their own narrow notions. They have cried, 'Lo here!' and 'Lo there!' 'To this communion!' or 'To that set of opinions!' But it has gone its way—the way of Him who made all things, and redeemed all things to Himself. In every age it has been a gospel to the poor. In every age it has, sooner or later, claimed the steps of civilisation, the discoveries of

science, as God's inspirations, not man's inventions. In every age, it has taught men to do that by God which they had failed in doing without Him. It is now ready, if we may judge by the signs of the times, once again to penitente, to convert, to reorganise, the political and social life of England, perhaps of the world, to vindicate democracy as the will and gift of God. Take it for the ground of your rights. If, henceforth, you claim political enfranchisement, claim it not as mere men, who may be villains, savages, animals, slaves of their own prejudices and passions, but as members of Christ, children of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and therefore bound to realise it on earth. All other rights are mere rights—mere selfish demands to become tyrants in your turn. If you wish to justify your Charter, do it on that ground. Claim your share in national life, only because the nation is a spiritual body, whose king is the Son of God; whose work, whose national character and powers, are allotted to it by the Spirit of Christ. Claim universal suffrage, only on the ground of the universal redemption of mankind—the universal priesthood of Christians. That argument will conquer, when all have failed, for God will make it conquer. Claim the disfranchisement of every man, rich or poor, who breaks the laws of God and man, not merely because he is an obstacle to you, but because he is a traitor to your common king in heaven, and to the spiritual kingdom of which he is a citizen. Denounce the idle idol of property qualification, not because it happens to strengthen class interests against you, but because, as your mystic dream reminded you, and, therefore, as you knew long ago, there is no real rank, no real power, but worth, and worth consists not in property, but in the grace of God. Claim, if you will, annual Parliaments, as a means of enforcing the responsibility of rulers to the Christian community, of which they are to be, not the lords, but the ministers—the servants of all. But claim these, and all also for which you long, not from man but from God, the King of men. And therefore, before you attempt to obtain them, make yourselves worthy of them—perhaps by that process you will find some of them have become less needful. At all events, do not ask, do not hope, that He will give them to you, before you are able to profit by them. Believe that he has kept them from you hitherto, because they would have been curses, and not, blessings. Oh! look back, look back, at the history of English Radicalism for the last half century, and judge by your own deeds, your own words, were you fit for those privileges which you so fraudulently demanded? Do not answer me, that those who had them were equally unfit, but thank God, if the case be indeed so, that your incapacity was not added to theirs, to make confusion worse confounded! Learn a new lesson. Believe

at last that you are in Christ, and become new creatures. With those miserable, awful, farce-tragedies of April and June, lot old things pass away, and all things become new. Believe that your kingdom is not of this world, but of One whose servants must not fight. He that believeth, as the prophet says, will not make haste. Beloved suffering brothers!—are not your times in the hand of One who loved you to the death, who conquered, as you must do, not by wrath, but by martyrdom? Try no more to meet Mammon with his own weapons, but commit your cause to Him who judges righteously, who is even now coming out of His place to judge the earth, and to help the fatherless and poor unto their right, that the man of the world may be no more exalted against them—the poor man of Nazareth, crucified for you!

She ceased, and there was silence for a few moments, as if angels were waiting, hushed, to carry our repentance to the throne of Him we had forgotten.

Crossthwaite had kept his face fast buried in his hands, now he looked up with burning eyes—

"I see it—I see it all now. Oh, my God! my God! What idols we have been!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MIRACLES AND SCIENCE.

SUNRISE, they say, often at first draws up and deepens the very mists which it is about to scatter, and even so, as the excitement of my first conviction cooled, dark doubts came to dim the new-born light of hope and trust within me. The question of miracles had been, ever since I had read Strans, my greatest stumbling-block—perhaps not unwillingly, for my doubts pampered my sense of intellectual acuteness and scientific knowledge; and "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." But now that they interfered with nobler, more important, more unmoderately practical ideas, I longed to have them removed—I longed even to swallow them down on trust—to take the miracles "into the bargain," as it were, for the sake of that mighty gospel of deliverance for the people, which accompanied them. Mean subterfuge! which would not, could not, satisfy me. The thing was too precious, too all-important, to take one tittle of it on trust. I could not bear the consciousness of one hollow spot—the gather fires of doubt glaring through, even at one little crevice. I took my doubts to Lady Ellerton—Kleanor, as I must now call her, for she never allowed herself to be addressed by her title—and she referred me to her uncle—

"I could say somewhat on that point myself. But since your doubts are scientific

ones, I had rather that you should discuss them with one whose knowledge of such subjects, you, and all England with you, must reverse."

"Ah, but—pardon me; he is a clergyman."

"And therefore bound to prove, whether he believes in his own proof or not. Unworthy suspicion!" she cried, with a touch of her old manner. "If you had known that man's literary history for the last thirty years, you would not suspect him, at least, of sacrificing truth and conscience to interest, or to fear of the world's insults."

I was rebuked; and not without hope and confidence, I broached the question to the good dean when he came in—as he happened to do that very day.

"I hardly like to state my difficulties," I began—"for I am afraid that I must hurt myself in your eyes by offending your prejudices, if you will pardon so plain spoken an expression."

"If," he replied, in his bland, courtly way, "I am so unfortunate as to have any prejudices left, you cannot do me a greater kindness than by offending them—or by any other means, however severe—to make me conscious of the locality of such a secret cancer."

"But I am afraid that your own teaching has created, or at least corroborated, these doubts of mine."

"How so?"

"You first taught me to revere science. You first taught me to admire and trust the immutable order, the perfect harmony of the laws of Nature."

"Ah! I comprehend now!" he answered, in a somewhat mournful tone—"how much we have to answer for! How often, in our carelessness, we offend those little ones, whose souls are precious in the sight of God! I have thought long and earnestly on the very subject which now distresses you, perhaps every doubt which has passed through your mind, has exercised my own, and, strange to say, you first set me on that new path of thought. A conversation which passed between us years ago at D**** on the antithesis of natural and revealed religion—perhaps you recollect it?"

Yes, I recollected it better than he fancied, and recollected too—I trust the thought he laid me—it was even yet intolerable.

"That conversation first awoke in me the sense of an hitherto unconscious inconsistency—a desire to reconcile two lines of thought—which I had hitherto considered as parallel, and impossible to unite. To you, and to my beloved niece here, I owe gratitude for that evening's talk, and you are freely welcome to all my conclusions, for you have been, indirectly, the originator of them all."

"Then I must confess, that miracles seem to me impossible, just because they break the laws of Nature. Pardon me—but there

seems something blasphemous in supposing that God can mar His own order. His power I do not call in question, but the very thought of His so doing is abhorrent to me."

"It is as abhorrent to me as it can be to you, to Goethe, or to Strauss, and yet I believe firmly in our Lord's miracles."

"How so, if they break the laws of Nature?"

"Who told you, my dear young friend, that to break the customs of Nature, is to break her laws? A phenomenon, an appearance, whether it be a miracle or a comet, need not contradict them because it is rare, because it is as yet not referable to them. Nature's deepest laws, her only true laws, are her invisible ones. All analyses (I think you know enough to understand my terms), whether of appearances, of causes, or of elements, only lead us down to fresh appearances—we cannot see a law, let the power of our lens be ever so immense. The true causes remain just as impalpable, as unfathomable as ever, eluding equally our microscope and our induction—ever tending towards some great primal law, as Mr. Grove has well shown lately in his most valuable pamphlet—some great primal law, I say, manifesting itself, according to circumstances, in countless diverse and unexpected forms—till all that the philosopher as well as the divine can say, is—The Spirit of Life impalpable, transcendental, direct from God, is the only real cause. It 'bleweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.' What, if miracles should be the orderly results of some such deep, most orderly, and yet most spiritual law?"

"I feel the force of your argument, but—"

"But you will confess, at least, that you, after the fashion of the crowd, have begun your argument by begging the very question in dispute, and may have, after all, created the very difficulty which torments you."

"I confess it, but I cannot see how the miracles of Jesus—of our Lord—have anything of order in them."

"Tell me, then—to try the Mosaic method—is disease, or health, the order and law of Nature?"

"Health, surely, we all confess that by calling disease disorders."

"Then, would one who healed diseases be a restorer, or a breaker of order?"

"A restorer, doubtless; but—"

"Like a patient scholar, and a scholarly patient, allow me to 'exhibit' my own inclinations, according to my own notion of the various crises of your distemper. I assure you I will not play you false, or entrap you by quips and special pleading. You are aware that our Lord's miracles were almost exclusively miracles of healing—restorations of that order of health which disease was breaking—that when the Scribes

and Pharisees, superstitious and sense bound, asked Him for a sign from heaven, a supernatural prodigy, he refused them as peremptorily as he did the fiend's 'Command these stones that they may be made bread.' You will quote against me the water turned into wine, as an exception to this rule. St. Augustine answered that objection centuries ago, by the same argument as I am now using. Allow Jesus to have been the Lord of Creation, and what was He doing then, but what He does in the maturing of every grape—transformed from air and water even as that wine in Cana? Goethe himself, unwittingly, has made Mephistopheles even see as much as that—

"Wine is sap, and grapes are wood,
The wooden board yields wine as good."

"But the time"—so infinitely shorter than that which Nature usually occupies in the process!"

"Time and space are no gods, as a wise German says, and as the electric telegraph ought already to have taught you. They are customs, but who has proved them to be laws of Nature? No, analyse these miracles one by one, fairly, carefully, scientifically, and you will find that if you want prodigies really blasphemous and absurd indications of the laws of Nature, amputated limbs growing again, and dead men walking away with their heads under their arms, you must go to the Popish legends, but not to the miracles of the Gospels. And now for you 'but'—"

"The raising of the dead to life? Surely death is the appointed end of every animal—ay, of every species, and of man among the rest."

"Who denies it? But is premature death the death of Jesus's daughter, of the widow's son at Naim, the death of Jesus himself, in the prime of youth and vigour, or rather that gradual decay of ripe old age, through which I now, thank God, so fast am travelling? What nobler restoration of order, what clearer vindication of the laws of Nature from the disorder of diseases, than to recall the dead to their natural and normal period of life?"

I was silent a few moments, having nothing to answer then—

"After all, these may have been restorations of the law of Nature. But why was the law broken in order to restore it? The Tenth of April has taught me, at least, that disorder cannot cast disorder out."

"Again, I ask, why do you assume the very point in question? Again I ask, who knows what really are the laws of Nature? You have heard Bacon's golden rule—'Nature is conquered by obeying her.'"

"I have."

"Then who more likely, who more certain, to fulfil that law to hitherto unattained perfection, than He who came to obey not

outward nature merely, but, as Bacon meant, the inner ideas, the spirit of Nature, which is the will of God?—He who came to do utterly, not his own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him? Who is so presumptuous as to limit the future triumphs of science? Surely no one who has watched her giant strides during the last century. Shall Stephenson and Faraday, and the inventors of the calculating machine, and the electric telegraph, have fulfilled such wonders by their weak and partial obedience to the 'Will of God expressed in things'—and he who obeyed, even unto the death, have possessed no higher power than theirs?"

"Indeed," I said, "your words stagger me. But there is another old objection which they have re-awakened in my mind. You will say I am shifting my ground sadly. But you must pardon me."

"Let us hear. They need not be so relevant. The unconscious logic of association is often deeper and truer than any syllogism."

"These modern discoveries in medicine seem to show that Christ's miracles may be attributed to natural causes."

"And thereby justify them. For what else have I been arguing. The difficulty lies only in the rationalist's shallow and sensuous view of Nature, and in his ambiguous slip-slop trick of using the word natural to mean, in one sentence 'material,' and in the next, as I use it, only 'normal and orderly.' Every new wonder in medicine which this great age discovers—what does it prove, but that Christ need have broken no natural laws to do that of old, which can be done now without breaking them—if you will but believe that those gifts of healing are all inspired and revealed by Him who is the Great Physician, the Life, the Lord of that vital energy by whom all cures are wrought."

"The surgeons of St. George's make the boy walk who has been lame from his mother's womb. But have they given life to a single bone or muscle of his limbs? They have only put them into that position—those circumstances, in which the God-given life in them can have its free and normal play, and produce the cure which they only assist. I claim that miracle of science, as I do all future ones, as the inspiration of Him who made the lame to walk in Judea, not by producing new organs, but by His creative will—quickening and liberating those which already existed."

"The mesmerist, again, says that he can cure a spirit of infirmity, an hysterical or paralytic patient, by shedding forth on them his own vital energy, and, therefore he will have it, that Christ's miracles were but mesmeristic feats. I grant, for the sake of argument, that he possesses the power which he claims, though I may think his facts too new, too undigested, often too exaggerated, to claim my certain assent. But, I say, I take you on your own ground; and, indeed,

if man be the image of God, his vital energy may, for aught I know, be able, like God's, to communicate some spark of life. But then, what must have been the vital energy of Him, who was the life itself, who was filled without measure with the spirit, not only of humanity, but with that of God the Lord and Giver of life? Do but let the Bible tell its own story, grant, for the sake of argument, the truth of the dogmas which it asserts throughout, and it becomes a consistent whole. When a man begins, as Spinoza does, by assuming the falsity of its conclusions, no wonder if he finds its premises a fragmentary chaos of contradictions."

"And what else," asked Eleanor, passionately, "what else is the meaning of that highest human honor, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but a paternal token that the same life-giving spirit is the free right of all?"

And thereon followed happy, peaceful, hopeful words, which the reader, if he call himself a Christian, ought to be able to imagine for himself. I am afraid that writing from memory, I should do as little justice to them as I have ^{to} the claim's arguments in this chapter. Of the consequences which they produced in me, I will speak anon.

CHAPTER XXXI.

It was a month or more before I summoned courage to ask after my cousin.

Eleanor looked solemnly at me.

"Did you not know it?" He is dead."

"Dead!" I was almost stunned by the announcement.

"Of typhus fever. He died three weeks ago, and not only he, but the servant who brushed his clothes, and the shopman, who had, a few days before, brought him a new coat home."

"How did you learn all this?"

"From Mr. Crosthwaite. But the strangest part of the sad story is to come. Crosthwaite's suspicions were aroused by some incidental circumstances, and knowing of Downes's death, and the fact that you most probably caught your fever in that miserable being's house, he made such inquiries as satisfied him that it was no other than your cousin's coat."

"Which covered the corpse in that fearful chamber?"

"It was indeed."

Just, awful God! And this was the consistent Nemesis of all poor George's thrift and cunning, of his determination to carry the buy-cheap-and-sell-dear commercialism, in which he had been brought up, and every act of life! Did I rejoice? No, all revenge, all spite had been scourged out of me.

I mourned for him as for a brother, till the thought flashed across me—Lillian was free! Half unconscious, I stammered her name inquiringly "

"Judge for yourself," answered Eleanor, mildly, yet with a deep, severe meaning in her tone

I was silent.

The tempest in my heart was ready to burst forth again, but she, my guardian angel, soothed it for me

"She is much changed, sorrow and sickness—for she, too, has had the fever,—and, alas! less resignation or peace within, than those who love her would have wished to see, have worn her down. Little remains now of that loveliness "

"Which I idolised in my folly! "

"Thank God, thank God! that you see that at last I knew it all along. I knew that there was nothing there for your heart to rest upon—nothing to satisfy your intellect—and, therefore, I tried to turn you from your dream. I did it harshly, angrily, too sharply, yet not explicitly enough. I ought to have made allowances for you. I should have known how enchanting, intoxicating, mere outward perfection must have been to one of your perceptions, shut out so long as you had been from the beautiful in art and nature. But I was cruel. Alas! I had not then learnt to sympathise, and I have often since felt with terror, that I, too, may have many of your sins to answer for, that I, even I, helped to drive you on to bitterness and despair "

"Oh, do not say so! You have done to me, meant to me, nothing but good "

"Be not too sure of that. You little know me. You little know the pride which I have fostered even the mean anger against you, for being the *protégé* of anyone but myself. That exclusiveness, and shyness, and proud reserve, is the bane of our English character. It has been the bane of mine. daily I strive to root it out. Come—I will do so now. You wonder why I am here. You shall hear somewhat of my story, and do not fancy that I am showing you a peculiar mark of honour or confidence. If the history of my life can be of use to the meaneast, they are welcome to the secrets of my inmost heart.

"I was my parents' only child, an heiress, highly born, and highly educated. Every circumstance of humanity which could pamper pride was mine, and I battered on the poison. I painted, I sang, I wrote in prose and verse—they told me, not without success. Men said that I was beautiful. I knew that myself, and revelled and gloried in the thought. Accustomed to see myself the centre of all my parents' hopes and fears, to be surrounded by flatterers, to indulge in secret the still more fatal triumph of con-

tempt for those I thought less gifted than myself, self became the centre of my thoughts. Pleasure was all I thought of. But not what the vulgar call pleasure. That I disdained, while, like you, I worshipped all that was pleasurable in the intellect and the taste. The beautiful was my God. I lived, in deliberate intoxication, on poetry, music, painting, and every autotype of them which I could find to the world around. At last I met with one whom you once saw. He first awoke in me the sense of the vast duties and responsibilities of my station—his example first taught me to care for the many rather than for the few. It was a blessed lesson. yet even that I turned to poison, by making self, still self, the object of my very benevolence. To be a philanthropist, a philosopher, a feudal queen, and the blessings and the praise of dependant hundreds—that was my new ideal, for that I turned the whole force of my intellect to the study of history, of social and economic questions. From Bentham and Malthus to Fourier and Proudhon, I read them all. I made them all fit into that idol temple of self which I was rearing, and fancied that I did my duty, by becoming one of the great ones of the earth. My ideal was not the crucified Nazarene, but some Hamon Alahad, in luxurious splendour, pampering his pride by bestowing as a favour those mercies which God commands as the right of all. I thought to serve God forsooth, by serving Mammon and myself. Fool that I was! I could not see God's handwriting on the wall against me. How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of heaven!

"You gave me, unintentionally, a warning. The capabilities which I saw in you made me suspect that those below might be more nearly my equals than I had yet fancied. Your vivid descriptions of the misery among whole classes of workmen—misery caused and ever increased by the very system of society itself—gave a momentary shock to my fancy. They drove me back upon the simple old question, which has been asked by every honest heart, age after age, 'What right have I to revel in luxury, while thousands are starving?' Why do I pride myself on doing out to them small fractions of that wealth, which, if sacrificed utterly and at once, might help to raise hundreds to a civilisation as high as my own? I could not face the thought, and angry with you for having awakened it, however unintentionally, I shrunk back behind the pitiable worn-out fallacy, that luxury was necessary to give employment. I knew that it was a fallacy, I knew that the labour spent in producing unnecessary things for one rich man was just as well have gone in producing necessities for a hundred poor, or employ the architect and the painter for public bodies as well as private individuals. That even for the production of luxuries, the

monopolising demand of the rich was not required—that the appliances of real civilisation, the landscapes, gardens, stately rooms, baths, books, pictures, works of art, collections of curiosities, which now went to pamper me alone—me, one single human soul—might be helping, in an associate society, to civilise a hundred families, now debarred from them by isolated poverty, without robbing me of an atom of the real enjoyment or benefit of them. I knew it, I say, to be a fallacy, and yet I hid behind it from the eye of God. Besides, ‘it always had been so—the few rich, and the many poor. I was but one more among millions.’”

She paused a moment, as if to gather strength, and then continued

“The blow came. My idol—for he, too, was an idol—to please him I had begun—to please myself in pleasing him, I was trying to become great—and with him went from me that sphere of labour which was to witness the triumph of my pride. I saw the estate pass into other hands, a mighty change passed over me, as impossible, perhaps, as unfitting, for me to analyse. I was considered mad. Perhaps I was so: there is a Divine insanity, a celestial folly, which conquers worlds. At least, when that period was past, I had done and suffered so strangely, that nothing henceforth could seem strange to me. I had broken the yoke of custom and opinion. My only ground was now the bare realities of human life and duty. In poverty and loneliness I thought out the problems of society, and seemed to myself to have found the one solution—self-sacrifice. Following my first impulse, I had given largely to every charitable institution. I could hear of—(God forbid that I should regret those gifts—yet the money, I soon found, might have been better spent. One by one, every institution disappointed me, they seemed, after all, only means for keeping the poor in their degradation, by making it just not intolerable to them—means for enabling Mammon to draw fresh victims into his den, by taking off his hands those whom he had already worn out into uselessness. Then I tried association among my own sex—among the most unwelcome and degraded of them. I simply tried to put them into a position in which they might work for each other, and not for a single tyrant; in which that tyrant’s profits might be divided among the slaves themselves. Experienced men warned me that I should fail, that such a plan would be destroyed by the innate selfishness and rivalry of human nature; that it demanded what was impossible to find, good faith, fraternal love, overruling moral influence. I answered, that I knew that already, that nothing but Christianity alone could supply that want, but that it could and should supply it, that I would teach them to live as sisters, by living with them as their sister myself. To become the teacher, the minister, the slave of those

whom I was trying to rescue, was now my one idea. To lead them on, not by machinery, but by precept, by example, by the influence of every gift and talent which God had bestowed upon me, to devote to them my enthusiasm, my eloquence, my poetry, my art, my science, to tell them who had bestowed their gifts on me, and would bestow, to each according to her measure, the same on them, to make my workrooms, in one word, not a machinery, but a family. And I have succeeded—as others will succeed, long after my name, my small endeavours, are forgotten amid the great now world—new Church. I should have said—of enfranchised and fraternal labour.”

And this was the suspected aristocrat! Oh, my brothers, my brothers! little you know how many a noble soul, among those ranks which you consider only as your foes, is yearning to love, to help, to live and die for you, did they but know the way? Is it their fault, if God has placed them where they are? Is it their fault, if they refuse to part with their wealth, before they are sure that such a sacrifice would really be a mercy to you? Show yourselves worthy of association. Show that you can do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God, as brothers before one Father, subjects of one crucified King, and see then whether the spirit of self-sacrifice is dead among the rich! See whether there are not left in England yet seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Mammon, who will not fear to “give their substance to the free,” if they find that the Son has made you free from your own sins, as well as from the sins of others!

CHAPTER VI.

PRIESTS AND PEOPLE

“BUT after all,” I said one day, “the great practical objection still remains unanswered—the clergy? Are we to throw ourselves into their hands after all? Are we, who have been declaiming all our lives against priestcraft, voluntarily to forgo again the chains of our slavery to a class whom we neither trust nor honour?”

She smiled. “If you examine the Prayer-Book, you will not find, as far as I am aware, anything which binds a man to become the slave of the priesthood, voluntarily or otherwise. Whether the people become priest-ridden or not, hereafter, will depend, as it always has done, utterly on themselves. As long as the people act upon their spiritual liberty, and live with eyes undimmed by superstitious fear, fixed in loving holdness on their Father in Heaven, and their King, the first-born among many brethren, the

priesthood will remain, as God intended them, only the interpreters and witnesses of His will and His kingdom. But let them turn their eyes from Him to aught in earth or heaven beside, and there will be no lack of priestcraft, of veils to hide Him from them, tyrants to keep them from Him, idols to ape His likeness. A sinful people will be sure to be a priest-ridden people, in reality, though not in name, by journalists and demagogues, if not by class leaders and popes and of the two, I confess I should prefer a Hildebrand to an O'Mynn."

"But," I replied, "we do not love, we do not trust, we do not respect the clergy. Has their conduct to the masses for the last century deserved that we should do so? Will you ask us to obey the men whom we despise?"

"God forbid!" she answered. "But you must surely be aware of the miraculous, ever-increasing improvement in the clergy."

"In morals," I said, "and in industry, doubtless, but not upon those points which are to us just now dearer than their morals or their industry, because they involve the very existence of our own industry and our own morals—I mean, social and political subjects. On them the clergy seem to me as ignorant, as bigoted, as aristocratic as ever."

"But, suppose that there were a rapidly increasing class among the clergy, who were willing to help you to the uttermost—and you must feel that then help would be worth having—towards the attainment of social reform, if you would waive for a time merely political claims?"

"What?" I said, "give up the very ideas for which we have struggled, and smothered, and all but died—and will struggle, and, if need be, die for still, or confess ourselves traitors to the common weal?"

"The Charter, like its supporters, must die to itself before it lives to God. Is it not even now further off than ever?"

"It seems so, indeed—but what do you mean?"

"You regarded the Charter as an absolute end. You made a selfish and a self-willed idol of it. And therefore God's blessing did not rest on it or you."

"We want it as a means as well as an end—as a means for the highest and widest social reform, as well as a right dependent on eternal justice."

"Let the working-classes prove that, then," she replied, "in their actions now. If it be true, as I would fain believe it to be, let them show that they are willing to give up their will to God's will, to compass those social reforms by the means which God puts in their way, and wait for His own good time to give them, or not to give them, those means which they in their own minds prefer. This is what I meant by saying that Chartism must die to itself before it has a chance of living to God. You must feel too, that Chartism has sinned—has defiled

itself in the eyes of the wise, the good, the gentle. Your only way now to soften the prejudice against it is to show that you can no longer be men, and brothers, and Christians without it. You cannot wonder if the clergy shall object awhile to help you towards that Charter, which the majority of you demanded for the express purpose of destroying the creed which the clergy do believe, however badly they may have acted upon it."

"It is all true enough—bitterly true but yet, why do we need the help of the clergy?"

"Because you need the help of the whole nation, because there are other classes to be considered beside yourselves, because the nation is neither the few nor the many, but the all, because it is only by the co-operation of all the members of a body, that any one member can fulfil its calling in health and freedom, because, as long as you stand aloof from the clergy, or from any other class, through pride, self-interest, or wilful ignorance, you are keeping up those very class distinctions of which you and I, too, complain as 'hatful equally to God and to His enemies,' and, finally, because the clergy are the class which God has appointed to unite all others which, in as far as it fulfils its calling, and is indeed a priesthood, is above and below all rank, and knows no man after the flesh, but only on the ground of his spiritual worth, and his birthright in that kingdom which is the heritage of all."

"Truly," I answered, "the idea is a noble one. But look at the reality! Has not priestly pandering to tyrants made the Church, in every age, a scold and a byword among free men?"

"May it ever do so," she replied, "when ever such a sin exists! But yet, look at the other side of the picture. Did not the priesthood, in the first ages, glory not in the name, but, what is better, in the office, of democrats? Did not the Roman tyrants hunt them down as wild beasts, because they were democrats, proclaiming to the slave and to the barbarian a spiritual freedom and a heavenly citizenship, before which the Roman will knew his power must vanish into nought? Who, during the invasion of the barbarians, protected the poor against their conquerors? Who, in the Middle Age, stood between the baron and his serfs? Who, in their monasteries, realised spiritual democracy,—the nothingness of rank and wealth, the practical might of co-operation and self sacrifice? Who delivered England from the Pope? Who spread throughout every cottage in the land the Bible and Protestantism, the book and the religion which declares that a man's soul is free in the sight of God? Who, at the martyr's stake in Oxford, 'lighted the candle in England that shall never be put out?' Who, by suffering, and not by rebellion, drove the last perjured Stuart from his throne, and united every sect and class in one of the noblest steps in

England's progress? You will say these are the exceptions; I say nay, they are rather a few great and striking manifestations of an influence which has been, unseen, though not unfelt, at work for ages, converting, consecrating, organising, every fresh invention of mankind, and which is now on the eve of Christianising democracy, as it did Medieval Feudalism, Tudor Nationalism, Whig Constitutionalism, and which will succeed in Christianising it, and so alone making it rational, human, possible, because the priesthood alone, of all human institutions, testifies of Christ the King of men, the Lord of all things, the insurer of all discoveries, who reigns, and will reign, till He has put all things under His feet, and the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. Be sure, as it always has been, so will it be now. Without the priesthood there is no freedom for the people. Statesmen know it, and, therefore, those who would keep the people fettered, find it necessary to keep the priesthood fettered also. The people never can be themselves without co-operation with the priesthood, and the priesthood never can be themselves without co-operation with the people. They may help to make a sect-Church for the rich, as they have helped to make, or a sect-Church for paupers (which is also the most subtle form of a sect-Church for the rich), as a party in England are trying now to do—as I once gladly would have done myself—but if they would be truly priests of God, and priests of the Universal Church, they must be priests of the people, priests of the masses, priests after the like news of Him who died on the cross.

"And are there any men," I said, "who believe this? and, what is more, have courage to act upon it, now in the very hour of Mammon's triumph?"

"There are those who are willing, who are determined, whatever it may cost them, to fraternise with those whom they take shame to themselves for having neglected, to preach and to organise, in concert with them, a Holy War against the social abuses which are England's shame, and, first and foremost, against the fear of competition. They do not want to be dictators to the working-men. They know that they have a message to the artisan, but they know, too, that the artisan has a message to them, and they are not afraid to hear it. They do not wish to make him a puppet for any system of their own, they only are willing, if he will take the hand they offer him, to devote themselves, body and soul, to the great end of enabling the artisan to govern himself, to produce in the integrity of a free man, and not of a slave, to eat the food he earns, and wear the clothes he makes. Will you working brothers co-operate with these men? Are they, do you think, such bigots as to let political differences stand between them and those who fain would trust them

as their brothers, or will they fight manfully side by side with them in the battle against Mammon, trusting to God, that if in anything they are otherwise minded, He will, in His own good time, reveal even that unto them? Do you think, to take one instance, the men of your own trade would heartily join a handful of these men in an experiment of associate labour, even though there should be a drayman or two among them?"

"Join them?" I said. "Can you ask the question? I, for one, would devote myself, body and soul, to any enterprise so noble. Crossthwaite would ask for nothing higher than to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water to an establishment of associate workmen. But, alas! his fate is fixed for the New World, and mine, I verily believe, for sickness and the grave. And yet I will answer for it, that, in the hopes of helping such a project, he would give up Mackaye's bequest, for the mere sake of remaining in England, and for me, if I have but a month of life, it is at the service of such men as you describe."

"Ah!" she said musingly, "if poor Mackaye had but had somewhat more faith in the future, that fatal condition would perhaps never have been attached to his bequest. And yet, perhaps, it is better as it is. Crossthwaite's mind may want quite as much as yours does, a few years of a simpler and brighter atmosphere to soften and refresh it again. Besides, your health is too weak, your life, I know, too valuable to your class, for us to trust you on such a voyage alone. He must go with you."

"With me?" I said. "You must be misinformed, I have no thought of leaving England."

"You know the opinion of the physicians?"

"I know that my life is not likely to be a long one, that immediate removal to a southern, if possible to a tropical climate, is considered the only means of preserving it. For the former, I care little, *non est tanti mero*. And, indeed, the latter, even if it would succeed, is impossible. Crossthwaite will live and thrive by the labour of his hands, while, for such a helpless invalid as I to travel would be to dissipate the little capital which poor Mackaye has left me."

"The day will come, when society will find it profitable, as well as just, to put the means of preserving life by travel within the reach of the poorest. But individuals must always begin by setting the examples, which the State too slowly, though surely (for the world is God's world after all), will learn to copy. All is arranged for you Crossthwaite, you know, would have sailed ere now, had it not been for your fever. Next week you start with him for Texas. No, make no objections. All expenses are defrayed—no matter by whom."

"By you! by you! Who else?"

"Do you think that I monopolise the generosity of England? Do you think warm hearts beat only in the breasts of working-men? But, if it were I, would not that be only another reason for submitting? You must go. You will have, for the next three years, such an allowance as will support you in comfort, whether you choose to remain stationary, or, as I hope, to travel southward into Mexico. Your passage-money is already paid."

Why should I attempt to describe my feelings? I gasped for breath, and looked stupidly at her for a minute or two. The second darling hope of my life within my reach, just as the first had been snatched from me! At last I found words.

"No, no, noble lady! Do not tempt me! Who am I, the slave of impulse, useless, worn out in mind and body, that you should waste such generosity upon me? I do not refuse from the honest pride of independence, I have not man enough left in me even for that. But will you, of all people, ask me to desert the starving suffering thousands, to whom my heart, my honour are engaged, to give up the pillow of my life, and pamper my fancy in a luxurious paradise, while they are starving here?"

"What? Cannot God find champions for them when you are gone? Has He not found them already? Believe me, that Tenth of April, which you forecast the death day of liberty, has awakened a spirit in high as well as low life, which children yet unborn will bless."

"Oh, do not mistake me! Have I not confessed my own weakness? But if I have one healthy nerve left in me, soul or body, it will retain its strength only as long as it thrills with devotion to the people's cause. If I live, I must live among them, for them. If I die, I must die at my post. I could not rest, except in labour. I dare not fly, like Jotham, from the call of God. In the deepest shade of the virgin forests, on the loneliest peak of the Cordilleras, He would find me out, and I should hear His still small voice reproving me, as it reproved the fugitive patriot, seer of old—What doest thou here, Elijah?"

I was excited, and spoke, I am afraid, after my custom, somewhat too magniloquently. But she answered calmly with a quiet smile.

"So you are a Chartist still?"

"If by a Chartist you mean one who fancies that a change in mere political circumstances will bring about a millennium, I am no longer one. That dream is gone—with others. But if to be a Chartist is to love my brothers with every faculty of my soul—to wish to live and die struggling for their rights, endeavouring to make them, not electors merely, but fit to be electors, senators, kings and priests to God and to His Christ—if that be the Chartistism of the future,

then am I sevenfold a Chartist, and ready to confess it before men, though I were thrust forth from every door in England."

She was silent a moment.

"The stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone of the corner. Surely the old English spirit has cast its madness, and begins to speak once more as it spoke in Naschy fights and Smithfield fires!"

"And yet you would quench it in me amid the enervating climate of the Tropics?"

Need it be quenched there? Was it quenched in Drake, in Hawkins, and the conquerors of Hindostan? Weakness, ill-strength, is from within, of the spirit, and not of the sunshine. I would send you thither, that you may gain new strength, new knowledge to carry out your dream and mine. Do not refuse me the honour of persuading you. Do not forbid me to employ my wealth in the only way which reconciles my conscience to the possession of it. I have saved many a woman already, and this one thing remained—the highest of all my hopes and longings—that God would allow me, ere I died, to save a man. I have longed to find some noble soul, as Chulih says, felled down by the wayside, and lift it up, and heal its wounds, and teach it the secret of its heavenly birthright, and consecrate it to its King in heaven. I have longed to find a man of the people, whom I could train to be the poet of the people."

"Me, at least, you have saved, have taught, have trained! Oh that your eye had been bestowed on some more worthy object!"

Let me at least, then, perfect my own work. You do not—it is a sign of your humanity that you do not appreciate the value of this rest. You underestimate at once your own powers, and the shock which they have received."

"If I must go, then, why so far? Why put you to so great expense? If you must be generous, send me to some place nearer home—to Italy, to the coast of Devon, or the Isle of Wight, where myriads like me are said to find all the advantages which are so often, perhaps too hastily, sought in foreign lands."

"No," she said, smiling, "you are my servant now, by the laws of chivalry, and you must follow my quest. I have long hoped for a Tropic poet, one who should leave the routine imagery of European civilisation, its meagre scenery, and physically deceptive hues, for the grandeur, the luxuriance, the minute and strongly marked variety of Tropic nature, the paradisaic beauty and simplicity of Tropic humanity. I am tired of the old images, of the barren alternation between Italy and the Highlands. I had once dreamt of going to the Tropics myself; but my work lay elsewhere. Go forward, and for the people. See if you cannot help to infuse some new blood into the aged veins of

English literature; see if you cannot, by observing man in his mere simple and primeval state, bring home fresh conceptions of beauty, fresh spiritual and physical laws of his existence, that you may realise them here at home—(how, I see as yet but dimly; but He who teaches the facts will surely teach their application)—in the cottages, in the playgrounds, the reading rooms, the churches of working-men.”

“But I know so little—I have seen so little.”

“That very fact, I flatter myself, gives you an especial vocation for my scheme. Your ignorance of cultivated English scenery, and of Italian art, will enable you to approach with a more reverent, simple, and unprejudiced eye, the primal forms of beauty—God’s work, not man’s. Sin you will see there, and anarchy, and tyranny, but I do not send you to look for a society, but for Nature. I do not send you to become a barbarian settler, but to bring home to the realms of civilisation those ideals of physical perfection, which as yet, alas! barbarism, rather than civilisation, has preserved. Do not despise your old love for the beautiful. Do not fancy that because you have let it become an idol and a tyrant, it was not therefore the gift of God. Cherish it, develop it to the last, steep your whole soul in beauty, watch it in its most vast and complex harmonies, and not less in its most faint and fragmentary traces. Only, hitherto you have blindly worshipped it, now you must learn to comprehend, to master, to embody it, to show it forth to men as the sacrament of Heaven, the finger-mark of God!”

Who could resist such pleading from *how* lips? I at least could not.

CHAPTER XL.

FREEDOM, EQUALITY, AND BROTHERHOOD.

BEFORE the same Father, the same King, crunched for all alike, we had partaken of the same bread and wine, we had prayed for the same spirit. Side by side around the chair on which I lay propped up with pillows, coughing my span of life away, had knelt the high-born countess, the cultivated philosopher, the repentant rebel, the wild Irish girl, her slavish and exclusive creed exchanged for ‘one more free and all-embracing; and that no extreme type of human condition might be wanting, the reclaimed Magdalene was there—two pale worn girls from Eleanor’s asylum, in whom I recognised the needlewomen to whom Mackaye had taken me, on a memorable night seven years before. Thus—and how better!—had God rewarded their loving care of that poor dying fellow-slave.

Yes—we had knelt together and I had felt that we were one—that there was a bond between us, real, eternal, independent of ourselves, knit not by man, but God; and the peace of God which passes understanding, came over me like the clear sunshine after weary rain.

One by one they shook me by the hand, and quitted the room, and Eleanor and I were left alone.

“See!” she said, “Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood are mine; but not as you expected.”

Blissful, repentant tears blinded my eyes, as I replied, not to her, but Him who spoke by her—

“Lord! not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

“Yes,” she continued, “Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood are here. Realise them in thine own self, and so alone thou helpst to make them realities for all. Not from without, from Charters and Republics, but from within, from The Spirit working in each, not by wrath and haste, but by patience made perfect through suffering, canst thou proclaim thine good news to the roving masses, and deliver them, as thy Master did before thee, by the cross, and not the sword. Divine paradox!—folly to the rich and mighty—the watchword of the weak, in whose weakness is God’s strength made perfect. ‘In your patience possess ye your souls, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.’ Yes—He came to crush the Babel tyranny of Rome fell, even as the more fearful, more subtle, and more diabolic tyranny of Mammon shall fall ere long—suicidal, even now crumbling by its innate decay. Yes—Babylon the Great—the commercial world of selfish competition, drunken with the blood of God’s people, whose merchandise is the bodies and souls of men—her doom is gone forth. And then—then—when they, the tyrants of the earth, who lived delicately with her rejoicing in her sins, the plutocrats and bureaucrats, the money changers and devourers of labour, are crying to the rocks to hide them, and to the hills to cover them, from the wrath of Him that sitteth on the throne, then labour shall be free at last, and the poor shall eat and be satisfied, with things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which God has prepared for those who love Him. Then the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, and mankind at last shall own their King—Him in whom they are all redeemed into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, and He shall reign indeed on earth, and none but His saints shall rule beside Him. And then shall this sacrament be an everlasting sign to all the nations of the world, as it has been to you this day, of freedom, equality, brotherhood, of glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. Do you believe?”

TAILOR AND POET.

Again I answered, not her, but Him who sent her—

"Lord, I believe! Help thou my unbelief!"

"And now, farewell. I shall not see you again before you start—and ere you return—My health has been fast declining lately."

I started—I had not dared to confess to myself how thin her features had become of late. I had tried not to hear the dry and hectic cough, or see the burning spot on either cheek—but it was too true, and with a broken voice, I cried

"Oh that I might die, and join you!"

"Not so—I trust that you have still a work to do. But if not, promise me that, whatever be the event of your voyage, you will publish, in good time, an honest history of your life, extenuating nothing, exaggerating nothing, ashamed to confess or to proclaim nothing. It may perhaps awaken some rich man to look down and take pity on the brains and hearts more noble than his own, which ho struggling in poverty and misguidance, among these foul cities, which civilisation rears—and calls them cities. Now, once again, farewell!"

She held out her hand—I would have fallen at her feet, but the thought of that common sacrament withheld me. I seized her hand, covered it with adoring kisses—Slowly she withdrew it, and glided from the room.

What need of more words? I obeyed her—sailed—and here I am.

Yes! I have seen the land! Like a purple fringe upon the golden water, "while the parting day dies like the dolphin," there it lay upon the far horizon—the great young free New World! and every tree, and flower, and insect on it new to wonder and a joy which I shall never see.

No, I shall never reach the land. I felt it all along. Weaker and weaker, day by day, with bleeding lungs and failing limbs, I have travelled the ocean-paths. The iron has entered too deeply into my soul.

Hark! Merry voices on deck are welcoming their future home. Laugh on, happy ones—come out of Egypt and the house of bondage, and the waste and howling wildoness of slavery and competition, workhouses and prisons, into a good land and large, a land flowing with milk and honey, where you will sit every one under his own vine and his own fig-tree, and look into the faces of your rosy children—and see in them a blessing and not a curse! Oh, England! stern mother land, when wilt thou renew thy youth?—thou wilderness of man's making, not God's! Is it not written, that the days shall come when the forest shall break forth into song, and the wilderness shall blossom like the rose?

Hark! again, sweet and clear across the still night sea, ring out the notes of Crossethwaite's bugle—the first luxury, poor fellow, he ever allowed himself; and yet not a selfish one, for music, like mercy, is twice blessed—

"It bleaseth him that gives and him that takes."

There is the spirit stirring marching air of the German workmen students—

"Thou, thou, thou, and thou,
Sir Master, fare thee well—"

Perhaps a half reproachful hint to the poor old England he is leaving. What a glorious motto! warming one's whole heart into life and energy! If I could but write in such a metric one true people's song, that should embody all my sorrow, indignation, hope—fitting last words for a poet of the people—for they will be my last words—Well—thank God! at least I shall not be buried in a London churchyard! It may be a foolish fancy—but I have made them promise to lay me up among the virgin woods, where, if the soul ever visits the place of its body's rest, I may snatch glimpses of that natural beauty from which I was barred out in life, and watch the gorgeous flowers that bloom above my dust, and hear the forest birds singing around the Poet's grave.

Hark to the grand hit of the "Good Time Coming!"—song which has cheered ten thousand hearts, which has already taken root that it may live and grow forever. A fitting melody to soothe my dying ears! Ah! how should there not be A Good Time coming?—Hope, and trust, and infinite deliverance!—a time such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive!—coming surely, soon or late, to those for whom a God did not disdain to die!

Our only remaining duty is to give an extract from a letter written by John Crossethwaite, and dated

"Galveston, Texas, Oct 1848"

**** "I am happy. Katie is happy. There is peace among us here, like the clear downshining after rain." But I thirst and long already for the expiration of my seven years' exile, wholesome as I believe it to be. My only wish is to return and assist in the Emancipation of Labour, and give my small aid in that fraternal union of all classes, which I hear is surely, though slowly, spreading in my mother-land.

"And now for my poor friend, whose papers, according to my promise to him, I transmit to you. On the very night on which he seems to have concluded them—an hour after we had made the land—we found

in his death-bed, dead, his head resting on
 the table as peacefully as if he had alighted
 on a sheet of paper by him were written the
 following verses; the ink was not yet dry.

“MY LAST WORDS.

I

‘Weep, weep, weep, and weep,
 For pauper, dolt, and slave,
 Hark! from wasted moor and fen,
 Feverous alley, workhouse den,
 Swells the wail of Englishmen,
 “Work! or the grave!”

II

‘Down, down, down, and down,
 With idler, knave, and tyrant,
 Why for sluggards stint and moli?
 He that will not live by toll
 Has no right on English soil,
 God’s Word’s our warrant!

III

‘Up, up, up, and up,
 Face your game and play it!
 The night is past—be’old the sun!
 The cup is full, the web is spun,
 The Judge is set, the doom begun,
 Who shall stay it?”

THE END.

